

OTHELLO

A line-by-line translation

Act 1, Scene 1

Shakespeare

*Enter RODERIGO and IAGO***RODERIGO**

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO


I would not follow him then.


Shakescleare Translation

*RODERIGO and IAGO enter.***RODERIGO**

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

IAGO



Christ , 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.


 A common curse in Shakespeare's time, "'Sblood" is a contraction of "by Christ's blood."


RODERIGO

You told me that you hated him.

IAGO

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

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

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

70 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,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
75 Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
As it may lose some color.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

80 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

85 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?

RODERIGO

Signior, is all your family within?

IAGO

Are your doors locked?

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Hey, Brabantio! Sir Brabantio, hey!

IAGO

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

BRABANTIO enters on a balcony above the two men.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

Sir ⁵, is all of your family safely inside?

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

IAGO

Are your doors locked?

BRABANTIO

90 Why, wherefore ask you this?

IAGO

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

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

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

95 Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise,
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
Arise, I say!

BRABANTIO

What, have you lost your wits?

RODERIGO

100 Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

BRABANTIO

Not I. What are you?

RODERIGO

My name is Roderigo.

BRABANTIO

The worse welcome.

I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors.

105 In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee. And now in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering drafts,
Upon malicious knavery dost thou come
To start my quiet?

RODERIGO

110 Sir, sir, sir—

BRABANTIO

But thou must needs be sure

My spirits and my place have in their power

To make this bitter to thee.

RODERIGO

Patience, good sir.

BRABANTIO

115 What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is Venice,
My house is not a grange.

RODERIGO

Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you—

IAGO

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

120 God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you
service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your
daughter covered with a Barbary horse. You'll have your
nephews neigh to you. You'll have coursers for cousins
and gennets for Germans.

BRABANTIO

125 What profane wretch art thou?

IAGO

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and
the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

BRABANTIO

Thou art a villain!

BRABANTIO

Why? Why on earth are you asking me this?

IAGO

Good lord ⁸, you're being robbed! You should be
ashamed. Get dressed! It's like your heart is burst open and
you're bleeding away your very soul. At this very moment--
right now--an old black ram is having his way with your
white lamb ⁹. 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!

⁸ Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the oath "Zounds," a contracted version of the phrase "by God's wounds."

⁹ Iago uses an overtly sexual metaphor which puts primacy on Othello's race.

BRABANTIO

What are you saying? Have you lost your mind?

RODERIGO

Most noble sir, do you recognize my voice?

BRABANTIO

I do not. Who are you?

RODERIGO

My name is Roderigo.

BRABANTIO

Then you're not welcome here. I've already told you not to
come by my house. I told you bluntly and honestly: my
daughter is not for you. And now you come here in some
kind of madness brought on by feasting and too many
drinks, just to make trouble and ruin my good sleep?

RODERIGO

Sir, sir, sir—

BRABANTIO

Make sure you understand: I have the will—and the
power—to make you regret this.

RODERIGO

Good sir, hold on.

BRABANTIO

What are you talking to me about with "robbing?" This is
the city of Venice. My house isn't some unprotected barn.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Christ, sir, you're the type of man who would refuse to serve
God if the devil told you to! We've come here to do you a
favor, and you're ignoring us just because you think we're
no good. You're letting your daughter mate with a Barbary ⁸
horse. Your grandchildren will neigh to you. You'll have
ponies and colts for descendants.

⁸ Barbary refers to a region in northern Africa.

BRABANTIO

What kind of foul-mouthed jerk are you?

IAGO

Sir, I am one that comes to tell you that your daughter and
the Moor are doing the deed at this very moment.

BRABANTIO

You're a villain!

IAGO

You are a senator!

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

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

BRABANTIO

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

Exit above

IAGO

[to RODERIGO]

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

Exit

Enter BRABANTIO, with servants and torches

BRABANTIO

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

IAGO

And you're a senator!

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

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

BRABANTIO

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

BRABANTIO exits from his balcony.

IAGO

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

IAGO exits.

BRABANTIO enters with servants and torches.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

190 Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

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

BRABANTIO

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

Exeunt

RODERIGO

Truly, I think they have.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

Yes, sir. I have indeed.

BRABANTIO

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

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

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

RODERIGO

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

BRABANTIO

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

BRABANTIO and RODERIGO exit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and attendants with torches

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

'Tis better as it is.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

Shakesclore Translation

OTHELLO and IAGO enter with attendants and torches.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

It's better that you haven't.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

By Janus, I think no.

Enter CASSIO, with officers and torches

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

What's the matter, think you?

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

Exit

CASSIO

Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO

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

CASSIO

60 I do not understand.

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

By Janus ¹, I think not.

¹ Janus is the ancient Roman god of beginnings, endings, and doorways. He is famously represented as having two faces.

CASSIO enters with officers carrying torches.

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

What do you think is the matter?

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

OTHELLO exits.

CASSIO

Flag-bearer ², what is Othello doing here?

² The original text's "ancient" is a corrupted form of the word "ensign," a military officer carrying an ensign flag.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

I don't understand.

IAGO

He's married.

CASSIO

To who?

IAGO

Marry, to—

Enter OTHELLO

Come, captain, will you go?

OTHELLO

65 Have with you.

CASSIO

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

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

Holla! Stand there!

RODERIGO

70 Signior, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO

Down with him, thief!

*They draw their swords***IAGO**

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

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

For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

80 If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, t' incur a general mock,
85 Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight.
Judge me the world if 'tis not gross in sense
That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms,
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals90 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 practitioner

Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—

95 Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,
Subdue him at his peril!**IAGO**

He got married.

CASSIO

To whom?

IAGO

Indeed, to—

OTHELLO enters.

Come on, captain, will you go now?

OTHELLO

Yes, I'll go with you.

CASSIO

Here comes another group of people looking for you.

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

Hey! Stop right there!

RODERIGO

Sir, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO

Get him, the thief!

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

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

OTHELLOSheathe your shiny swords, or the dew will make them rust.
Good sir, your old age commands more respect than your
weapons do.**BRABANTIO**Oh, you foul thief! Where have you hidden my daughter?
Since you're damned yourself, you probably cast a spell on
her! I'll stake my case on plain evidence and common sense
as to whether such a tender, beautiful, and happy virgin
girl—one who was so opposed to marriage that she
shunned even the wealthy, good-looking young men of our
city—would have ever risked her reputation to run away
from her protected home into the dirty embrace of such a
thing as you, a thing to be feared and not loved, unless she
had been caught by magic. Let the world be my judge: isn't
it completely obvious that you have practiced some evil
magic on her, and abused her delicate youth with drugs or
toxins that make her weak? I'll bring you to court. This is
most likely what happened. Therefore, I hereby arrest you
as a criminal and a practitioner of illegal black magic.*[To the officers]* Get a hold of him. If he resists you, subdue
him even if it means hurting him.

OTHELLO

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

BRABANTIO

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

OTHELLO

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

OFFICER

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

BRABANTIO

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

Exeunt

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

OFFICER

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

BRABANTIO

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

They exit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

DUKE

5 And mine a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR

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

DUKE

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

SAILOR

15 *(within)*
What, ho, what, ho, what, ho!

Shakescleare Translation

The DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS enter.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

DUKE

And my letters say a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR

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

DUKE

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

SAILOR

[Offstage] Hey! Hey!

OFFICER

A messenger from the galleys.

Enter SAILOR

DUKE

Now, what's the business?

SAILOR

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

DUKE

How say you by this change?

FIRST SENATOR

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

DUKE

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

OFFICER

Here is more news.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

MESSENGER

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

He's now in Florence.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

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

OFFICER

It's a messenger from the ship.

A SAILOR enters.

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

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

 "Ottomites" is another term for
the Turks.

FIRST SENATOR

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

MESSENGER

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

He's in Florence now.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

Here comes Brabantio and the brave Moor.

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

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me.
 60 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
 65 And it is still itself.

DUKE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

ALL

Dead?

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

ALL

85 We are very sorry for't.

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO


Nothing, but this is so.


OTHELLO

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
 90 My very noble and approved good masters,
 That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
 It is most true. True, I have married her.
 The very head and front of my offending
 Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
 95 And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace,
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
 Their dearest action in the tented field,
 And little of this great world can I speak,
 100 More than pertains to feats of broils and battle,

DUKE

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

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

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

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

Why? What's the matter?

