

# Othello

## Act 1, Scene 1

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO

RODERIGO and IAGO enter.

**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**

5 'Sblood, but you'll not hear me!  
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  
(In personal suit to make me his lieutenant)  
10 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  
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,  
And in conclusion  
15 Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he,  
"I have already chose my officer."  
And what was he?  
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine  
20 A fellow almost damned in a fair wife  
That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows  
More than a spinster—unless the bookish theoretic,  
Wherein the toged consuls can propose  
25 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  
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
Christian and heathen, must be belee'd and calmed  
30 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**

By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

**IAGO**

35 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,  
Whether I in any just term am affined  
To love the Moor.

**RODERIGO**

40 I would not follow him then.

**RODERIGO**

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

**IAGO**

Christ, 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.

**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 *he* 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, "I have already chosen my lieutenant, for  
sure." And who did he choose? A guy who's basically a  
mathematician, some Michael Cassio, from Florence, a man  
practically cursed with a wife 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 he chose this Cassio for lieutenant—not me, when, 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. No, my career's stalled and I'm overtaken by some  
number cruncher—an accountant! That bean-counter will soon  
be his lieutenant and meanwhile I'll be carrying around his  
Moorship's (*Ed. note: "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."*) flag, thank you very much.

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

**RODERIGO**

What a full fortune does the Thick-lips owe  
 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,  
 70 And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
 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**

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

**RODERIGO**

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

**IAGO**

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

*Enter BRABANTIO, above*

**BRABANTIO**

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

**IAGO**

Oh, 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. With God as my witness, I swear I'm not serving him 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 (*Ed. note: A racist nickname for Othello, who is a "Moor," someone of African descent.*) has, if he can pull off what he's trying to do.

**IAGO**

Call up Desdemona's father and wake him. We'll slander Othello in the streets and ruin his happiness by getting his wife's family all riled up. 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 many annoyances that it 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 from above.*

**BRABANTIO**

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

**RODERIGO**

Signior, is all your family within?

**IAGO**

Are your doors locked?

**BRABANTIO**

85 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

Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise,

90 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**

Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

**BRABANTIO**

Not I. What are you?

**RODERIGO**

95 My name is Roderigo.

**BRABANTIO**

The worser welcome.

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors.

In honest plainness thou hast heard me say

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

100 Being full of supper and distempering drafts,

Upon malicious knavery dost thou come

To start my quiet?

**RODERIGO**

Sir, sir, sir—

**BRABANTIO**

But thou must needs be sure

105 My spirits and my place have in their power

To make this bitter to thee.

**RODERIGO**

Patience, good sir.

**BRABANTIO**

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—

**RODERIGO**

Sir, is all of your family safely inside?

**IAGO**

Are your doors locked?

**BRABANTIO**

Why on earth are you asking me this?

**IAGO**

Good lord, you're being robbed! Quick, 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. 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**

Have you lost your mind?

**RODERIGO**

Noble lord, do you recognize my voice?

**BRABANTIO**

I do no. 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, having feasted and gotten drunk, 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 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**

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

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!

**IAGO**

You are a senator!

**BRABANTIO**

120 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  
125 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.  
130 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)

135 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,  
140 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,  
Belief of it oppresses me already.  
Light, I say, light!

*Exit above*

**IAGO**

Christ, sir, would you refuse to serve God just because it was the devil who 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 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**

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!

**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, 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, 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 duty, beauty, wit, and wealth to some extravagant, wandering foreigner. 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.

**BRABANTIO**

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 above.*

**IAGO***(to RODERIGO)*

145 Farewell, for I must leave you.  
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,  
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)  
150 Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embarked  
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars  
(Which even now stand in act) that, for their souls,  
Another of his fathom they have none  
To lead their business. In which regard,  
155 Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,  
Yet for necessity of present life  
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,  
160 And there will I be with him. So farewell.

*Exit**Enter BRABANTIO, with servants and torches***BRABANTIO**

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!—  
165 With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father?—  
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?

**RODERIGO**

Truly, I think they are.

**BRABANTIO**

170 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**

175 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**

180 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.

**IAGO**

*(to RODERIGO)* Farewell. I must leave you. It seems to me  
neither wise nor appropriate given my position in Othello's  
service to be brought forward against the Moor (as 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 him), 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 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. Farewell.

*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 awake all my family.  
Do you think they've gotten married?

**RODERIGO**

Truly, I think they have.

**BRABANTIO**

Oh, heaven, how did she get out of the house? Oh, 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 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 on. I'll call on every house. I know most of them well  
enough to tell them, "Hey, get your weapons!" and I'll raise up a  
force of especially strong officers. Go on, good Roderigo. I will  
reward you for your efforts.

*Exeunt**BRABANTIO and RODERIGO exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 2

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and attendants with torches**OTHELLO and IAGO enter with attendants and 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  
 That, with the little godliness I have,  
 10 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  
 As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,  
 15 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.  
 My services which I have done the signiory  
 Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know—  
 Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,  
 20 I shall promulgate. I fetch my life and being  
 From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
 As this that I have reached. For know, Iago,  
 25 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
 I would not my unhousèd free condition  
 Put into circumscription and confine  
 For the sea's worth. But look, what lights come yond?

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

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

**IAGO**

By Janus, I think no.

**IAGO**

Although I have killed men while serving in war, still my  
 conscience forbids me from committing any premeditated  
 murder. I lack the evil disposition sometimes to do my job. Nine  
 or ten times I've thought about just stabbing him right under  
 the ribs.

**OTHELLO**

It's better that you haven't.

**IAGO**

But he said such insulting, rude things against your 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 Barbantio 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 news until I hear  
 that it's an honor to boast—but I am descended from men of  
 royal lineage, and 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 lights come 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 (*Ed. note: Janus is the ancient Roman god of  
 beginnings, endings, and doorways. He is famously represented  
 as having two faces, a fitting symbol for the two-faced Iago.*), I  
 think not.

*Enter CASSIO, with officers and torches*

*CASSIO enters with officers carrying torches.*

**OTHELLO**

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

**CASSIO**

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.  
40 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 for.  
45 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.  
I will but spend a word here in the house  
And go with you.

*Exit*

*OTHELLO exits.*

**CASSIO**

Ancient, what makes he here?

**IAGO**

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

**CASSIO**

I do not understand.

**IAGO**

He's married.

**CASSIO**

To who?

**IAGO**

Marry, to—

*Enter OTHELLO*

*OTHELLO enters.*

Come, captain, will you go?

Come on, captain, will you go now?

**OTHELLO**

Have with you.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, I'll go with you.

**CASSIO**

55 Here comes another troop to seek for you.

**CASSIO**

Here comes another group of people looking 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**

Signior, it is the Moor.

**BRABANTIO**

Down with him, thief!

*They draw their swords*

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

60 Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.  
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!  
65 For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
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,  
70 Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,  
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,  
75 Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
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  
80 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—  
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  
85 Without a prompter. Whither will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

**BRABANTIO**

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

*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, 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**

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, fair, 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 foul magic on her, and abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals 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, until it's time for you to go bear witness at your trial.

**OTHELLO**

What if I do obey?

90 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**

'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?

95 In this time of the night? Bring him away.  
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,  
100 Bondslaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

**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, noble sir. The Duke is in a council meeting and you too, I am sure, 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, as well as the other senators, will sympathize with my situation as if it is their own. For if we let people get away with things like this, our statesmen will be as good as slaves and pagans.

*Exeunt*

*All exit.*

## Act 1, Scene 3

*Enter DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS*

*The DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS enter.*

**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**

And mine a hundred and forty.

**SECOND SENATOR**

And mine, two hundred.

5 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  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

**DUKE**

Nay, it is possible enough to judgment.

10 I do not so secure me in the error,  
But the main article I do approve  
In fearful sense.

**SAILOR**

*(within)*

What, ho, what, ho, what, ho!

**OFFICER**

A messenger from the galleys.

*Enter SAILOR*

**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 mine 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**

*(from offstage)* Hey! Hey!

**OFFICER**

It's a messenger from the ship.

*A SAILOR enters.*

**DUKE**

Now, what's the business?

**SAILOR**

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

**DUKE**

How say you by this change?

**FIRST SENATOR**

20 This cannot be,  
By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant,  
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,  
25 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,  
30 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**

35 The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
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**

40 Of thirty sail. And now they do re-stem  
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
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.  
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

**FIRST SENATOR**

45 He's now in Florence.

**DUKE**

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

**DUKE**

What's going on, now?

**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**

The Ottomites (*Ed. note: Another term for the Turks.*), your honor, have steered their fleet of ships toward the island of Rhodes, and added a second fleet to that one.

**FIRST SENATOR**

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

**MESSENGER**

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

**DUKE**

It's certain, then, 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 valiant Moor.

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

**DUKE**

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

**BRABANTIO**

55 So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me.  
Neither my place nor aught 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  
And it is still itself.

**DUKE**

Why, what's the matter?

**BRABANTIO**

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

**ALL**

Dead?

**BRABANTIO**

60 Ay, to me.  
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**

65 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  
Stood in your action.

**BRABANTIO**

70 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**

We are very sorry for't.

**DUKE**

(to OTHELLO) What, in your own part, can you say to this?

**BRABANTIO**

75 Nothing, but this is so.

**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, gentle sir. We missed your advice and  
help tonight.

**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, y own particular trouble is so  
great that it overwhelms 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 tricksters. For  
Desdemona 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 potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
 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.  
 80 The very head and front of my offending  
 Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
 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  
 85 Their dearest action in the tented field,  
 And little of this great world can I speak,  
 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,  
 90 I will a round unvarnished tale deliver  
 Of my whole course of love. What drugs, what charms,  
 What conjuration and what mighty magic—  
 For such proceeding I am charged withal—  
 I won his daughter.