BRABANTIO

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

ALL

Is she dead?

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

ALL

We are very sorry to hear this.

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

OTHELLO

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

And therefore little shall I grace my cause
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
 I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love. What drugs, what charms,
 105 What conjuration and what mighty magic—
 For such proceeding I am charged withal—
 I won his daughter.

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

Fetch Desdemona hither.

OTHELLO

Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.

Exeunt IAGO and attendants

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

DUKE

Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO

145 Her father loved me, oft invited me,
 Still questioned me the story of my life
 From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
 That I have passed.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
 150 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,
 Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly breach,
 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 155

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
 so still and quiet and naturally inclined to blushing. Is it
 possible that she, in spite of her nature, in spite of her
 young age, in spite of her nationality, in spite of her
 reputation—in spite of everything—would fall in love with
 something she feared to even look at? It would be a foolish
 misjudgment to think that my perfect daughter could make
 such a mistake, contrary to all rules of nature. We must find
 out what cunning evil plots have brought this about.
 Therefore I say again that he has used some potion on her
 that affects the blood, or some drug magically enchanted
 for his purpose.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

Bring Desdemona here.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO exits with attendants.

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

DUKE

Go ahead and speak, Othello.

OTHELLO

Her father loved me and often invited me to his house,
 where he would ask about the story of my life, about the
 battles and sieges I've fought in, and the good and bad
 fortune I've had. I told him everything, even from when I
 was a boy, and spoke about disastrous turns of events,
 moving events on land and on sea, and about times I barely
 escaped imminent death by a hair's breadth. I told him
 about how I was taken prisoner by my enemy and sold into
 slavery, about how I was ransomed back and how I traveled
 around through vast caverns and empty deserts, through

And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
 And portance in my traveler's history.
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks, hills whose heads touch heaven
 It was my hint to speak—such was my process—
 160 And of the Cannibals that each others eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
 Grew beneath their shoulders. These things to hear
 Would Desdemona seriously incline.
 But still the house affairs would draw her hence,
 165 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
 Devour up my discourse, which I, observing,
 Took once a pliant hour and found good means
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
 170 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard
 But not intently. I did consent,
 And often did beguile her of her tears
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke
 175 That my youth suffered. My story being done
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.
 She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing
 strange,
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
 180 She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished
 That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
 I should but teach him how to tell my story
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake.
 185 She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
 And I loved her that she did pity them.
 This only is the witchcraft I have used.
 Here comes the lady. Let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

BRABANTIO

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

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 my stories. Picking up on her hint, I spoke
 to her. She loved me for the dangers I had endured, and I
 loved her because she pitied me for having endured them.
 This is the only witchcraft I have used. Here comes the
 woman herself. Let her testify.

DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants enter.

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

- 220 Let me speak like yourself and lay a sentence
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers
Into your favor.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
- 225 To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.
The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief,
- 230 He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

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

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

Why, at her father's.

BRABANTIO

I'll not have it so.

OTHELLO

Nor I.

DESDEMONA

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

DUKE

- 270 What would you, Desdemona?

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

DUKE

Let me speak, as you have, and offer some proverbs that may help you to be happier with these two lovers. When there's nothing you can do to fix a situation, there's no use crying about it anymore, because you've already survived seeing the worst outcome of your former hopes. To be sad after something bad happens only makes it worse. When fortune takes something away from you, you make a mockery of your trouble by being patient. If you've been robbed, it's better to smile and take away the thief's pleasure of making you upset than to grieve about it, and rob yourself even further of good cheer.

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

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

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

I won't allow it.

OTHELLO

Neither will I.

DESDEMONA

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

DUKE

What is your idea, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord.

275 I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honors and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind
A moth of peace and he go to the war,
280 The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

You must away tonight.

OTHELLO

With all my heart.

DUKE

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

OTHELLO

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

Adieu, brave Moor. Use Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO


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


Exeunt DUKE, BRABANTIO, CASSIO, SENATORS, and officers

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 and blind me so that I am more concerned with my pleasures than with business, let housewives use my helmet as a skillet and let my reputation be completely ruined.

 Cupid is the ancient Roman god of love.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

You must depart tonight.

OTHELLO

With all my heart, I will.

DUKE


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


OTHELLO

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

DUKE

Let it be so. Good night to everyone.

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

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

FIRST SENATOR

Farewell, brave Moor. Be good to Desdemona.

BRABANTIO

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

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

OTHELLO

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

Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA

RODERIGO

Iago.

IAGO

What say'st thou, noble heart?

RODERIGO

330 What will I do, think'st thou?

IAGO

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

RODERIGO

I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

350 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
355 blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to
most prepost'rous conclusions. But we have reason to
cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted
lusts. Whereof I take this that you call love to be a
sect or scion.

RODERIGO

360 It cannot be.

IAGO

365 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,

OTHELLO

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

OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.

RODERIGO

Iago.

IAGO

What is it, noble man?

RODERIGO

What do you think I should do?

IAGO

Well, go to bed and sleep.

RODERIGO

I will drown myself right now.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

That can't be true.

IAGO

It's just lust, and your will is letting it control you. Come on,
be a man. Drown yourself? Drown cats and blind puppies
instead! I have told you that I am your friend, and our bond
is strong. I am being a good friend to you right now. Sell
some things to put money in your wallet. Desdemona can't
stay in love with the Moor for long—get money in your

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

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

IAGO

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse.
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office. I know not if 't be true,

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 in an attempt to win her than to drown for being without her.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Where will we meet in the morning?

IAGO

At my house.

RODERIGO

I'll meet you there early.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

What?

IAGO

No more of this drowning nonsense, you hear?

RODERIGO

I've changed my mind about that.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

I'll sell all my land.

RODERIGO exits.

IAGO

Thus I make this fool into my bank account. I'd be wasting my cleverness if I spent time with such an idiot without getting some amusement and money out of it. I hate the Moor, and there's a rumor going around that he's slept with my wife. I don't know if this is true, but even just on suspicion, I'll think of it like a sure thing. He holds me in

But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.
415 The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now,
To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery. How? How? Let's see.
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
420 That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
425 And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are.
I have 't. It is engendered! Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

Exit

high esteem. This will be even better for my plan. Cassio is an attractive fellow. Let me think now: how can I get his place as lieutenant and raise up my own status through trickery? How? How? Let's see. In a little while, I can lie to Othello, telling him that Cassio is getting too close with Desdemona. Cassio has the good looks and smooth manners to be suspected of such a thing. He looks like he could get a woman to cheat on her husband. The Moor is gullible and trusting. He thinks men are honest when they only appear to be. I can lead him around like a donkey. That's it. I've laid the seeds of my plan, and it will come to fruition with the help of Hell.

IAGO exits.

Act 2, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN

MONTANO

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

10 A segregation of the Turkish fleet.
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds,
The wind-shaken 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.
20 It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a THIRD GENTLEMAN

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

How? Is this true?

Shakescleare Translation

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

MONTANO

What can you see out on the sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

A THIRD GENTLEMAN enters.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

What? Is this true?

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

Enter CASSIO

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Is he well shipped?

CASSIO

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

A VOICE

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

Enter a MESSENGER

CASSIO

What noise?

MESSENGER

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

CASSIO

60 My hopes do shape him for the governor.

A shot

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO

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

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO enters.

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Does he have a good ship?

CASSIO

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

A VOICE

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

A MESSENGER enters.

CASSIO

What's this noise?

MESSENGER

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


CASSIO

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

A shot is fired.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

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

CASSIO

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

65 I shall.

*Exit***MONTANO**

But good lieutenant, is your general wived?

CASSIO

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

Enter SECOND GENTLEMAN

How now? Who has put in?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

What is she?

CASSIO

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

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO with attendants

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Oh, but I fear. How lost you company?

CASSIO

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

A VOICE*(within)* A sail, a sail!**SECOND GENTLEMAN**

I will.

*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.

The SECOND GENTLEMAN enters.

What's the news? Who has arrived?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Who is she?

CASSIO

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

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

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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


DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

The great storm parted our ships.

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

 Jove was the chief god in ancient Rome.

CASSIO

105 But, hark! a sail.

A shot

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO

See for the news.

Exit a SECOND GENTLEMEN

110 Good ancient, you are welcome.—Welcome, mistress.
(*kisses EMILIA*)
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,
That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

Alas, she has no speech!

IAGO

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

EMILIA

You have little cause to say so.

IAGO

125 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,
Players in your housewifery, and hussies in your beds.

DESDEMONA

Oh, fie upon thee, slanderer!

IAGO

130 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

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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

But look! A sail.

A shot is fired.

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, good Iago, don't get mad that I'm
kissing your wife hello. I was brought up to show courtesy
that way.

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

No, she doesn't talk that much!

IAGO

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

EMILIA

You have little reason to say that.

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

Oh, curses upon you, you slandering women!

IAGO

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

EMILIA

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

IAGO

No, I won't.

DESDEMONA


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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

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

IAGO

Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA

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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

Worse and worse!

EMILIA

How if fair and foolish?

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

To do what?

IAGO

To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

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

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

CASSIO

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

CASSIO takes DESDEMONA'S hand

IAGO

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

Trumpet within

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

CASSIO

195 'Tis truly so.

DESDEMONA

Let's meet him and receive him.

CASSIO

Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO and attendants

OTHELLO

Oh my fair warrior!

DESDEMONA

My dear Othello!

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

CASSIO takes DESDEMONA'S hand.

IAGO

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

A trumpet sounds offstage.

I know that trumpet! It's the Moor.

CASSIO

Indeed it is.

DESDEMONA

Let's go meet and welcome him.

CASSIO

Look, he's coming!

OTHELLO and attendants enter.

OTHELLO

Oh, my beautiful warrior!

DESDEMONA

My dear Othello!

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Come, let us to the castle.
225 News, friends! Our wars are done, the Turks are
drowned.
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?—
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus,
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
230 I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
In mine own comforts.— I prithee, good Iago,
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers.
Bring thou the master to the citadel.
He is a good one, and his worthiness
235 Does challenge much respect.— Come, Desdemona,
Once more, well met at Cyprus.

Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

With him? Why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO

Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed.
Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but
for bragging and telling her fantastical lies. To love
him still for prating? Let not thy discreet heart think
it. Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she have
250 to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with
the act of sport, there should be a game to inflame it
and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in
favor, sympathy in years, manners and beauties. All
which the Moor is defective in. Now for want of these
255 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
260 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,
265 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
270 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
275 grapes. If she had been blessed, she would never have
loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

[To DESDEMONA] Honey, you will be well loved in Cyprus.
They've shown nothing but love to me. Oh, my sweet lady, I
keep on chattering on and going on and on about my
happiness.

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

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

OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.

IAGO

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

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

RODERIGO

With him? But that's not possible.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Blessed? As if. She drinks the same wine we do. If she was
really blessed, she never would have fallen in love with the

paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark that?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Well.

IAGO

295 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
300 removed, without the which there were no expectation of
our prosperity.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

305 Adieu.

Exit

IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
310 And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,
Not out of absolute lust—though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin—
But partly led to diet my revenge,
315 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leaped into my seat. The thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife.
320 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
325 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the right garb
(For I fear Cassio with my night-cape too)
Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me
For making him egregiously an ass
330 And practicing upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused.

Moor. Blessed? Nonsense! Didn't you see her playing with
Cassio's hand? Didn't you notice that?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

It was flirtation, the sort of thing that leads to foul thoughts
and lust. Their faces were so close to each other that they
almost breathed the same breath. It's horrible to think
about, Roderigo! When this kind of behavior happens, the
main event isn't far away--the physical consummation. Psh!
But, sir, let me tell you what to do. I've brought you here
from Venice. Wait for my command tonight. Cassio doesn't
know who you are. I won't be far away from you. Find some
excuse to make Cassio angry, either by speaking too loudly,
or mocking his discipline, or whatever way you want that
seems like a good idea at the time.

RODERIGO

Okay.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Goodbye.

RODERIGO exits.

IAGO

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

Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

Exit

IAGO exits.

Act 2, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter Othello's HERALD, with a proclamation

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
 5 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
 10 hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Bless the
 isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

Exit

Shakescleare Translation

Othello's MESSENGER enters with an announcement.

HERALD

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

The MESSENGER exits.

Act 2, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

Iago hath direction what to do,
 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.—
 10 Come, my dear love,
 The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue:
 That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.
 Good night.

Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

Enter IAGO

CASSIO

Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch.

IAGO

15 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.

Shakescleare Translation

OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants enter.

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

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


OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.


IAGO enters.

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

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

CASSIO

20 She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

25 An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

She is indeed perfection.

IAGO

30 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

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

CASSIO

40 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

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

Exit

IAGO

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

CASSIO

She's a most beautiful lady.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Indeed, she's a young, delicate creature.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

She really is perfect.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Where are they?

IAGO

Here at the door. Please, call them in.

CASSIO

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

CASSIO exits.

IAGO

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

That may offend the isle. But here they come.
60 If consequence do but approve my dream
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

Enter CASSIO, MONTANO and gentlemen

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

'Fore heaven, an excellent song.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO

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

CASSIO

To the health of our general!

MONTANO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

Will you hear 't again?

CASSIO

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
100 saved.

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

CASSIO

By heaven, that's an excellent song.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Are the English really so good at drinking?

IAGO

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

CASSIO

A toast, to the health of our general!

MONTANO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Why, that song is even better than the last.

IAGO

Do you want to hear it again?

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

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

ALL

Excellent well!

CASSIO

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

Exit

MONTANO

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

Exit GENTLEMEN

IAGO

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

MONTANO

But is he often thus?

IAGO

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

MONTANO

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

Enter RODERIGO

IAGO

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

Exit RODERIGO

MONTANO

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

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

ALL

Very good!

CASSIO

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

CASSIO exits.

MONTANO

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

The GENTLEMEN exit.

IAGO

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

MONTANO

But is he often this drunk?

IAGO

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

MONTANO

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

RODERIGO enters.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO exits.

MONTANO

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

So to the Moor.

IAGO

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

Cry within "Help! help!"

IAGO

But, hark! What noise?

Enter CASSIO, pursuing RODERIGO

CASSIO

Zounds! You rogue! You rascal!

MONTANO

145 What's the matter, lieutenant?

CASSIO

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

RODERIGO

Beat me?

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

150 Nay, good lieutenant! I pray you, sir, hold your hand.
(stays him)

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Come, come, you're drunk.

CASSIO

Drunk?

They fight

IAGO

155 *(aside to RODERIGO)* Away, I say, go out, and cry a
mutiny.

Exit RODERIGO

Nay, good lieutenant! Alas, gentlemen—
Help, ho!— Lieutenant—sir, Montano—
Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch indeed!

Bell rings

160 Who's that which rings the bell?—Diablo, ho!
The town will rise. Fie, Fie, lieutenant,
You'll be ashamed for ever.

Enter OTHELLO and attendants

OTHELLO

What is the matter here?

MONTANO

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

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

RODERIGO

Beat me?

CASSIO

Did you say something, you rogue? *[He hits RODERIGO]*

MONTANO

No, good lieutenant! Please, sir, stop hitting him! *[He holds
CASSIO back]*

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Stop that. You're drunk.

CASSIO

Drunk?

CASSIO fights with MONTANO.

IAGO

[To RODERIGO so that only he can hear] Go away, I tell you.
Run off and shout out that there's a brawl.

RODERIGO exits.

Hey, good lieutenant! No, gentlemen! Hey, help!
Lieutenant—sir Montano—Gentlemen, help!—Some fine
guards these guys are.

A bell rings.

Who's ringing that bell? The devil! It's going to wake up the
town. For shame, lieutenant, stop or you'll never live this
down.

OTHELLO and attendants enter.

OTHELLO

What's the matter here?

MONTANO

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

OTHELLO

Hold, for your lives!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

170 Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?
Are we turned Turks? And to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
175 Holds his soul light, he dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle
From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?—
Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,
Speak, who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

CASSIO

190 I pray you pardon me, I cannot speak.

OTHELLO

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

MONTANO

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

OTHELLO

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

OTHELLO

Stop, for God's sake!

IAGO

Stop, lieutenant! Sir Montano—Gentlemen, are you out of
your minds? Have you forgotten your sense of duty? Stop!
The general is talking to you. Stop, for shame!