**BRABANTIO**

A maiden never bold,  
 95 Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion  
 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  
 100 That will confess perfection so could err.  
 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  
 105 Or with some dram, conjured to this effect,  
 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**

110 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**

I do beseech you,  
 115 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,  
 Not only take away, but let your sentence  
 Even fall upon my life.

**DUKE**

120 Fetch Desdemona hither.

**OTHELLO**

Most powerful, serious, and honorable sirs, my noble masters who have proved to be good, 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**

My daughter is a young girl who has never been bold. She is quiet and not impulsive. Is it possible that she, in spite of her nature, in spite of her young age, in spite of her origin, 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 on her some potion 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 accusations and 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**

Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.

*Exeunt IAGO and attendants*

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

**DUKE**

Say it, Othello.

**OTHELLO**

Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
Still questioned me the story of my life  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
130 That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,  
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
135 Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my traveler's history.  
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
140 Rough quarries, rocks, hills whose heads touch heaven  
It was my hint to speak—such was my process—  
And of the Cannibals that each others eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Grew beneath their shoulders. These things to hear  
145 Would Desdemona seriously incline.  
But still the house affairs would draw her hence,  
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse, which I, observing,  
150 Took once a pliant hour and found good means  
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard  
But not intentively. I did consent,  
155 And often did beguile her of her tears  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
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,  
160 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.  
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  
165 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.  
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*

**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 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 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 such 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**

170 I think this tale would win my daughter too.  
 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.

175 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,

180 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.  
 I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my husband.  
 185 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.

Please it your grace, on to the state affairs.

190 I had rather to adopt a child than get it.—  
 Come hither, Moor.  
 I here do give thee that with all my heart  
 Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
 I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,  
 195 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  
 Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers

200 Into your favor.  
 When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
 By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.  
 To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
 Is the next way to draw new mischief on.  
 205 What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,  
 Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.  
 The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief,  
 He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

**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 with him, as well, then I will no longer place blame on Othello. Come here, gentle girl. Do you see to whom, out of everyone here, you should be most obedient?

**DESDEMONA**

My noble father, 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. To be sad after something bad happens only makes it worse. 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**

210 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.  
 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow  
 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.  
 215 These sentences to sugar or to gall,  
 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.  
 But words are words. I never yet did hear  
 That the bruised heart was piercèd through the ears.  
 I humbly beseech you, proceed to th' affairs of state.

**DUKE**

220 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 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**

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

**DUKE**

Why, at her father's.

**BRABANTIO**

I'll not have it so.

**OTHELLO**

240 Nor I.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**DUKE**

What would you, Desdemona?

**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**

I'm so used to war, honorable senators, 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 and 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 it  
 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**

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  
 250 Even to the very quality of my lord.  
 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  
 255 A moth of peace and he go to the war,  
 The rites for which I love him are bereft me,  
 And I a heavy interim shall support  
 By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

**OTHELLO**

Let her have your voice.  
 260 Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not  
 To please the palate of my appetite,  
 Nor to comply with heat the young affects  
 In my defunct and bounteous to her mind,  
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind,  
 265 And heaven defend your good souls, that you think  
 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,  
 270 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
 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,  
 275 Either for her stay or going. Th' affair cries haste  
 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  
 280 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.  
 To his conveyance I assign my wife,  
 285 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)  
 And, noble signior,  
 If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
 Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

**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.

**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, making me blind, 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.

**DUKE**

As too 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 commission, 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, than your son-in-law is much more fair (Ed. note: *The Duke is making a pun on the word "fair", which can mean beautiful or pale and light-skinned.*) than he is black.

**FIRST SENATOR**

290 Adieu, brave Moor. Use Desdemona well.

**BRABANTIO**

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.  
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.

295 I prithee, let thy wife attend on her,  
And bring them after in the best advantage.  
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*

**RODERIGO**

300 Iago.

**IAGO**

What say'st thou, noble heart?

**RODERIGO**

What will I do, think'st thou?

**IAGO**

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

**RODERIGO**

I will incontinently drown myself.

**IAGO**

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

**RODERIGO**

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**

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

**FIRST SENATOR**

Goodbye, 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 things. We can't be late.

*OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.*

**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. And 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**

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**

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 sated with his body she will find the errors of her choice. Therefore, put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than 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 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 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 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**

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 with drowning yourself! That's a ridiculous idea. It would be better to get hanged for committing a crime trying to get 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 to, farewell.  
Do you hear, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

What say you?

**IAGO**

No more of drowning, do you hear?

**RODERIGO**

I am changed.

**IAGO**

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

**RODERIGO**

I'll sell all my land.

*Exit**RODERIGO exits.***IAGO**

365 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  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,  
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
370 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.  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now,  
375 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  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
380 To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose  
As asses are.  
385 I have 't. It is engendered! Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

*Exit**IAGO exits.***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.

**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 act as if it is. 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 tell Othello 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 with the help of Hell it will come to fruition.

## Act 2, Scene 1

*Enter MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN**MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN enter.***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**

What can you see out on the sea?

**FIRST GENTLEMAN**

Nothing at all. It's a rough sea and I can't see a single sail  
between the sky and the ocean.

**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-fixèd pole.  
I never did like molestation view  
On the enchafèd flood.

**MONTANO**

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

*Enter a THIRD GENTLEMAN*

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

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

**MONTANO**

25 How? Is this true?

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

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

**MONTANO**

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

**THIRD GENTLEMAN**

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

**MONTANO**

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

**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 their 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 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 he is safe. For I have served under him, and he commands like a perfect soldier. Let's go to the shore, both so we can see the ship that's already arrived and so we can 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, let's do so.  
For every minute is expectancy  
Of more arrivance.

*Enter CASSIO*

**CASSIO**

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

**MONTANO**

Is he well shipped?

**CASSIO**

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

**A VOICE**

*(within)* A sail, a sail, a sail!

*Enter a MESSENGER*

**CASSIO**

What noise?

**MESSENGER**

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

**CASSIO**

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**

60 I shall.

**MONTANO**

But good lieutenant, is your general wived?

**CASSIO**

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

**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**

*(from with)* 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 (*Ed. note: A cannon shot to  
signal that they are a friendly ship.*). We at least know it's a  
friendly ship.

**CASSIO**

Please sir, go forth and find out who it actually is who has  
arrived.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

Will do.

*Exit*

*The SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.*

**MONTANO**

Good lieutenant, is your general married?

**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.

Enter SECOND GENTLEMAN

The SECOND GENTLEMAN enters.

How now? Who has put in?

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

**CASSIO**

He's had most favorable and happy speed.  
 Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
 70 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  
 The divine Desdemona.

**MONTANO**

What is she?

**CASSIO**

75 She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,  
 Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,  
 Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts  
 A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,  
 And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,  
 80 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  
 And bring all Cyprus comfort!

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

Oh, behold,  
 The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
 85 You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.  
 Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven,  
 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**

90 He is not yet arrived. Nor know I aught  
 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**

95 *(within)* A sail, a sail!

**CASSIO**

But, hark! a sail.

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.

*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**

*(from within)* A sail, a sail!

**CASSIO**

But look! A sail.

A shot

A shot is fired.

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

They give this greeting to the citadel.  
This likewise is a friend.

**CASSIO**

See for the news.

*Exit a SECOND GENTLEMEN*

Good ancient, you are welcome.—Welcome, mistress.  
(*kisses EMILIA*)

100 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  
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,  
105 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.  
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,  
110 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,  
Bells in your parlors, wild-cats in your kitchens,  
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,  
115 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.  
You rise to play and go to bed to work.

**EMILIA**

You shall not write my praise.

**IAGO**

No, let me not.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**IAGO**

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

**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

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

**CASSIO**

Go see what's going on.

*The SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.*

Good flag-bearer, welcome. And welcome, ma'am. (*He kisses EMILIA*) Now don't get mad, good Iago, 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 please, you're slandering women!

**IAGO**

But it's true. I swear it's true or else I'm a Turk. 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**

Nope.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**IAGO**

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

**DESDEMONA**

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

**IAGO**

Ay, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**IAGO**

I am about it, but indeed my invention  
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze,  
130 It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors  
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**

135 If she be black, and thereto have a wit,  
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**

140 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**

There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,  
145 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?

**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?

**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**

150 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,  
155 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,  
160 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, 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**

(*aside*) He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, whisper! With as little a web as this will I ensnare as 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 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**

'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!

**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! Don't listen to him, Emilia, 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**

(*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, keep showing such courtesy to her. 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 wit.*

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**

My beautiful warrior!

**DESDEMONA**

My dear Othello!

**OTHELLO**

180 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  
185 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  
Succeeds in unknown fate.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**OTHELLO**

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

**IAGO**

(*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.  
News, friends! Our wars are done, the Turks are drowned.  
200 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,  
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts.—I prithee, good Iago,  
205 Go to the bay and disembark my coffers.  
Bring thou the master to the citadel.  
He is a good one, and his worthiness  
Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona,  
Once more, well met at Cyprus.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants*

**IAGO**

210 (*to the attendant*) Do thou meet me presently at the harbor. (*to RODERIGO*) Come hither. If thou be'st 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.

**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! 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, as honest as 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 keep on chattering on and going on and on about my happiness. 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. 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**

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 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 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, 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 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**

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**

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, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from Venice. 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**

260 Well.

**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, granted all this, which is obvious, 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 fellow. And besides, he is handsome, young, and has everything that foolish, young women look for in a man. He's an awful man, and Desdemona's already found him.

**RODERIGO**

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

**IAGO**

For God's sake! She drinks the same wine we do. If she was really blessed, she never would have fallen in love with the Moor. Baloney! Didn't you see her playing with his 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 let me tell you what to do. I've brought you here from Venice. Wait for my command tonight. Cassio 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, 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**

270 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.

275 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

280 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,

285 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,

290 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)

295 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*

*IAGO exits.*

**IAGO**

Sir, Cassio has a bad temper, and maybe he'll try to hit you. Provoke him into it. 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'd 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 do really 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, if 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.

## Act 2, Scene 2

*Enter Othello's HERALD, with a proclamation*

*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 the desire of our noble, brave general Othello, now that we know the Turkish fleet has been completely destroyed, that every man celebrate. 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

*Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants*

**OTHELLO**

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

**CASSIO**

Iago hath direction what to do,  
5 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:  
10 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.

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

**OTHELLO**

Good Michael, be on guard 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. Tomorrow come speak with me as soon as you're up. *(To DESDEMONA)* Come on, my dear love, now that we've gone through with the marriage, it's time to enjoy the benefits, between you and me. Good night.

*OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.*

*IAGO enters.*

**CASSIO**

Welcome, Iago. We must go be on 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 yet slept together, and she's beautiful enough to catch Jove's *(Ed. note: Jove, the king of the ancient Roman gods, was famous for having affairs with beautiful mortal women.)* 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 most fresh and delicate creature.

**IAGO**

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

**CASSIO**

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**

25 Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of 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**

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 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**

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

**CASSIO**

Indeed, she's a young, delicate creature.

**IAGO**

What niceeyes she has! They could provoke a war.

**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 outside 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.

*Exit*

*CASSIO exits.*

**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,  
 45 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,  
 50 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.  
 55 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.

**IAGO**

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

**CASSIO**

'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

**IAGO**

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**

70 Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

**IAGO**

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**

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

**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 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 easily  
 offended in matters of honor, 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**

Hey, more wine!  
 (Sings)  
*And let me clink, clink the glasses,  
 And let me clink the glasses,  
 A soldier's a man,  
 And life is short,  
 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**

Oh yes. An Englishman could easily drink a Dane under the  
 table, and would easily out-drink a German. And if a Dutchman  
 tried to go drink for drink with an Englishman, the Dutchman  
 would end up vomiting.

**CASSIO**

A toast, to the health of our general!

**MONTANO**

I'll toast to that, lieutenant!

**IAGO**

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.  
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.

85 Some wine, ho!

**CASSIO**

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

**IAGO**

Will you hear 't again?

**CASSIO**

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.

**CASSIO**

95 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 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**

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

*Exit GENTLEMEN*

**IAGO**

Oh, sweet England.  
(Sings)

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 jerk.  
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 think it's inappropriate to do that sort of thing. 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**

Yes, but, if you don't mind, not before me. A lieutenant's got to get into heaven before the flag-bearer. But enough of this, let's get to business. Forgive us our sins, God! Gentlemen, let's get to business. 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 go be on guard.

*The GENTLEMEN exit.*

**IAGO**

105 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,  
The one as long as th' other. 'Tis pity of him.  
110 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**

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

**MONTANO**

115 It were well  
The general were put in mind of it.  
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**

120 *(aside)* How now, Roderigo?  
I pray you, after the lieutenant, go!

*Exit RODERIGO*

**MONTANO**

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

**IAGO**

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?

*Enter CASSIO, pursuing RODERIGO*

**CASSIO**

130 Zounds! You rogue! You rascal!

**MONTANO**

What's the matter, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

A knave teach me my duty?  
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

**IAGO**

This man who just left, Cassio, he is such a good soldier he could be a commander in Caesar's army. But his vice is as great as 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?

**IAGO**

*(Whispering to RODERIGO)* 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?

*CASSIO enters, chasing RODERIGO.*

**CASSIO**

Christ! You scoundrel! You rascal!

**MONTANO**

What's the matter, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

A villain is going to tell me what to do? I'll beat the villain to a pulp.

**RODERIGO**

Beat me?

**CASSIO**

135 Dost thou prate, rogue? (*strikes him*)

**MONTANO**

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**

140 (*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*

145 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**

I bleed still,  
I am hurt to the death. He dies!

**OTHELLO**

Hold, for your lives!

**IAGO**

150 Hold, ho! Lieutenant—sir, Montano—gentlemen,  
Have you forgot all place of sense and duty?  
Hold! The general speaks to you. Hold, for shame!

**RODERIGO**

Beat me?

**CASSIO**

Did you say something, scoundrel? (*Hits RODERIGO*)

**MONTANO**

No, good lieutenant! Please, sir, stop hitting him! (*Holds CASSIO back*)

**CASSIO**

Let me go, sir, or I'll throw you over my head.

**MONTANO**

Come on, come on, you're just drunk.

**CASSIO**

Drunk?

*CASSIO fights with MONTANO.*

**IAGO**

(*Whispers to RODERIGO*) 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**

Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?  
Are we turned Turks? And to ourselves do that  
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

- 155 For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.  
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage  
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?—  
160 Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,  
Speak, who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

**IAGO**

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,  
165 As if some planet had unwitting men,  
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breasts  
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak  
Any beginning to this peevish odds,  
And would in action glorious I had lost  
170 Those legs that brought me to a part of it.

**OTHELLO**

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

**CASSIO**

I pray you pardon me, I cannot speak.

**OTHELLO**

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

**MONTANO**

- 180 Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.  
Your officer Iago can inform you,  
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,  
185 Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,  
And to defend ourselves it be a sin  
When violence assails us.

**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 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 your discipline and restraint. 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 self-defense is a sin, when someone attacks you.

**OTHELLO**

Now, by heaven,  
My blood begins my safer guides to rule,  
And passion, having my best judgment collied,  
190 Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,  
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,  
195 Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,  
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?  
200 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?

**MONTANO**

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  
205 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  
210 And Cassio following him with determined sword  
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman  
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause,  
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,  
Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out—  
215 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—  
220 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.  
225 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**

I know, Iago,  
230 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!  
I'll make thee an example.

**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 and Cassio swearing oaths. I've never heard Cassio like this 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**

235 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*

240 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**

Ay, past all surgery.

**IAGO**

245 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 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 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, 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 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**

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

**CASSIO**

I know not.

**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 led away.*

Iago, look carefully around town, and calm down anyone who  
this fight has riled up. 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 no! God forbid!

**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 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—you have no name, but I 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**

Is 't possible?

**CASSIO**

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

**IAGO**

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

**CASSIO**

275 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 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 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 lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

**CASSIO**

290 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 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 goodness not to do more than she is requested. This 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**

You advise me well.

**IAGO**

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

**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 between Othello and you will grow stronger than ever.

**CASSIO**

That's good advice.

**IAGO**

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

**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*

*CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

- 310 And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
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
- 315 In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful  
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,  
320 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
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!
- 325 When devils will the blackest sins put on  
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,  
330 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:  
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  
335 And out of her own goodness make the net  
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 cudged, 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.

**CASSIO**

I think you're right, and in the morning I will ask the virtuous Desdemona to plead on my behalf. But I worry that they won't let me even see her.

**IAGO**

You're on the right track. Good night, lieutenant. I must go be on guard duty.

**CASSIO**

Good night, honest Iago.

**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? Satan! 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 against her and entrap her—and everyone else—with her own goodness.

*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 they that have not patience!  
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

- 345 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.  
Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
350 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.  
Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter.  
Nay, get thee gone.

*Exit RODERIGO*

**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 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.*

- 355 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  
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find  
360 Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way.  
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

*Exit*

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've got no time to waste!

*IAGO exits.*

## Act 3, Scene 1

*Enter CASSIO and MUSICIANS*

*CASSIO and MUSICIANS enter.*

**CASSIO**

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

*They play. Enter CLOWN*

**CASSIO**

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

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

**CLOWN**

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

**CLOWN**

Gentlemen, have your instruments been in Naples (*Ed. note: The city of Naples was associated with syphilis, and the disease would commonly damage the nose.*)? Is that why they have that strange nasal sound?

**MUSICIAN**

- 5 How, sir? How?

**MUSICIAN**

What do you mean, sir?

**CLOWN**

Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

**CLOWN**

Tell me, are these wind instruments?

**MUSICIAN**

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

**MUSICIAN**

Yes, indeed they are, sir.

**CLOWN**

Oh, thereby hangs a tail.

**CLOWN**

Well that's not good.

**MUSICIAN**

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

**MUSICIAN**

What?

**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.

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

*Exeunt MUSICIANS*

**CASSIO**  
20 Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

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

**CASSIO**  
Prithee, keep up thy quilllets. 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 entertreats 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**  
In happy time, Iago.

**IAGO**  
You have not been abed, then?

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

**IAGO**  
35 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  
May be more free.

**CASSIO**  
I humbly thank you for 't.

**CLOWN**  
I don't like windbags. But anyways, here's some money for you. The general likes your music so much that he would like you, for God's sake, to stop playing it.

**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.

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

*The MUSICIANS leave.*

**CASSIO**  
Do you hear, my honest friend?

**CLOWN**  
No, I don't hear your honest friend. I hear you.

**CASSIO**  
Enough of your jokes. Here's some 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. I've been bold enough, Iago, 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.

*Exit IAGO**IAGO exits.*

I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest.

I've never known a kinder, more honest man from Florence.