OTHELLO

What is going on? What is the reason for this fight? Have we
become Turks? Are we attacking ourselves since fate
stopped the Turks from attacking us? You are Christians;
stop this barbarous brawl. The next one of you to raise a fist
must not value his life very much, for I'll kill whoever
moves. Silence that annoying bell. It will worry everyone on
the island. What is the matter, gentlemen? Honest Iago, you
look sick with worry. Tell me, who started this? I command
you to tell me, if you care for me.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

MONTANO

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

OTHELLO

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

MONTANO

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

IAGO

Touch me not so near.
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
225 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio.
Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general:
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow crying out for help
230 And Cassio following him with determined sword
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause,
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out—
235 The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose, and I returned then rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords
And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight
I ne'er might say before. When I came back—
240 For this was brief— I found them close together
At blow and thrust, even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter cannot I report.
But men are men, the best sometimes forget.
245 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received
From him that fled some strange indignity
Which patience could not pass.

OTHELLO

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

Enter DESDEMONA, attended

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

DESDEMONA

What's the matter, dear?

OTHELLO

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

MONTANO is led off

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

Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO

IAGO

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

265 Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO

Marry, heaven forbid!

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 talk like
that before. When I got back here I found these two fighting,
just as they were when you got here and separated them.
That's all I know. In his rage, Cassio wronged Montano, who
was only trying to help, but I think that Cassio must have
received some strange insult from the man who ran away
that he simply couldn't tolerate.

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA enters with attendants.

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

DESDEMONA

What's the matter, dear?

OTHELLO

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

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

MONTANO is taken away.

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

Everyone but IAGO and CASSIO exits.

IAGO


Are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Yes, beyond anything a doctor can help with.

IAGO

Oh God, no!  God forbid it!

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

CASSIO

270 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

275 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
280 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

285 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

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

CASSIO

I know not.

IAGO

Is 't possible?

CASSIO

295 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

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

IAGO

305 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

310 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.

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—if you don't have a name, then I will call you devil!

IAGO

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

CASSIO

I don't know.

IAGO

Really?

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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


CASSIO


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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

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

IAGO

315 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

I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

IAGO

320 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,
325 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

330 You advise me well.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Good night, honest Iago.

Exit

IAGO

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

Enter RODERIGO

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 now than ever
before.

CASSIO

That's good advice.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO


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


CASSIO

Good night, honest Iago.

CASSIO exits.

IAGO

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

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

RODERIGO enters.

How 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,
370 and I think the issue will be I shall have so much
experience for my pains. And so, with no money at all
and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

IAGO

How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
375 Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee.
And thou, by that small hurt, hath cashiered Cassio.
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
380 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.
385 Nay, get thee gone.

Exit RODERIGO

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

Exit

How are things going, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

How poor are those who don't have any patience! Every
wound must heal gradually. You know that our plan is
based on cleverness and not magic, and cleverness needs
time to work. Aren't things actually going well? Cassio has
beaten you up, yes. But because of this he's been fired from
his position as lieutenant. The fruits that blossom first are
the first to ripen, and before long, we'll reap the fruits of our
labors. Be patient a while longer. It's already morning, in
fact. Excitement and action make time fly. Go back to your
room and get some sleep. Go, I tell you. I'll fill you in more
later. Now, get going.

RODERIGO exits.

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

IAGO exits.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter CASSIO and MUSICIANS

CASSIO

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

They play. Enter CLOWN

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

5 How, sir? How?

CLOWN

Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

MUSICIAN

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLOWN

Oh, thereby hangs a tail.

MUSICIAN

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

Shakesclare Translation

CASSIO and MUSICIANS enter.


CASSIO

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

The MUSICIANS play a song. A CLOWN enters.

CLOWN

Gentlemen, have your instruments been in [Naples](#)? Is
that why they have that strange nasal sound?

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

MUSICIAN

What do you mean, sir?

CLOWN

Tell me, are these wind instruments?

MUSICIAN

Yes, indeed they are, sir.

CLOWN

Well, that's an problem.

MUSICIAN

What's the problem, sir?

CLOWN

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

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

Exeunt MUSICIANS

CASSIO

Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN

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

CASSIO

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

CLOWN

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

Exit CLOWN

Enter IAGO

CASSIO

30 In happy time, Iago.

IAGO

You have not been abed, then?

CASSIO

35 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

40 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.

Exit IAGO

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

Well then, sir, we will stop.

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

We don't have any silent songs, sir.

CLOWN


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


The MUSICIANS exit.

CASSIO

Do you hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN

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

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

CASSIO

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

CLOWN

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

The CLOWN exits.

IAGO enters.

CASSIO

Just in time, Iago.

IAGO

You haven't gone to bed, then?

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

I humbly thank you for this.

IAGO exits.

I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest.

Enter EMILIA

EMILIA

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

CASSIO

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


EMILIA


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

CASSIO

I am much bound to you.

Exeunt

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

 Cassio is a Florentine, and so suggests Iago is kind and honest like the people in his hometown.

EMILIA enters.

EMILIA

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

CASSIO

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

EMILIA

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

CASSIO

I owe you for this.

CASSIO and EMILIA exit.

Act 3, Scene 2

Shakespeare

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?

GENTLEMEN

We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

Shakescleare Translation

OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN enter.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

GENTLEMEN

After you, my lord.

OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN exit.

Act 3, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA

Shakescleare Translation

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

EMILIA

Madam, here comes my lord.

CASSIO

Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESDEMONA

Why, stay and hear me speak.

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Well, do your discretion.

Exit CASSIO

IAGO

Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO

What dost thou say?

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO and IAGO enter.

EMILIA

Madam, here comes my husband.

CASSIO

Madam, I'll leave now.

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Well, it's up to you.

CASSIO exits.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What are you talking about?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

40 Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I do believe 'twas he.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Who is 't you mean?

DESDEMONA

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
50 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,
I have no judgment in an honest face.
55 I prithee, call him back.

OTHELLO

Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

60 Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

DESDEMONA

But shall 't be shortly?

OTHELLO

The sooner, sweet, for you.

DESDEMONA

Shall 't be tonight at supper?

OTHELLO

No, not tonight.

DESDEMONA

65 Tomorrow dinner, then?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I think it was him.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Who do you mean?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Was that him who just left?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

DESDEMONA

But will that time be soon?

OTHELLO

All the sooner because you asked, sweetheart.

DESDEMONA

So, will that be tonight at dinner?

OTHELLO

No, not tonight.

DESDEMONA

Tomorrow at dinner, then?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

Hath ta'en your part, to have so much to do
To bring him in? Trust me, I could do much—

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Why of thy thought, Iago?

IAGO

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

OTHELLO

Oh, yes, and went between us very oft.

IAGO

Indeed?

be so hard for him to get to talk with you? Trust me, I could
do a lot—

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA and DESDEMONA exit.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

What is it, Iago?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Oh, no reason. I was just curious.

OTHELLO

Why were you curious, Iago?

IAGO

I didn't think he had met her.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Really?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Honest, my lord?

OTHELLO

Honest, ay, honest.

IAGO

My lord, for aught I know.

OTHELLO

120 What dost thou think?

IAGO

Think, my lord?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I think so too.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO

Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Good my lord, pardon me,
Though I am bound to every act of duty
155 I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.

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

IAGO

My lord, you know I care about you.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I think so too.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Certainly, men should be what they seem to be.

IAGO

Well then, I think Cassio is an honest man.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My good lord, pardon me. I must obey your every order, but I don't have to do that which even slaves aren't obligated to do—divulge my thoughts. What if my thoughts are vile and

Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false,
As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure
Wherein uncleanly apprehensions
160 Keep leets and law-days and in sessions sit
With meditations lawful?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

165 I do beseech you,
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not, that your wisdom,
170 From one that so imperfectly conceits,
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom
175 To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO

What dost thou mean?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

185 I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Ha!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

195 Oh, misery!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No! To be once in doubt
205 Is to be resolved. Exchange me for a goat

untrue? After all, what palace is there that has never let a
foul thing inside? Who has ever had a heart so pure that
impure thoughts haven't held court with lawful thoughts?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What do you mean?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I want to know your thoughts.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Ha!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Oh, what misery!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Why would say that? Do you think I would make jealousy
my whole life, and with every change in the moon find new
suspicions? No! To doubt once is to make up your mind. I'd
rather turn into a goat than devote all my time to such
overblown suspicions, like the sort of jealous man you're

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,
 210 Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances.
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous.
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
 The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt,
 For she had eyes and chose me. No, Iago,
 215 I'll see before I doubt, when I doubt, prove,
 And on the proof there is no more but this:
 Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO

I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason
 To show the love and duty that I bear you
 220 With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound,
 Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
 Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio.
 Wear your eyes thus, not jealous nor secure.
 I would not have your free and noble nature
 225 Out of self-bounty be abused. Look to 't.
 I know our country disposition well.
 In Venice they do let God see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands. Their best
 conscience
 230 Is not to leave 't undone, but keep't unknown.

OTHELLO

Dost thou say so?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

235 And so she did.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I am bound to thee forever.

IAGO

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

OTHELLO

Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I will not.

IAGO

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

describing. It wouldn't make me jealous for you to say that
 my wife is pretty, eats well, enjoys the company of others,
 speaks her mind, sings, plays music, and dances. When a
 woman is virtuous, these traits are virtuous as well. And I
 will not worry or fear that she may be unfaithful because I
 am not very desirable. She knew who she was marrying.
 No, Iago, I won't doubt Desdemona until I see something,
 and if I doubt her I'll see if I can prove it. If I get proof,
 there's only one thing to do: get rid of either my love or my
 jealousy.

IAGO

I'm glad to hear this, because now I can show my love for
 you and fulfill my duty in a more frank manner. So, hear
 what I must tell you. I don't have any proof yet. But keep an
 eye on your wife, and watch her carefully with Cassio. Look
 at her like this: don't be too jealous or too trusting. I
 wouldn't want you to get taken advantage of because of
 your noble, kind nature. Look out. I know the people of my
 country well. Women of Venice let God see the sorts of
 exploits they wouldn't dare let their husbands see. Their
 conscience doesn't stop them from doing bad things, but
 only keeps them from letting their bad deeds be known.

OTHELLO

Do you think so?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Yes, she did.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I am forever in your debt.

IAGO

I can see this has upset you a little.

OTHELLO

Not at all, not at all.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I won't.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

260 And yet how nature, erring from itself—

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

275 My lord, I take my leave. *(going)*

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

290 Fear not my government.

IAGO

I once more take my leave.

Exit

OTHELLO

This fellow's of exceeding honesty
And knows all quantities, with a learnèd spirit,
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
295 Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
300 Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. Oh, curse of marriage
That we can call these delicate creatures ours
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
305

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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


IAGO

Once again, goodbye.

IAGO exits.

OTHELLO

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

 Men whose wives cheated on them (called "cuckolds") were

And live upon the vapor of a dungeon
Than keep a corner in the thing I love
For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague to great ones,
Prerogative are they less than the base.
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.

310 Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us
When we do quicken. Look where she comes.

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

I am to blame.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

320 I have a pain upon my forehead, here.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

325 Your napkin is too little,
Let it alone.

Her handkerchief drops

Come, I'll go in with you.

DESDEMONA

I am very sorry that you are not well.

Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA

EMILIA

(picks up the handkerchief)

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

Enter IAGO

IAGO

How now! What do you here alone?

part of fate, like death. From the moment we're born we are
fated to [wear the horns](#) 🗡️. Look, here she comes.

*commonly depicted as having horns
on their heads.*

DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

My mistake.

DESDEMONA

Why do you speak so faintly? Are you okay?

OTHELLO

I have a headache, here by my [forehead](#) 🗡️.

*🗡️ Othello refers to the place from
which a cuckold's horns were
imagined to grow.*

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Your handkerchief is too small. Leave it alone.

DESDEMONA's handkerchief drops.

Come on, I'll go inside with you.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.

EMILIA

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

IAGO enters.

IAGO

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

EMILIA

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

IAGO

A thing for me? It is a common thing—

EMILIA

Ha?

IAGO

To have a foolish wife.

EMILIA345 Oh, is that all? What will you give me now
For the same handkerchief?**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

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

350 Hast stolen it from her?

EMILIANo, 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.

EMILIA355 What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest
To have me filch it?**IAGO**

Why, what is that to you?

EMILIA360 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*365 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.
Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
370 But with a little act upon the blood
Burn like the mines of sulfur.*Enter OTHELLO*375 I did say so.
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.**EMILIA**

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

IAGOYou have a thing for me? It is a common **thing** . . .**EMILIA**

What?

IAGO

. . . to have a foolish wife.

EMILIAOh, is that it? What will you give me now for the
handkerchief itself?**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

EMILIAWhat 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?


EMILIANo, she let it drop carelessly. And, since I happened to be
here, I took the opportunity to pick it up. Look, here it is.**IAGO**

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

EMILIAWhat will you do with it? Why have you been so eager for
me to steal it?**IAGO**

Why do you care?

EMILIAIf you don't have an important purpose for it, then give it
back to me. Poor Desdemona, she'll be so upset when she
realizes it's missing.**IAGO**Don't tell her what happened to it. I have a use for it. Go on,
leave me alone.*EMILIA exits.*I will leave this handkerchief in Cassio's room, and let him
find it there. Unimportant, trifling matters count as strong
evidence to the jealous. This may have significant
consequences. The Moor is already being changed by my
poisonous advice. Dangerous suspicion are like poisons
that don't even taste very bad at first, but slowly act on the
blood and burn the insides before long like unquenchable
sulfur.*OTHELLO enters.*Just as I said. Look, here he comes. No exotic plant or herb,
nor any sleeping medicine in the world, will return to you
that sweet restful sleep you enjoyed just yesterday.

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

OTHELLO

Ha! Ha! False to me?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

380 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.

IAGO

How now, my lord!

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

390 I am sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Is 't possible, my lord?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

410 Is 't come to this?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

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

OTHELLO

Ha! Ha! Desdemona, unfaithful to me?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

What is going on, my lord?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

I am sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Can this be possible, my lord?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Has it come to this?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Would? Nay, and I will.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Death and damnation! Oh!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

460 Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

IAGO

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

IAGO

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


OTHELLO


No, stay. You should be honest.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Yes, and I will be.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Death and damnation! Oh!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Give me some proof that Desdemona is disloyal.

IAGO

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

As if he plucked up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips, lay his leg
475 Over my thigh, and sigh, and kiss, and then
Cry "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"

OTHELLO

Oh, monstrous! Monstrous!

IAGO

Nay, this was but his dream.

OTHELLO

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I'll tear her all to pieces!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

If it be that—

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Yet be content.

OTHELLO

Oh, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO

505 Patience, I say. Your mind may change.

OTHELLO

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

515

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

IAGO

Calm down, now.

OTHELLO

Oh, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

I here engage my words. (*he kneels*)

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

535 I am your own for ever.

Exeunt

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

I am loyal to you forever.

OTHELLO and IAGO exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Shakespeare

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and CLOWN

DESDEMONA

Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

CLOWN

I dare not say he lies anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why, man?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

Go to. Where lodges he?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

Can anything be made of this?

CLOWN

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

Shakescleare Translation

DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and a CLOWN enter.

DESDEMONA

Do you know where Lieutenant Cassio lies?


CLOWN

I daresay he doesn't lie anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why?

CLOWN

He's a soldier, and to accuse a soldier of [lying](#)  is as bad as stabbing him.

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.

 The Clown takes Desdemona's question of where Cassio "lies"--or lodges--in the literal sense of telling falsehoods.

DESDEMONA

Can you inquire him out and be edified by report?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

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

CLOWN

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

Exit

DESDEMONA

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

20 I know not, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse
Full of crusadoes. And but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough

25 To put him to ill thinking.

EMILIA

Is he not jealous?

DESDEMONA

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born
Drew all such humors from him.

EMILIA

Look where he comes.

Enter OTHELLO

DESDEMONA

30 I will not leave him now till Cassio
Be called to him.—How is 't with you, my lord?

OTHELLO

Well, my good lady.— (*aside*) Oh, hardness to dissemble!—
How do you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Well, my good lord.

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

It hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

OTHELLO

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart.
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,
Much castigation, exercise devout,
40 For here's a young and sweating devil here,
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,

DESDEMONA

Can you ask around and find out?

CLOWN

I will interrogate all the world about him, and make everyone answer my questions.

DESDEMONA

Find him and tell him to come to me. Tell him I have persuaded my husband on his behalf, and I hope that everything will be resolved.