*Enter EMILIA**EMILIA enters.***EMILIA**

40 Good morrow, good Lieutenant. I am sorry  
For your displeasure, but all will sure be well.  
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  
45 He might not but refuse you. But he protests he loves you  
And needs no other suitor but his likings  
To take the safest occasion by the front  
To bring you in again.

**EMILIA**

Good day, 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 he 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**

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

**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**

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

**EMILIA**

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

**CASSIO**

I am much bound to you.

**CASSIO**

I owe you for this.

*Exeunt**CASSIO and EMILIA exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 2

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN**OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN enter.***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.

**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**

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

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

5 This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?

**OTHELLO**

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

**GENTLEMEN**

We'll wait upon your lordship.

**GENTLEMEN**

After you, my lord.

*Exeunt**OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 3

*Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA*

*DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA enter.*

**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,  
He's never anything but your true servant.

**DESDEMONA**

10 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**

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

**DESDEMONA**

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here  
20 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,  
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience.  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift,  
25 I'll intermingle everything he does  
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

*OTHELLO and IAGO enter.*

**EMILIA**

Madam, here comes my lord.

**CASSIO**

Madam, I'll take my leave.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, stay and hear me speak.

**CASSIO**

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

**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. Do not doubt, Cassio, 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**

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 distant 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  
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.

**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, do your discretion.

**IAGO**

Ha! I like not that.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say?

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

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**

40 I do believe 'twas he.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**OTHELLO**

Who is 't you mean?

**DESDEMONA**

45 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,  
50 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  
55 To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

**OTHELLO**

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?

**DESDEMONA**

Well, it's up to you.

*Exit CASSIO*

*CASSIO exits.*

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

What are you talking about?

**IAGO**

Nothing, my lord. Hmm—I don't know.

**OTHELLO**

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

**IAGO**

Cassio, my lord? No, I can't imagine he would slink away looking  
so guilty upon seeing you arrive.

**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 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 have no judgment at all. Please, call him back here.

**OTHELLO**

Was that him who just left?

**DESDEMONA**

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

**OTHELLO**

Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But soon?

**OTHELLO**

Sooner because you asked, sweetie.

**DESDEMONA**

Tonight at dinner?

**OTHELLO**

No, not tonight.

**DESDEMONA**

Tomorrow dinner, then?

**OTHELLO**

60 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.  
I prithee name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent,  
65 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  
T' incur a private check. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul  
70 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,  
When I have spoke of you disparagingly,  
Hath ta'en your part, to have so much to do  
75 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**

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

**OTHELLO**

I will deny thee nothing!  
85 Whereon I do beseech thee, grant me this,  
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**

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

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

**OTHELLO**

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

**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. He  
really 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 should  
Cassio come? 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've 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 good  
food, or to keep yourself warm, or to do anything that's good for  
you. 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 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**

95 What dost thou say, Iago?

**IAGO**Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,  
Know of your love?**OTHELLO**He did, from first to last.  
Why dost thou ask?**IAGO**But for a satisfaction of my thought,  
No further harm.**OTHELLO**

100 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**105 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**

What dost thou think?

**IAGO**

110 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.  
I heard thee say even now thou lik'st not that  
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?  
115 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  
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me  
120 Show me thy thought.

**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?" Come on, you're repeating everything I say  
like a strange monster in my mind that's scared to show its ugly  
face. What are you implying? You just said earlier that you didn't  
like how Cassio left my wife's side. What about it didn't you like?  
And you thought it was interesting when I told you that Cassio  
advised me the whole time I was courting Desdemona. 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 love you.

**OTHELLO**

I think thou dost.

And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty  
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,

125 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  
They are close dilations, working from the heart,  
That passion cannot rule.

**IAGO**

For Michael Cassio,

130 I dare be sworn, I think, that he is honest.

**OTHELLO**

I think so too.

**IAGO**

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**

135 Nay, yet there's more in this.  
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  
140 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

145 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**

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 acting. 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 and cannot be hidden.

**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 a certain way they shouldn't seem like they are!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, clearly 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 been mixed in with his lawful ones?

**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**

I do beseech you,  
 150 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,  
 From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
 155 Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  
 Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
 It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
 Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom  
 To let you know my thoughts.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou mean?

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

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!  
 170 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 damnèd minutes tells he o'er  
 Who dotes, yet doubts— suspects, yet soundly loves!

**OTHELLO**

175 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  
 From jealousy!

**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 uncertain guess. It would not be  
 good for you, and it wouldn't be wise, honest, or manly of me to  
 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**

180       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  
 Is to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat  
 185 When I shall turn the business of my soul  
 To such exsufflicate and blowed surmises,  
 Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous  
 To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances.  
 190 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,  
 I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove,  
 195 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  
 With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound,  
 200 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  
 Out of self-bounty be abused. Look to 't.  
 205 I know our country disposition well.  
 In Venice they do let God see the pranks  
 They dare not show their husbands. Their best conscience  
 Is not to leave 't undone, but keep't unknown.

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou say so?

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

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,  
 215 He thought 'twas witchcraft. But I am much to blame.  
 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.

**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. 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 country well. Women of Venice let God see things 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, okay 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 fear it has.

220 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  
Than to suspicion.

**OTHELLO**

225 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 friend—  
My lord, I see you're moved.

**OTHELLO**

No, not much moved.

230 I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

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  
235 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
Whereto we see in all things nature tends—  
Foh! One may smell in such a will most rank,  
Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural.  
But—pardon me—I do not in position  
240 Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear  
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,  
May fall to match you with her country forms,  
And happily repent.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, farewell.

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

**IAGO**

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**

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 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 gross desire and foul thoughts in such a person.  
But pardon me, I am talking generally and don't mean her in  
particular, although I do fear that she may return to her better  
judgment, prefer her own countrymen to you, and take back her  
love for you.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, farewell. 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**

*(Talking to himself)* Why did I marry? This honest man must  
know more, much more than he is telling me.

**IAGO**

*(returns)* My lord, I would I might entreat your honor

- 250 To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time.  
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.  
255 Note if your lady strain his entertainment  
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—  
260 And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

**OTHELLO**

Fear not my government.

**IAGO**

I once more take my leave.

**OTHELLO**

- This fellow's of exceeding honesty  
And knows all quantities, with a learnèd spirit,  
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
265 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  
270 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  
275 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,  
Prerogativèd are they less than the base.  
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.  
280 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?  
Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
285 By you invited, do attend your presence.

**OTHELLO**

I am to blame.

**DESDEMONA**

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

**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 much. 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.

*Exit*

*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 *(Ed. note: Men whose wives cheated on  
them (called cuckolds) were commonly depicted as having horns  
on their heads.)*. Look, here she comes.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.*

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

**DESDEMONA**

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

**OTHELLO**

My mistake.

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so faintly? Are you okay?

**OTHELLO**

I have a pain upon my forehead, here.

**DESDEMONA**

Why that's with watching, 'twill away again.

290 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
It will be well. *(pulls out a handkerchief)*

**OTHELLO**

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,

295 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  
300 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**

305 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**

Oh, is that all? What will you give me now

310 For the same handkerchief?

**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

**OTHELLO**

I have a headache, here by my forehead *(Ed. note: Where a cuckold's horns were imagined to grow from.)*

**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 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. I sure don't know. 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...

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

**IAGO**

315 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**

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

**IAGO**

320 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  
When she shall lack it.

**IAGO**

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

*Exit EMILIA*

*EMILIA exits.*

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

*Enter OTHELLO*

*OTHELLO enters.*

I did say so.  
335 Look, where he comes. Not poppy nor mandragora  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
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**

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

**EMILIA**

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

**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**

Good woman, 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.

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 before long burn the insides.

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**

What, 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  
about it.

**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.

345 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**

I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**

350 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!

Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars

355 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,

Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

360 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**

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,

365 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**

Is 't come to this?

**OTHELLO**

Make me to see 't, or at the least so prove it

370 That the probation bear no hinge nor loop

To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!

**IAGO**

My noble lord—

**OTHELLO**

If thou dost slander her and torture me,  
Never pray more. Abandon all remorse.

375 On horror's head horrors accumulate,

Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed,

For nothing canst thou to damnation add

Greater than that.

**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 it's as if the robbery never

happened.

**IAGO**

I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**

I would have been happy if the whole camp of soldiers, grunts

and all, had tasted her sweet body, if only I didn't know about it.

Oh, now I can say farewell to a mind at peace! 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 your 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 thunderbolts, farewell! Othello's military career is

finished.

**IAGO**

Can this be true, 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 a man? Have you a soul or sense?  
 380 God buy you, take mine office. O wretched fool  
 That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice!  
 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  
 385 I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest.

**IAGO**

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.  
 390 I think that thou art just and think thou art not.  
 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,  
 395 I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

**IAGO**

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?  
 400 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,  
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster  
 405 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,  
 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross  
 410 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**

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

**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 part of me thinks she isn't. I'll find some proof. Her reputation, which was as pure and fair as Diana (*Ed. note: Diana was the ancient Roman goddess of, among other things, virginity.*), 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!

**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, 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**

415 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  
 And, being troubled with a raging tooth,  
 420 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,  
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."  
 425 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  
 Over my thigh, and sigh, and kiss, and then  
 430 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**

'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

435 And this may help to thicken other proofs  
 That do demonstrate thinly.

**OTHELLO**

I'll tear her all to pieces!

**IAGO**

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  
 440 Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

**OTHELLO**

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

**IAGO**

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**

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

**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 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, 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,

- 450 All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven—'tis gone.  
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!  
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**

- 455 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,  
460 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  
I here engage my words. *(he kneels)*

**IAGO**

- 465 Do not rise yet.  
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
You elements that clip us round about,  
Witness that here Iago doth give up  
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,  
470 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  
Not with vain thanks but with acceptance bounteous,  
And will upon the instant put thee to 't.