CLOWN

To do that is within the scope of a man's ability. And therefore I'll give it a try.

The CLOWN exits.

DESDEMONA

Where could I have lost that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

I don't know, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I would rather have lost my purse full of coins.
Losing my handkerchief would be enough to make my husband jealous, if he were less loyal and more of a jealous man.

EMILIA

Is he not a jealous man?

DESDEMONA

Who, Othello? I think he got so much sunlight where he was born that it burned the jealousy out of him.

EMILIA

Look, he's coming here.

OTHELLO enters.

DESDEMONA

I won't stop bothering him now until he reinstates Cassio.

[To OTHELLO] How are you doing, my husband?

OTHELLO

I'm doing well, my good lady.

[To himself] Oh, it's so hard to pretend I'm fine!

[To DESDEMONA] How are you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Well, my good husband.

OTHELLO

Give me your hand. It's moist, my lady.

DESDEMONA

Yes, because I am young and haven't experienced any sorrow.

OTHELLO

Warm and moist skin means that you are fertile and have a generous heart. This hand of yours suggests that you need to be secluded, to fast and to pray. You need some discipline, for someone with these kinds of sweating hands commonly rebels against authority. It's a good hand, an open one.

A frank one.

DESDEMONA

You may indeed say so,
45 For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

OTHELLO

A liberal hand. The hearts of old gave hands,
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

DESDEMONA

I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

OTHELLO

What promise, chuck?

DESDEMONA

50 I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO

That which I gave you.

DESDEMONA

55 I have it not about me.

OTHELLO

Not?

DESDEMONA

No, indeed, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give,
60 She was a charmer and could almost read
The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made gift of it, my father's eye
65 Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me
And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,
To give it her. I did so, and take heed on 't,
Make it a darling like your precious eye.
70 To lose 't or give 't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA

Is 't possible?

OTHELLO

'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl, that had numbered in the world
75 The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sewed the work.
The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,
And it was dyed in mummy which the skillful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESDEMONA

80 Indeed? Is 't true?

DESDEMONA

You could say that, for it was that hand that gave you my
heart.

OTHELLO

A giving hand. It used to be that people's hearts controlled
whether they gave someone their hand in marriage. But
now people give away their hands without consulting their
hearts.

DESDEMONA

I can't speak to that. Now come on, remember your
promise.

OTHELLO

What promise, dear?

DESDEMONA

I have sent someone to tell Cassio to come speak to you.

OTHELLO

I have a cold and a runny nose. Lend me your handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO

No, give me the one I gave to you.

DESDEMONA

I don't have it with me.

OTHELLO

You don't?

DESDEMONA

No, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's not good. My mother was given that handkerchief by
an Egyptian woman who could read people's minds. She
told my mother that as long as she had the handkerchief,
she would be desirable and my father would be helplessly
in love with her, but if she lost it or gave it away, my father
would hate her and he would go after other women. Before
my mother died, she gave the handkerchief to me and told
me to give it to my wife whenever I married. I did this, and
so keep it close like a precious treasure. To lose that
handkerchief or give it away would be a sin greater than
any other.

DESDEMONA

Is this true?

OTHELLO

It is true. There's magic in the sewing. A prophetess who
lived to the age of two hundred sewed the handkerchief
while she was in a trance. The worms that made the silk
were magical, and it was tinted in dye extracted from
embalmed virgins' hearts.

DESDEMONA

Really? Is this true?

OTHELLO

Most veritable, therefore look to 't well.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Ha! Wherefore?

DESDEMONA

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Bless us!

OTHELLO

Say you?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

How!

DESDEMONA

90 I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO

Fetch 't, let me see 't.

DESDEMONA

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit.
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO

95 Fetch me the handkerchief—my mind misgives.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

100 A man that all his time
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,
Shared dangers with you—

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO

Zounds!

Exit

EMILIA

105 Is not this man jealous?

DESDEMONA

I ne'er saw this before.
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief,
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

OTHELLO

Absolutely, so look after that handkerchief carefully.

DESDEMONA

God, I wish I'd never seen it!

OTHELLO

Aha! Why do you wish that?

DESDEMONA

Why are you talking in fits in starts—and so impulsively, too?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

God help me.

OTHELLO

What do you say?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

What?

DESDEMONA

I'm telling you, it's not lost.

OTHELLO

Go get it, then. Let me see it.

DESDEMONA

Well, sir, I could do that, but I won't right now. You're trying to trick me so I forget about persuading you regarding Cassio. Please, let Cassio be your lieutenant again.

OTHELLO

Bring me the handkerchief. I am worried.

DESDEMONA

Come on. You'll never find a better man for the job than Cassio.

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

Cassio has always had good fortune because of your love for him. He and you have faced dangers together.

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

To tell the truth, it's all your fault.

OTHELLO

Christ!

OTHELLO exits.

EMILIA

Doesn't that look like a jealous man?

DESDEMONA

I've never seen him like this. There really must be some magic in that handkerchief. I am really sad and unlucky that I lost it.

EMILIA

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

- 110 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.

DESEMONA

- 115 How now, good Cassio, what's the news with you?

CASSIO

- Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you
That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I, with all the office of my heart
120 Entirely honor. I would not be delayed.
If my offence be of such mortal kind
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purposed merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,
125 But to know so must be my benefit.
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,
And shut myself up in some other course,
To fortune's alms.

DESEMONA

- Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio,
130 My advocacy is not now in tune.
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him
Were he in favor as in humor altered.
So help me every spirit sanctified
As I have spoken for you all my best
135 And stood within the blank of his displeasure
For my free speech. You must awhile be patient.
What I can do I will, and more I will
Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.

IAGO

Is my lord angry?

EMILIA

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

IAGO

- Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon
When it hath blown his ranks into the air
And, like the devil, from his very arm
145 Puffed his own brother— and is he angry?
Something of moment then, I will go meet him.
There's matter in 't indeed, if he be angry.

DESEMONA

I prithee, do so.

Exit IAGO

- Something, sure, of state,
150 Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
Hath puddled his clear spirit, and in such cases
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so,
155 For let our finger ache and it endues
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,
Nor of them look for such observances
As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
160

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.

DESEMONA

How are you, Cassio? What's going on with you?

CASSIO

Madam, only my case from before. I beg you to use your
virtuous powers to help me return to the good graces of
Othello, whom I honor with all of my heart. I want this to
happen quickly. If my offense was so bad that neither my
past service nor my present regret, nor the future good
deeds I promise can buy back his love, then I at least would
like to know this now. If that is the case then I will pretend
to be content, and settle on a new career to try my fortunes
there.

DESEMONA

Alas, dearest Cassio, my pleading on your behalf isn't
working right now. My husband is not acting like himself. If
his physical appearance were as transformed as his inner
character is now, I wouldn't even recognize him. So help me
God, I have spoken up for you as best I could and he has
looked down on me because of it. You must be patient for a
while. I will do what I can, and I will even do more than I
would dare do for myself. Let that be enough for you.

IAGO

Is Othello angry?

EMILIA

He was just here, and he is certainly strangely bothered.

IAGO

Can he be angry? I have seen him remain calm when a
cannon has blown his soldiers into the air and, like the
devil, blown his own brother out of his arms. And *now* he's
angry? It must be about a serious matter. I will go see him. If
he's angry, it must really be something significant.

DESEMONA

Please do go see him.

IAGO exits.

It must be something government-related—either having to
do with Venice or some secret thing that's now come to
light in Cyprus—that has put him in this mood. When this
happens, men take out their tempers on less important
things, when they're really upset with bigger issues. That's
what happens when we hurt our finger, and it makes other
parts of our bodies seem to hurt. No, we shouldn't idolize
men, or expect them to always be as nice as they are on
their wedding day. Oh, Emilia, curse me: I'm so foolish that I
thought Othello was being unkind, but I was clearly falsely
accusing him.

I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul,
But now I find I had suborned the witness,
And he's indicted falsely.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

Heaven keep the monster from Othello's mind!

EMILIA

Lady, amen.

DESDEMONA

I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk hereabout.
175 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?
180 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
185 More tedious than the dial eightscore times!
Oh weary reckoning!

CASSIO

Pardon me, Bianca,
I have this while with leaden thoughts been pressed,
But I shall, in a more continue time,
190 Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
(*giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief*)
Take me this work out.