- 475 Within these three days let me hear thee say  
That Cassio's not alive.

**IAGO**

My friend is dead,  
'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  
480 To furnish me with some swift means of death  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

**IAGO**

I am your own for ever.

**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! 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. 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. He'll be dead. 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**

I am loyal to you forever.

*Exeunt*

*OTHELLO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 4

*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**

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

**DESDEMONA**

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**

I know not, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

25 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 As jealous creatures are, it were enough To put him to ill thinking.

*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.

**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**

It's not impossible to do this, so 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 money. Losing my handkerchief would be enough to make my husband jealous, if he were less loyal and more of a jealous man.

**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*

*OTHELLO enters.*

**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**

Give me your hand. This hand is moist, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

35 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,  
Much castigation, exercise devout,  
40 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,  
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

**OTHELLO**

45 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**

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

**OTHELLO**

I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me.  
Lend me thy handkerchief.

**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.

**DESDEMONA**

I won't stop bothering him now until he reinstates Cassio. How  
are you doing, my husband?

**OTHELLO**

I'm doing well, my good lady. *(Speaking to himself)* Oh, it's so  
hard to pretend I'm fine! *(Speaking to DESDEMONA again)*  
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, a generous 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.

50 **DESDEMONA**  
Here, my lord.

**OTHELLO**  
That which I gave you.

**DESDEMONA**  
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,  
55 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  
60 Should hold her loathèd 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.  
65 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  
The sun to course two hundred compasses,  
70 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**  
Indeed? Is 't true?

**OTHELLO**  
Most veritable, therefore look to 't well.

75 **DESDEMONA**  
Then would to Heaven that I had never seen 't!

**OTHELLO**  
Ha! Wherefore?

**DESDEMONA**  
Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

**OTHELLO**  
Is 't lost? Is 't gone? Speak, is 't out o' th' way?

**DESDEMONA**  
Here, my lord.

**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. When 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 a magical dye made from young women's 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 so excited and worked up?

**OTHELLO**  
Is the handkerchief lost? Is it gone? Tell me, have you lost it?

**DESDEMONA**

Bless us!

**OTHELLO**

80 Say you?

**DESDEMONA**

It is not lost, but what and if it were?

**OTHELLO**

How!

**DESDEMONA**

I say, it is not lost.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch 't, let me see 't.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.

85 This is a trick to put me from my suit.  
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.**OTHELLO**

Fetch me the handkerchief—my mind misgives.

**DESDEMONA**Come, come,  
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**90 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**

95 Zounds!

**EMILIA**

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.**DESDEMONA**

God bless me.

**OTHELLO**

What do you say?

**DESDEMONA**

It isn't lost, but what if it were?

**OTHELLO**

What?

**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!

*Exit**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 unhappy that I lost it.

**EMILIA**

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.  
 100 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**

105 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  
 110 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,  
 115 But to know so must be my benefit.  
 So shall I clothe me in a forced content,  
 And shut myself up in some other course,  
 To fortune's alms.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio,  
 My advocacy is not now in tune.  
 120 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  
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure  
 125 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**

He went hence but now,  
 And certainly in strange unquietness.

**IAGO**

130 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  
 Puffed his own brother—and is he angry?  
 Something of moment then, I will go meet him.  
 135 There's matter in 't indeed, if he be angry.

**DESDEMONA**

I prithee, do so.

*Exit IAGO*

**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**

Just my case from before. I beg you to use your virtuous powers  
 t help me return to the good graces of Othello, who 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 try my fortune with some other path  
 in life.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, most gentle 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.

**DESDEMONA**

Please do go see him.

*IAGO exits.*

Something, sure, of state,  
 Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice  
 Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
 Hath puddled his clear spirit, and in such cases  
 140 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so,  
 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,  
 145 Nor of them look for such observances  
 As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
 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**

150 Pray heaven it be  
 State matters, as you think, and no conception  
 Nor no jealous toy concerning you.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

**EMILIA**

But jealous souls will not be answered so.  
 155 They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
 But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster  
 Begot upon itself, born on itself.

**DESDEMONA**

Heaven keep the monster from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Lady, amen.

**DESDEMONA**

160 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**

What make you from home?  
 165 How is 't with you, my most fair Bianca?  
 Indeed, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

**BIANCA**

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  
 170 More tedious than the dial eightscore times!  
 Oh weary reckoning!

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.

**DESDEMONA**

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.

**DESDEMONA**

May heaven keep that monster away from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Amen, lady.

**DESDEMONA**

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**

I humbly thank your ladyship.

*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 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**

175 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**

Go to, woman,  
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth  
180 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**

I know not neither, I found it in my chamber.  
I like the work well. Ere it be demanded,  
185 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**

I do attend here on the general  
And think it no addition, nor my wish,  
To have him see me womaned.

**BIANCA**

190 Why, I pray you?

**CASSIO**

Not that I love you not.

**BIANCA**

But that you do not love me.  
I pray you bring me on the way a little  
And say if I shall see you soon at night.

**CASSIO**

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you,  
195 For I attend here. But I'll see you soon.

**BIANCA**

'Tis very good. I must be circumstanced.

**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.

**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 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 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  
circumstanc.

*Exeunt*

*BIANCA and CASSIO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

OTHELLO and IAGO enter.

**IAGO**

Will you think so?

**OTHELLO**

Think so, Iago?

**IAGO**

What,

To kiss in private?

**OTHELLO**

An unauthorized kiss!

**IAGO**

Or to be naked with her friend in bed  
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

**OTHELLO**

5 Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!  
It is hypocrisy against the devil.  
They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,  
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

**IAGO**

10 So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip.  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief—

**OTHELLO**

What then?

**IAGO**

Why then 'tis hers, my lord, and, being hers,  
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.

**OTHELLO**

15 She is protectress of her honor too.  
May she give that?

**IAGO**

Her honor is an essence that's not seen,  
They have it very oft that have it not.  
But for the handkerchief—

**OTHELLO**

20 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,  
Boding to all—he had my handkerchief.

**IAGO**

Ay, what of that?

**OTHELLO**

That's not so good now.

**IAGO**

Do you think so?

**OTHELLO**

Think so, 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**

Naked in bed, Iago, 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  
meaningless slip-up. 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 had my  
handkerchief.

**IAGO**

Yes, so what?

**OTHELLO**

That is not so good, now.

**IAGO**

25 What if I had said I had seen him do you wrong?  
Or heard him say—as knaves be such abroad,  
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**

30 He hath, my lord, but be you well assured  
No more than he'll unswear.

**OTHELLO**

What hath he said?

**IAGO**

Why, that he did—I know not what he did.

**OTHELLO**

What? what?

**IAGO**

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.  
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! 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,  
All guiltless, meet reproach.—What, ho! My lord!  
My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter CASSIO*

45 How now, Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What's the matter?

**IAGO**

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.  
This is his second fit. He had one yesterday.

**IAGO**

What if I had told you that I saw him wrong you? 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**

He has, my lord, 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 starts uncontrollably shaking in rage*

**IAGO**

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.  
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.

- 50 The lethargy must have his quiet course.  
If not, he foams at mouth and by and by  
Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.  
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,  
He will recover straight. When he is gone  
55 I would on great occasion speak with you.

*Exit CASSIO*

How is it, general? Have you not hurt your head?

**OTHELLO**

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**

- 60 There's many a beast then in a populous city,  
And many a civil monster.

**OTHELLO**

Did he confess it?

**IAGO**

Good sir, be a man,

- 65 Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked  
May draw with you. There's millions now alive  
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,  
70 And to suppose her chaste. No, let me know,  
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, thou art wise! 'Tis certain.

**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 (*Ed. note: 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 by heaven! 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 wise! You're right.

**IAGO**

Stand you awhile apart,  
 Confine yourself but in a patient list.  
 Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief—  
 75 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,  
 80 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.  
 85 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,  
 But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

**IAGO**

That's not amiss,  
 90 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  
 Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature  
 That dotes on Cassio, as 'tis the strumpet's plague  
 95 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*

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad.  
 And his unbookish jealousy must construe  
 100 Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behavior  
 Quite in the wrong.—How do you now, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

The worsè that you give me the addition  
 Whose want even kills me.

**IAGO**

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on 't.  
 105 Now if this suit lay in Bianca's power  
 How quickly should you speed!

**CASSIO**

Alas, poor caitiff!

**OTHELLO**

Look how he laughs already!

**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 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 and be attracted to only one.  
 When he is asked about her, he can't help but laugh. Here he  
 comes.

*CASSIO enters.*

*(Talking 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. *(Talking 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. 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 never knew woman love man so.

**CASSIO**

110 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**

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**

115 Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Do ye triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

**CASSIO**

I marry her! What? A customer? Prithee bear some charity to  
my wit. Do not think it so unwholesome. Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

So, so, so, so! They laugh that win!

**IAGO**

120 Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

**CASSIO**

Prithee say true!

**IAGO**

I am a very villain else.

**OTHELLO**

Have you scored me? Well.

**CASSIO**

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**

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—

**IAGO**

I've never seen a woman love a man as much as Bianca loves  
you.

**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**

Bianca 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 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**

Crying "O dear Cassio!" as it were. His gesture imports it.

**CASSIO**

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**

140 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**

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?

**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*

*BIANCA exits.*

**IAGO**

155 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**

Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very fain speak with you.