BIANCA

O Cassio, whence came this?
This is some token from a newer friend!
195 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
From whence you have them. You are jealous now
200 That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.
No, in good troth, Bianca.

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, my 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

My lady, I humbly thank you.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.

BIANCA enters.

BIANCA

Hello, my friend Cassio!

CASSIO

What are you doing away from home? How are you, my
most beautiful Bianca? I was actually just on my way to
your house, my sweet love.

BIANCA

And I was on my way to yours, Cassio. Why have you been
away for a week? Seven days and nights? One hundred and
sixty-eight hours? And hours that lovers spend apart pass
eight times more slowly than normal. How tiresome to
count the hours going by!

CASSIO

Pardon me, Bianca. I've been busy with heavy thoughts.
But, when I have some time, I will make up for being away
for so long. Sweet Bianca, copy out the pattern on this. [*He*
gives her DESDEMONA's handkerchief]

BIANCA

Oh, Cassio, where did you get this from? This is some gift
from another woman! Now I see why you haven't come to
see me. Has it come to this? Well, well, well.

CASSIO

Oh please, woman. Throw your vile guesses back to hell,
where they came from. You are jealous now and think that
this handkerchief is from some mistress. No, in truth, it
isn't, Bianca.

BIANCA

Why, whose is it?

CASSIO

I know not neither, I found it in my chamber.
I like the work well. Ere it be demanded,
205 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,
210 To have him see me womaned.

BIANCA

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
215 And say if I shall see you soon at night.

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

'Tis very good. I must be circumstanced.

Exeunt

BIANCA

Whose is it, then?

CASSIO

I don't know. I found it in my bedroom, and I like the
pattern on it. Before someone asks for it back, I want to
have the pattern copied. Take it and do it, and leave me
alone for a bit.

BIANCA

Leave you! Why?

CASSIO

I am waiting on the general here, and I don't think it would
be very good for him to see me with a woman.

BIANCA

Why?

CASSIO

It's not that I don't love you.

BIANCA

But that you don't love me. Please come with me just a little
ways, and tell me if I will see you soon at night.

CASSIO

I can't go with you very far, for I must wait here. But I will
see you soon.

BIANCA

That's good enough. I have to take what I can get given the
circumstances.

BIANCA and CASSIO exit.

Act 4, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

IAGO

Will you think so?

OTHELLO

Think so, Iago?

IAGO

What,
To kiss in private?

OTHELLO

5 An unauthorized kiss!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

Shakescleare Translation

OTHELLO and IAGO enter.

IAGO

Do you think so?

OTHELLO

Think what, Iago?

IAGO

What, that they kissed in private?

OTHELLO

An inappropriate kiss!

IAGO

Or because she was naked in bed with a friend for just an
hour or more, not meaning any harm?

OTHELLO

Iago, naked in bed and not meaning any harm? That would
be like tricking the devil. If they were acting this way but
had virtuous intentions, they were tempted by the devil and
they were tempting God to damn them.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What then?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.
Thou saidst—Oh, it comes o'er my memory,
As doth the raven o'er the infectious house,
25 Boding to all—he had my handkerchief.

IAGO

Ay, what of that?

OTHELLO

That's not so good now.

IAGO

What if I had said I had seen him do you wrong?
Or heard him say—as knaves be such abroad,
30 Who having, by their own importunate suit,
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,
Convincèd or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab—

OTHELLO

Hath he said any thing?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What hath he said?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What? what?

IAGO

40 Lie—

OTHELLO

With her?

IAGO

With her, on her, what you will.

OTHELLO

Lie with her? lie on her? We say "lie on her" when they
belie her! Lie with her—that's fulsome.
45 Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief! To confess, and
be hanged for his labor. First to be hanged, and then to
confess—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest
herself in such shadowing passion without some

IAGO

As long as they haven't actually *done* anything, it's just a
pardonable sin. But, if I give my wife a handkerchief . . .

OTHELLO

What then?

IAGO

Then it belongs to her, my lord. And since it is hers, she may
give it to any man she wants.

OTHELLO

Her honor belongs to her, too. Can she give that away, as
well?

IAGO

Her honor is part of her inner essence that can't be seen.
Often people have an honorable reputation but aren't really
honorable. But as for the handkerchief—

OTHELLO

By heaven, I wish I had forgotten about it. You told me—oh,
it comes back to my memory, like the bad omen of a raven
coming over a house where someone is sick—that Cassio
had my handkerchief.

IAGO

Yes, so what?

OTHELLO

That is not so good, now.

IAGO

What if I had told you that I saw him do you wrong? Or what
if I heard him say so—there are some villains out there who,
once they have seduced or satisfied some mistress with
their flirting and doting, can't help but brag about it—

OTHELLO

Has he said something?

IAGO

My lord, he has—but you can be sure that he'll deny it.

OTHELLO

What did he say?

IAGO

Well, he said that he did—I don't know what he did.

OTHELLO

What? What?

IAGO

He said he did lie—

OTHELLO

With Desdemona?

IAGO

With her, on her, however you want to say it.

OTHELLO

Lie with her? Lie on her? To lie *on* someone is to tell lies
about that person! To lie *with* her—that's obscene. First the
handkerchief, and now this confession! Should he confess
first and then be executed? No, I'll kill him first and let him
confess later. I am trembling with anger, and nature
wouldn't make my body do this without some reason. It

instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish!

50 Noses, ears, and lips. Is 't possible?
Confess!—Handkerchief!—Oh, devil!—

Falls in a trance

IAGO

Work on, My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught,

And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,

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

Enter CASSIO

How now, Cassio!

CASSIO

What's the matter?

IAGO

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.

60 This is his second fit. He had one yesterday.

CASSIO

Rub him about the temples.

IAGO

No, forbear.

The lethargy must have his quiet course.

If not, he foams at mouth and by and by

65 Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,
He will recover straight. When he is gone
I would on great occasion speak with you.

Exit CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

70 Dost thou mock me?

IAGO

I mock you not, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

OTHELLO

A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO

There's many a beast then in a populous city,

75 And many a civil monster.

OTHELLO

Did he confess it?

IAGO

Good sir, be a man,

Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked

May draw with you. There's millions now alive

80 That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.

Oh, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,

To lip a wanton in a secure couch,

And to suppose her chaste. No, let me know,

85 And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

must be more than a rumor if it's making me tremble like this. Ugh! Noses, ears, and lips. Could this be true? That he would admit to it—and the handkerchief! Oh, devil!

OTHELLO is afflicted with a seizure.

IAGO

[To himself] Keep on working, my harmful medicine, keep on working! This is how gullible fools are tricked, and many trustworthy and chaste women, completely innocent, are punished in situations like this.

[To OTHELLO] Hey! My lord! My lord! Othello!

CASSIO enters.

Hey there, Cassio!

CASSIO

What's the matter?

IAGO

My lord has fallen into a seizure. This is the second time he's had one of these fits. He had one yesterday.

CASSIO

Rub his temples.

IAGO


No, hold on. We have to let the fit run its course. Otherwise he'll foam at the mouth and break out in a fit of savage madness. Look, he's moving. Stay away for a bit. He'll recover soon. When he is gone, I would really like to talk to you in private.

CASSIO exits.

How are you, General? Have you hurt your head?

OTHELLO

Are you mocking me ?

 Othello thinks that Iago might be referring to Othello having been cuckolded, as growing horns could be described as "hurting one's head".

IAGO

No, I swear to God! I wish you would bear your misfortune like a man!

OTHELLO

A man who's been cheated on isn't a man; he has the cuckold's horns, and so is a monstrous beast.

IAGO

Well then, there are many monsters in big cities, and many monsters that pass for men.

OTHELLO

Did Cassio confess to it?

IAGO

Good sir, be a man. Think about it: every married man has experienced what you're going through. There are millions of wives now living who sleep in disgraced beds which they swear belong only to their husbands. But you're better off. It's even worse—a curse from hell—to kiss your wife in bed thinking that she is chaste when she isn't. No, I'd rather know if my wife were cheating on me. Then I'd know exactly what sort of person I am and what sort of person my wife is.

OTHELLO

Oh, thou art wise! 'Tis certain.