**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.

**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 flavor-of-the-week. 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'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.

**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**

Prithee come, will you?

**IAGO**

Go to! Say no more.

*Exit CASSIO*

*CASSIO exits.*

**OTHELLO**

*(advancing)* How shall I murder him, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

**OTHELLO**

165 Oh Iago!

**IAGO**

And did you see the handkerchief?

**OTHELLO**

Was that mine?

**IAGO**

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**

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**

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**

Oh, a thousand thousand times—and then of so gentle a condition!

**IAGO**

185 Ay, too gentle.

**CASSIO**

Please come to the diner, then. Will you?

**IAGO**

Stop talking and go after her!

**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 fair 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**

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**

Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

**IAGO**

If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend, for if it touch not you it comes near nobody.

**OTHELLO**

190 I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?

**IAGO**

Oh, 'tis foul in her.

**OTHELLO**

With mine officer!

**IAGO**

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**

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**

200 And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You shall hear more by midnight.

**OTHELLO**

Excellent good.

*A trumpet within*

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.

**LODOVICO**

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

*(gives him a letter)*

**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**

Even worse.

**OTHELLO**

Get me some poison, Iago, 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**

Excellent, 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**

The duke and senators of Venice send their greetings.

*LODOVICO gives OTHELLO 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**

215 I thank you. How does lieutenant Cassio?

**IAGO**

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**

220 My lord?

**OTHELLO**

*(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**

225 A most unhappy one. I would do much  
T' atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

Fire and brimstone!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Are you wise?

**DESDEMONA**

What, is he angry?

**LODOVICO**

Maybe the letter moved him,  
For, as I think, they do command him home,  
Deputing Cassio in his government.

**DESDEMONA**

230 By my troth, I am glad on 't.

**OTHELLO**

Indeed!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

I kiss the letter that contains their commands.

**DESDEMONA**

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

**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 am glad to see you mad.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, sweet Othello—

**OTHELLO**

235 Devil! (*strikes her*)

**DESDEMONA**

I have not deserved this.

**LODOVICO**

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!

240 If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.  
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**

245 Mistress!

**DESDEMONA**

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.

250 Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,  
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,  
well-painted passion!  
255 (*To LODOVICO*) I am commanded home. (*To DESDEMONA*)  
Get you away,  
I'll send for you anon. (*To LODOVICO*) Sir, I obey the mandate  
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.

260 You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!

**OTHELLO**

I'm glad to see that you are mad.

**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 was 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?

**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. (*Speaking to DESDEMONA*) Keep on  
crying. (*Speaking to LODOVICO*) About this letter,  
sir— (*Speaking to DESDEMONA*) Oh you are pretending really  
well! (*Speaking to LODOVICO*) I have been ordered to come  
home. (*Speaking to DESDEMONA*) Go away. I'll call for you  
later. (*Speaking to LODOVICO*) Sir, I obey my orders and will  
return to Venice. (*Speaking 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 (*Ed. note: These two animals were  
associated with sexual licentiousness.*)!

*Exit**OTHELLO exits.***LODOVICO**

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  
Could neither graze nor pierce?

**IAGO**

265 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**

What? Strike his wife?

**IAGO**

270 '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  
And new-create his fault?

**IAGO**

Alas, alas!  
It is not honesty in me to speak  
275 What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,  
And his own courses will denote him so  
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**LODOVICO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

*Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA**OTHELLO and EMILIA enter.***OTHELLO**

You have seen nothing then?

**EMILIA**

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

**OTHELLO**

You haven't seen anything, then?

**EMILIA**

I haven't heard anything either, and haven't suspected anything.

**OTHELLO**

But you've seen her and Cassio together.

**EMILIA**  
 5 But then I saw no harm, and then I heard  
 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?

**EMILIA**  
 Never.

**OTHELLO**  
 10 To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

**EMILIA**  
 Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**  
 That's strange.

**EMILIA**  
 15 I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
 Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other  
 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  
 Is foul as slander.

**OTHELLO**  
 20 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.  
 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**  
 25 Pray you, chuck, come hither.

**DESDEMONA**  
 What is your pleasure?

**OTHELLO**  
 Let me see your eyes.  
 Look in my face.

**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**  
 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.

**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 fancy's this?

**OTHELLO**

30 (to EMILIA) Some of your function, mistress,  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door.  
Cough or cry "hem" if any body come.  
Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch!

Exit EMILIA

EMILIA exits.

**DESDEMONA**

Upon my knee, what doth your speech import?  
I understand a fury in your words,  
But not the words.

**OTHELLO**

35 Why, what art thou?

**DESDEMONA**

Your wife, my lord. Your true and loyal wife.

**OTHELLO**

Come, swear it, damn thyself.  
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves  
Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double damned,  
Swear thou art honest!

**DESDEMONA**

40 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**

45 Alas the heavy day, why do you weep?  
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.

**DESDEMONA**

What horrible things are you imagining?

**OTHELLO**

(Speaking 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 (*Ed. note: Othello compares Emilia to the keeper of a brothel.*)! Go!

**DESDEMONA**

I beg you on my knees to 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 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 terrible 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, he has cut ties with me, too.

**OTHELLO**

Had it pleased heaven  
 50 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,  
 I should have found in some place of my soul  
 55 A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me  
 The fixèd figure for the time of scorn  
 To point his slow and moving finger at!  
 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.  
 But there where I have garnered up my heart,  
 60 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  
 To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,  
 65 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,  
 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,  
 70 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**

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
 Made to write "whore" upon? What committed?  
 75 Committed? O thou public commoner!  
 I should make very forges of my cheeks  
 That would to cinders burn up modesty  
 Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?  
 Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,  
 80 The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets  
 Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth  
 And will not hear 't. What committed!  
 Impudent strumpet!

**DESDEMONA**

By heaven, you do me wrong!

**OTHELLO**

Are you not a strumpet?

**DESDEMONA**

85 No, as I am a Christian.  
 If to preserve this vessel for my lord  
 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**

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 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, that I know nothing about?

**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 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 it, then I am not one.

**OTHELLO**

What, not a whore?

**DESDEMONA**

No I am not, on my word as a good Christian.

**OTHELLO**  
90 Is 't possible?

**DESDEMONA**  
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,  
95 That have the office opposite to Saint Peter  
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.

**EMILIA**  
100 Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?  
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**  
Who is thy lord?

**EMILIA**  
He that is yours, sweet lady.

**DESDEMONA**  
105 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  
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember,  
And call thy husband hither.

**EMILIA**  
Here's a change indeed!

**DESDEMONA**  
110 'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.  
How have I been behaved that he might stick  
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

**OTHELLO**  
Can this be true?

**DESDEMONA**  
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 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. (*Ed.  
note: Othello continues to talk as if Emilia runs a brothel, and  
has arranged an illicit meeting between Othello and her  
prostitute Desdemona.*)

*Exit*

*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 thy 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!

*Exit*

*EMILIA exits.*

**DESDEMONA**  
It's appropriate that I am treated like this, very appropriate.  
How have I ever behaved so that he could find the smallest  
thing to complain about?

*Enter EMILIA with IAGO*

*EMILIA and IAGO enter.*

**IAGO**

What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't with you?

**DESDEMONA**

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes  
115 Do it with gentle means and easy tasks.  
He might have chid me so, for, in good faith,  
I am a child to chiding.

**IAGO**

What is the matter, lady?

**EMILIA**

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,  
120 Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
That true hearts cannot bear it.

**DESDEMONA**

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  
125 Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

**IAGO**

Why did he 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,  
130 Her father and her country, and her friends,  
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**

I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,  
135 Some busy and insinuating rogue,  
Some coggling, cozening slave, to get some office,  
Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else!

**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 conniving slave has slandered Desdemona in order  
to get some military position. If I'm wrong, let me be hanged!

**IAGO**

Fie, there is no such man. It is impossible.

**DESDEMONA**

If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

**EMILIA**

- 140 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,  
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
- 145 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**

Speak within door.

**EMILIA**

- 150 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**

- Alas Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again?  
Good friend, go to him. For, by this light of heaven,  
155 I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
Delighted them, or any other form,
- 160 Or that I do not yet, and ever did,  
And ever will—though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorce—love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
- 165 But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore,"  
It does abhor me now I speak the word.  
To do the act that might the addition earn  
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

**IAGO**

- 170 I pray you, be content, 'tis but his humor.  
The business of the state does him offence,  
And he does chide with you.

**DESDEMONA**

If 'twere no other—

**IAGO**

'Tis but so, I warrant.

*Trumpets sound*

**IAGO**

But there is no man who would do such a thing. It is impossible.

**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 most villainous lowlife, some scoundrel. 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. 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 temper. 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.*

175 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*

How now, Roderigo!

**RODERIGO**

I do not find that thou deal'st justly with me.

**IAGO**

What in the contrary?

**RODERIGO**

180 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**

185 Will you hear me, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

I have heard too much, and your words and performances are no kin together.

**IAGO**

You charge me most unjustly.

**RODERIGO**

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**

195 "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**

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.

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**

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 I would see something in return soon, 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**

Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

**IAGO**

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**

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?

**IAGO**

220 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**

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**

Why, by making him incapable of Othello's place: knocking out his brains.

**RODERIGO**

And that you would have me to do!

**IAGO**

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups 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 necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supertime, and the night grows to waste. About it!

**RODERIGO**

I will hear further reason for this.

**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**

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 (*Ed. note: A country in North Africa.*) 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.

**RODERIGO**

What do you mean, 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 dines 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**

And you shall be satisfied.

**IAGO**

You won't regret it.

*Exeunt**RODERIGO and IAGO exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

*Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA and attendants**OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and attendants enter.***LODOVICO**

I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

**LODOVICO**

I beg you, sir, don't trouble yourself any further.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, pardon me, 'twill do me good to walk.

**OTHELLO**

I beg your pardon, but it will be good for me to walk.

**LODOVICO**

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

**LODOVICO**

Good night, madam. I humbly thank you, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

Your honor is most welcome.

**DESDEMONA**

You are most welcome, your honor.

**OTHELLO**

5 Will you walk, sir?—O Desdemona—

**OTHELLO**

Will you walk with me, sir? And oh, Desdemona—

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**DESDEMONA**

Yes, my lord?

**OTHELLO**Get you to bed on th' instant, I will be returned  
Forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there, look 't be done.**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.

**DESDEMONA**

I will, my lord.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants**OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants exit.***EMILIA**

10 How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.

**EMILIA**

How is it going now? Othello looks gentler than before.

**DESDEMONA**He says he will return incontinent,  
And hath commanded me to go to bed  
And bid me to dismiss you.**DESDEMONA**He said he's coming back immediately and commanded me to go  
to bed and dismiss you.**EMILIA**

Dismiss me?

**EMILIA**

Dismiss me?

**DESDEMONA**15 It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,  
Give me my nightgown, and adieu.  
We must not now displease him.**DESDEMONA**That's what he ordered. Therefore, good Emilia, give me my  
nightgown and then goodbye. We must not displease Othello  
now.**EMILIA**

Ay. Would you had never seen him!

**EMILIA**

Okay. I wish 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**

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**

25 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  
30 Will not go from my mind. I have much to do  
But to go hang my head all at one side  
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**

35 He speaks well.

**EMILIA**

I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine  
for a touch of his nether lip.

**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, as you  
asked.

**DESDEMONA**

All right. Good Father, 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 speaks well.

**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,  
Sing all a green willow.*
- 40 *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.*
- Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones*
- 45 *Sing willow, willow, willow—  
Lay by these—  
Willow, willow—  
Prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon—  
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.*
- 50 *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)*

- I called my love false love but what said he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow.*
- 55 *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**

'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—
- 60 That there be women do abuse their husbands  
In such gross kind?

**EMILIA**

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**

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?

**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! Do you  
think—tell me, Emilia—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**

The world's a huge thing. It is a great price for a small vice.

**DESDEMONA**

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

**EMILIA**

70 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 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 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.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults

85 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,

Or scant our former having in despite.

90 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,

As husbands have. What is it that they do

95 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,

Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

100 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**

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**

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**

Damn me, if I would 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 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. 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. 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

*Enter IAGO and RODERIGO*

*IAGO and RODERIGO enter.*

**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.

*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  
He hath a daily beauty in his life  
20 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**

That thrust had been mine enemy indeed  
25 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**

The voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

**IAGO**

Here, stand behind this wall. He'll come soon. Keep your sword  
unsheathed, and then stick it where it belongs. Quick, quick!  
Don't worry. 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, as I may mess this up.

**IAGO**

I'll be here, right by your side. Be bold, and make a stand.

*IAGO steps back.*

**RODERIGO**

I don't have any great dedication to this deed, but he has given  
me satisfactory reasons to do it. It's just one man to kill. Go  
forth, my sword: he will die.

**IAGO**

*(Talking 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 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 wounds RODERIGO.*

**RODERIGO**

Oh, I've been slain!

*IAGO wounds 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, villain that I am!

**OTHELLO**

30 It is even so.

**CASSIO**

Oh, help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

**OTHELLO**

'Tis he. Oh, brave Iago, honest and just,  
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!  
Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,  
35 And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come.  
For, of my heart, those charms, thine eyes, are blotted.  
Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be spotted.

*Exit*

*Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO*

**CASSIO**

What, ho! No watch? No passage? Murder! Murder!

**GRATIANO**

'Tis some mischance, the cry is very direful.

**CASSIO**

40 Oh, help!

**LODOVICO**

Hark!

**RODERIGO**

Oh, wretched villain!

**LODOVICO**

Two or three groan. 'Tis heavy night,  
These may be counterfeits. Let's think 't unsafe  
45 To come in to the cry without more help.

**RODERIGO**

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.

**RODERIGO**

Oh, I am a villain.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you are.

**CASSIO**

Oh help, hey! Bring some light! I need a surgeon!

**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'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.

50 **IAGO**  
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**  
(to *CASSIO*) What are you here that cry so grievously?

55 **CASSIO**  
Iago? Oh, I am spoiled, undone by villains!  
Give me some help.

**IAGO**  
Oh, me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

**CASSIO**  
I think that one of them is hereabout,  
And cannot make away.

**IAGO**  
Oh, treacherous villains!—  
(to *LODOVICO* and *GRATIANO*)  
60 What are you there? Come in, and give some help.

**RODERIGO**  
Oh, help me there!

**CASSIO**  
That's one of them.

**IAGO**  
O murd'rous slave! O villain!

*Stabs RODERIGO*

**RODERIGO**  
O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!

65 **IAGO**  
Kill men i' th' dark! Where be these bloody thieves?  
How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!—  
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**  
Don't you hear a cry?

**CASSIO**  
Over here! For heaven's sake, help me!

**IAGO**  
What's the matter?

**GRATIANO**  
(*Speaking to LODOVICO*) This is Othello's flag bearer, I gather.

**LODOVICO**  
This is him, a very brave man.

**IAGO**  
(*Speaking 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! (*Speaking 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 slave! Oh what a villain!

*IAGO stabs RODERIGO.*

**RODERIGO**  
Oh, damned Iago! You inhuman dog!

**IAGO**  
Where are the 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.

70 **IAGO**  
I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

**GRATIANO**  
Cassio!

**IAGO**  
How is 't, brother!

**CASSIO**  
My leg is cut in two.

75 **IAGO**  
Marry, heaven forbid!  
Light, gentlemen, I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter BIANCA*

**BIANCA**  
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!

80 **IAGO**  
O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect  
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.

**IAGO**  
Lend me a garter. So.—Oh, for a chair,  
To bear him easily hence!

85 **BIANCA**  
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?  
90 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**  
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! Give me some light, gentlemen, 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 were  
the people who attacked you?

**CASSIO**  
No.

**GRATIANO**  
I am sorry to find you like this. I've been trying to find you.

**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.

95 **IAGO**  
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**  
Roderigo!

**IAGO**  
He, he, 'tis he.

*A chair is brought in*

100 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, mistress,  
Save you your labor.—He that lies slain here, Cassio,  
Was my dear friend. What malice was between you?

**CASSIO**  
105 None in the world, nor do I know the man.

**IAGO**  
(to *BIANCA*)  
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.—  
110 Behold her well. I pray you, look upon her.  
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**  
115 Cassio hath here been set on in the dark  
By Roderigo and fellows that are 'scaped.  
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.—  
120 (to *BIANCA*) What, do you shake at that?

**BIANCA**  
He supped at my house, but I therefore shake not.

**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 in.*

Ah, well done, the chair! Some good man carry him away  
carefully. I'll go get the general's surgeon. (*Speaking to BIANCA*)  
As for you, mistress, don't exert yourself. 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**  
(*Speaking 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? Yeah, 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 has been attacked here in the dark by Roderigo and  
some men who have run away. Cassio is 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. (*Speaking 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 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**

125 As !! 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.—  
Will you go on afore?  
(*aside*)

130 This is the night  
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

*Exeunt*

**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? (*Speaking to himself*) This  
is the night that either makes me or utterly ruins me.

*All ex.*

## Act 5, Scene 2

*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 the last.  
20 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**

Ay, Desdemona.

*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 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 once I put out your light, you most artfully,  
excellently fashioned woman, I don't know of any 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 creatures he loves. She's  
waking up.

**DESDEMONA**

Who's there? Othello?

**OTHELLO**

Yes, Desdemona.

25 **DESDEMONA**  
Will you come to bed, my lord?

**OTHELLO**  
Have you prayed tonight, Desdemon?

**DESDEMONA**  
Ay, my lord.

30 **OTHELLO**  
If you bethink yourself of any crime  
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.  
No, heavens forfend, I would not kill thy soul!

**DESDEMONA**  
Talk you of killing?

**OTHELLO**  
Ay, I do.

35 **DESDEMONA**  
Then heaven  
Have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**  
Amen, with all my heart.

**DESDEMONA**  
If you say, I hope you will not kill me.

**OTHELLO**  
Humh!

40 **DESDEMONA**  
And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then  
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,  
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.

45 **DESDEMONA**  
That death's unnatural that kills for loving.  
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?  
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.  
These are portents, but yet I hope, I hope  
They do not point on me.

**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 to God,  
make amends 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 talk of killing?

**OTHELLO**  
Yes, I do.

**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 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**

Peace, and be still.

**DESDEMONA**

I will so. What's the matter?

**OTHELLO**

50 That handkerchief  
Which I so loved and gave thee, thou gav'st  
To Cassio.

**DESDEMONA**

No, by my life and soul!  
Send for the man and ask him.

**OTHELLO**

55 Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury.  
Thou art on thy deathbed.

**DESDEMONA**

Ay—but not yet to die!

**OTHELLO**

60 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**

I say "amen."

**DESDEMONA**

65 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**

70 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**

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**

That he hath usèd thee.

**OTHELLO**

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 slept with you.

- 75 **DESDEMONA**  
How? Unlawfully?
- OTHELLO**  
Ay.
- DESDEMONA**  
He will not say so.
- OTHELLO**  
No, his mouth is stopped. Honest Iago  
Hath ta'en order for 't.
- 80 **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**  
Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?
- DESDEMONA**  
85 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**  
But half an hour!
- OTHELLO**  
90 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**  
95 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!
- DESDEMONA**  
What? Adulterous sex with me?
- OTHELLO**  
Yes.
- DESDEMONA**  
He would not say so.
- 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**  
Stop, 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**  
(*From off-stage*) 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**  
(*From off-stage*) Hey! My lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Who's there?

**EMILIA**

*(within)* O good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

**OTHELLO**

100 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?  
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were 't good?  
I think she stirs again—No. What's best to do?  
105 If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife—  
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.  
Oh, insupportable! Oh, heavy hour!  
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse  
Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe  
Should yawn at alteration.

**EMILIA**

*(within)*

110 I do beseech you  
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**

115 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  
120 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**

Not Cassio killed! Then murder's out of tune,  
125 And sweet revenge grows harsh.

**OTHELLO**

Who's there?

**EMILIA**

*(From off-stage)* Oh my good lord, I want to have a word with you!

**OTHELLO**

Yes, it is Emilia. *(Speaking to EMILIA)* One minute. *(Speaking to himself)* She's dead. Emilia is likely coming to tell me about Cassio's death; he made a lot of noise. Ha! 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**

*(From 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 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, falsely, falsely murdered!

**EMILIA**

Alas, what cry is that?

**OTHELLO**

That? What?

**EMILIA**

Out and alas, that was my lady's voice.

*Opens the bedcurtains*

130 Help! Help, ho, help! O lady, speak again!  
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

**DESDEMONA**

A guiltless death I die.

**EMILIA**

Oh, who hath done this deed?

**DESDEMONA**

Nobody. I myself. Farewell.  
Commend me to my kind lord. Oh, farewell!

*Dies*

**OTHELLO**

Why, how should she be murdered?

**EMILIA**

135 Alas, who knows?

**OTHELLO**

You heard her say herself it was not I.

**EMILIA**

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**

140 Oh, the more angel she,  
And you the blacker devil!

**OTHELLO**

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!

**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 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**

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 rash to say that she was unfaithful. She was heavenly  
faithful and honest!

**OTHELLO**  
 145 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**  
 Thy husband.

**EMILIA**  
 That she was false to wedlock?

**OTHELLO**  
 150 Ay, with Cassio. Had she been true,  
 If heaven would make me such another world  
 Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,  
 I'd not have sold her for it.

**EMILIA**  
 My husband?

**OTHELLO**  
 155 Ay, 'twas he that told me on her first.  
 An honest man he is, and hates the slime  
 That sticks on filthy deeds.

**EMILIA**  
 My husband!

**OTHELLO**  
 What needs this iterance, woman? I say thy husband.

**EMILIA**  
 O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!  
 My husband say that she was false!

**OTHELLO**  
 He, woman.  
 160 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**  
 165 Ha!

**EMILIA**  
 Do thy worst.  
 This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
 Than thou wast worthy her.

**OTHELLO**  
 Peace, you were best.

**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 jewels.

**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**  
 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 he 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**

170 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!  
The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder!

*Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO*

**MONTANO**

175 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**

(*to IAGO*) Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.  
180 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  
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

**EMILIA**

185 But did you ever tell him she was false?

**IAGO**

I did.

**EMILIA**

You told a lie, an odious, damnèd lie.  
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.  
She false with Cassio! Did you say with Cassio?

**IAGO**

190 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**

And your reports have set the murder on.

**OTHELLO**

195 Nay, stare not, masters, it is true, indeed.

**GRATIANO**

'Tis a strange truth.

**MONTANO**

Oh, monstrous act!

**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  
claim to murder for you.

**GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**EMILIA**

(*Speaking 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 it 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 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**

Villainy, villainy, villainy!  
I think upon 't, I think I smell 't, Oh, villainy!  
I thought so then, I'll kill myself for grief.

200 Oh, villainy, villainy!

**IAGO**

What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

**EMILIA**

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.  
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.  
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

**OTHELLO**

Oh! Oh! Oh!

**EMILIA**

205 Nay, lay thee down and roar,  
For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent  
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.  
210 I know this act shows horrible and grim.

**GRATIANO**

Poor Desdemon! 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,  
215 Yea, curse his better angel from his side  
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,  
220 And she did gratify his amorous works  
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.

**EMILIA**

Oh, heaven! Oh, heavenly powers!

**IAGO**

Zounds, hold your peace.

**EMILIA**

225 '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**

Be wise, and get you home.

*Draws his sword*

**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 Desdemon! 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 bad behavior.

**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 that token and 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 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**  
230 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.  
For often, with a solemn earnestness—  
235 More than indeed belonged to such a trifle—  
He begged of me to steal it.

**IAGO**  
Villainous whore!

**EMILIA**  
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*)  
240 O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool  
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**  
245 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,  
For 'tis a damnèd slave.

*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO*

**OTHELLO**  
250 I am not valiant neither,  
But ever puny whipster gets my sword.  
But why should honor outlive honesty?  
Let it go all.

**EMILIA**  
I will not go.

**GRATIANO**  
Shame! You draw your sword against a woman?

**EMILIA**  
Oh you stupid Moor! That handkerchief you speak of I found by  
luck and gave 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. (*Speaking to*  
*OTHELLO*) Oh you murdering fool! How did such a fool as you  
get such a good wife?

**OTHELLO**  
Doesn't heaven have any thunderbolts it can use on this  
complete villain?

*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 taken from  
the Moor. 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.

*MONTANO and GRATIANO exit.*

**OTHELLO**  
I'm not very strong if some puny little fellows 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 thy song bode, lady?  
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.  
255 And die in music.  
(*singing*) Willow, willow, willow—  
Moor, she was chaste, she loved thee, cruel Moor.  
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.  
So speaking as I think, alas, I die.

*Dies**EMILIA dies.***OTHELLO**

I have another weapon in this chamber,  
260 It was a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper.  
Oh, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

**GRATIANO**

(*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,  
265 Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Enter GRATIANO**GRATIANO enters.***GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

**OTHELLO**

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  
270 I have made my way through more impediments  
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,  
275 And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
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,  
280 Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt  
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,  
285 From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
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**

290 That's he that was Othello. Here I am.

**EMILIA**

What did your song foretell, lady? Listen, can you hear me? I will  
be like a swan and die while singing. (*She sings*) 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 I die,  
speaking my honest thoughts.

**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**

(*From 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**

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 rush at me  
and I'd fall 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, just as  
your chastity never gave in to the heat of desire. Oh that 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 rash and most unfortunate man?

**OTHELLO**

You speak of Othello. Here I am.

**LODOVICO**

Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

*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**

295 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**

300 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**

Ay.

**CASSIO**

305 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**

310 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**

And where is that poisonous snake? Bring the 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.*

**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 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**

315 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  
By Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

320 Oh, villain!

**CASSIO**

Most heathenish and most gross!

**LODOVICO**

Now here's another discontented paper  
Found in his pocket too, and this, it seems,  
Roderigo meant to have sent this damnèd villain  
325 But that, belike, Iago in the interim  
Came in and satisfied him.

**OTHELLO**

O thou pernicious caitiff!  
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief  
That was my wife's?

**CASSIO**

I found it in my chamber,  
330 And he himself confessed but even now  
That there he dropped it for a special purpose  
Which wrought to his desire.

**OTHELLO**

O fool! fool! fool!

**CASSIO**

There is besides in Roderigo's letter  
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him  
335 Brave me upon the watch, whereon it came  
That I was cast. And even but now he spake,  
After long seeming dead—Iago hurt him,  
Iago set him on.

**LODOVICO**

*(to OTHELLO)* You must forsake this room and go with us.  
340 Your power and your command is taken off  
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,  
If there be any cunning cruelty  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest  
345 Till that the nature of your fault be known  
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring him away.

**LODOVICO**

Sir, let me explain what has happened, which I don't think you  
know. Here is a letter found in the pocket of the dead Roderigo.  
And here is another. One of them says that Roderigo should kill  
Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

Oh, that villain!

**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**

*(Speaking 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  
much pain for a long time. You will stay a prisoner until the  
Venetian government hears of your crime. Come on, bring him  
away.

**OTHELLO**

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,  
 350 When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
 Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,  
 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,  
 355 Perplexed in the extreme. Of one whose hand,  
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
 Richer than all his tribe. Of one whose subdued eyes,  
 Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
 Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
 360 Their medicinal gum. Set you down this,  
 And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk  
 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
 365 And smote him, thus.

*Stabs himself*

**LODOVICO**

Oh, bloody period!

**GRATIANO**

All that is spoke is marred.

**OTHELLO**

*(to DESDEMONA)*

I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,  
 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

*Kisses DESDEMONA, dies*

**CASSIO**

370 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.  
 This is thy work. The object poisons sight,  
 375 Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house  
 And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
 For they succeed on you.—To you, lord governor,  
 Remains the censure of this hellish villain:  
 The time, the place, the torture. Oh, enforce it!  
 380 Myself will straight aboard, and to the state  
 This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

*Exeunt*

**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 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**

*(Speaking to DESDEMONA)* I kissed you before I killed you.

Now that I 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**

*(Speaking to IAGO)* You cruel dog, worse than pain, starvation, or the tempestuous sea, look at the tragic contents of this bed. This is your doing. It hurts to look at this. Cover the bodies. Gratiano, guard the house and take the Moor's possessions, for you inherit them all. *(Speaking to CASSIO)* And you, 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 with a heavy heart tell the Venetian government about these tragic events.

*All exit.*