IAGO

Stand you awhile apart,
 Confine yourself but in a patient list.
 Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief—
 90 A passion most resulting such a man—
 Cassio came hither. I shifted him away
 And laid good 'scuses upon your ecstasy,
 Bade him anon return and here speak with me,
 The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
 95 And mark the fliers, the gibes, and notable scorns
 That dwell in every region of his face.
 For I will make him tell the tale anew
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when
 He hath, and is again to cope your wife.
 100 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience,
 Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,
 And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO

Dost thou hear, Iago?
 I will be found most cunning in my patience,
 105 But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

IAGO

That's not amiss,
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

OTHELLO withdraws

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
 A huswife that by selling her desires
 110 Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature
 That dotes on Cassio, as 'tis the strumpet's plague
 To beguile many and be beguiled by one.
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain
 From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

Enter CASSIO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Alas, poor caitiff!

OTHELLO

125 Look how he laughs already!

IAGO

I never knew woman love man so.

OTHELLO

Oh, you are certainly wise!

IAGO

Stay away from her for a while. Be patient. While you were overwhelmed by your grief—a passionate feeling you are prone to—Cassio was here. I sent him away and made some excuse for your fit of passion. I told him to come back here and speak with me, and he promised to do so. Hide nearby and watch the sneers and visible expressions of scorn all over his face, as I ask him to tell me again about where, how, how often, how long ago, and when he has slept and will again sleep with your wife. Just watch his expression. Please, be patient, or else you'll show that you are completely ruled by your emotions and not a real man.

OTHELLO

Listen to me, Iago: I will be patient and cunning. But—do you hear me?—I will take violent action later.

IAGO

That's not wrong. But wait for a bit. Will you step back and hide?

OTHELLO steps back and hides, so that he cannot hear IAGO but can still see him.

Now I will question Cassio about Bianca, a loose girl that makes a living by selling herself to men. The whore loves Cassio, and it's her bad luck to attract many men but be attracted to just one. When he is asked about her, he can't help but laugh. Here he comes.

CASSIO enters.

[To himself] As Cassio smiles while we talk, Othello will go mad. And his unrestrained jealousy will misinterpret poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and jovial behavior.

[To CASSIO] How are you doing now, lieutenant?

CASSIO

I'm doing worse now since you called me lieutenant, when it's killing me that I don't have that title anymore.

IAGO

Ask Desdemona to help you, and you'll surely get it back.

[To CASSIO so only he can hear] Now, if it were Bianca who had the power to help you, I imagine you'd be running off to her as fast as you could!


CASSIO


Ha, that poor woman!

OTHELLO

Look how he's laughing already!

IAGO

I've never seen a woman love a man as much as [she](#)  loves you.

 Iago refers to Bianca in this conversation with Cassio, but Othello—not having heard well the first time—believes Iago and Cassio are referring to Desdemona.

CASSIO

Alas, poor rogue, I think indeed she loves me.

OTHELLO

Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

IAGO

Do you hear, Cassio?

OTHELLO

130 Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er. Go to, well said, well said.

IAGO

She gives it out that you shall marry her.
Do you intend it?

CASSIO

Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

135 Do ye triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Prithee say true!

IAGO

I am a very villain else.

OTHELLO

Have you scored me? Well.

CASSIO

145 This is the monkey's own giving out. She is persuaded I
will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not
out of my promise.

OTHELLO

Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.

CASSIO

150 She was here even now. She haunts me in every place. I
was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain
Venetians, and thither comes the bauble and, by this
hand, she falls me thus about my neck—

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

155 So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so shakes, and
pulls me! Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. Oh, I
see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw
it to.

CASSIO

Alas, the poor girl, I think she really does love me.

OTHELLO

Now he denies his crime a bit, and laughs it off.

IAGO

Have you heard, Cassio?

OTHELLO

Now Iago is asking Cassio to tell the story again. Go on, well
said, well said.

IAGO

She is saying that you're going to marry her. Do you intend
to?

CASSIO

Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Are you celebrating like a triumphant Roman general? Are
you triumphing after your conquest?

CASSIO

Me, marry her? A prostitute? Please, think a little more
highly of me; don't think I'm that stupid. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Aha, so there! He's laughing like he's won her over!

IAGO

Really, rumor has it that you are going to marry her.

CASSIO

Please, is that true?

IAGO

I swear it is, or else I'm a villain.

OTHELLO

Have you wronged me? Well, then.

CASSIO

The monkey herself must be spreading this rumor. She is
convinced I will marry her, driven by her own love and self-
flattery. I haven't promised her anything.

OTHELLO

Iago is signaling to me. Now Cassio is beginning the story.

CASSIO

She was here just now. She follows me everywhere. The
other day I was talking along the shore with some
Venetians, and the silly girl came to me and—I swear—she
hangs around my neck like this—

OTHELLO

He looks like he's crying out, "Oh dear Cassio!" That's what
his gestures indicate.

CASSIO

She hangs on me like this and cries on my shoulder and
shakes and pulls me like this! Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Now he's talking about how she dragged him to my
bedroom. Oh, Cassio, I'm going to cut off your nose and
throw it to some dog.

CASSIO

Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO

160 Before me! Look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA

CASSIO

'Tis such another fitchew. Marry, a perfumed one.—
What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIANCA

Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you mean
by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a
165 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
170 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

IAGO

175 After her, after her.

CASSIO

I must, she'll rail in the street else.

IAGO

Will you sup there?

CASSIO

Yes, I intend so.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Prithce come, will you?

IAGO

Go to! Say no more.

Exit CASSIO

OTHELLO

(advancing) How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTHELLO

185 Oh Iago!

CASSIO

Well, I must stop spending time with her.

IAGO

My goodness! Look, she's coming.

BIANCA enters.

CASSIO

Just the prostitute we were talking about. And she's
wearing perfume. Why are you following me around like
this?

BIANCA

Let the devil and his wife follow you around! Why did you
give me that handkerchief just recently? I was an idiot to
accept it. You want me to copy the embroidery? What a
likely story, that you found it in your room and didn't know
who left it there! This is a gift from some woman, and you
want *me* to copy out the embroidery? There, give it back to
your new mistress. Wherever you got it from, I'm not
copying any of it.

CASSIO

What's the matter, my sweet Bianca? What's the matter?

OTHELLO

By heaven, that's my handkerchief!

BIANCA

If you will come have dinner with me tonight, then okay. If
you don't come to dinner then just keep on waiting until I
call for you next—which will be never.

BIANCA exits.

IAGO

Go after her, go after her.

CASSIO

I must. Otherwise, she'll make a ruckus in the street.

IAGO

Will you go to dinner with her?

CASSIO

Yes, I intend to go.

IAGO

Well, I'd like to get a chance to see you later, because I really
would like to speak with you.

CASSIO

Please come to the diner, then. Will you?

IAGO

Stop talking and go after her!

CASSIO exits.

OTHELLO

[Coming forward out of hiding] How should I murder him,
Iago?

IAGO

Did you see how he laughed about his crime?

OTHELLO

Oh, Iago!

IAGO

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO

Was that mine?

IAGO

190 Yours by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

OTHELLO

I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman!

IAGO

Nay, you must forget that.

OTHELLO

195 Ay, let her rot and perish and be damned tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone. I strike it and it hurts my hand. Oh, the world hath not a sweeter creature, she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

IAGO

Nay, that's not your way.

OTHELLO

200 Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate with her needle, an admirable musician. Oh, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

IAGO

She's the worse for all this.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Ay, too gentle.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?

IAGO

Oh, 'tis foul in her.

OTHELLO

With mine officer!

IAGO

215 That's fouler.

OTHELLO

Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again—This night, Iago!

IAGO

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO

Was that my handkerchief?

IAGO

I swear on my hand, it was yours. And look how much he cares about your foolish wife! She gave him her handkerchief, and he turns around and gives it to a whore.

OTHELLO

If I could, I'd spend nine years killing him slowly. She was a fine woman! A beautiful woman! A sweet woman!

IAGO

You must forget about that.

OTHELLO

Yes, let her rot and perish and go to hell tonight, for she will not live past tonight. No, my heart has turned to stone. If I beat my chest, it hurts my hand. Oh, there's not a sweeter creature in the world! She could be the wife of an emperor and he'd obey her commands.

IAGO

No, that's not like you to obey a woman.

OTHELLO

Let her be hanged! I'm just calling her what she is now. Such a skilled sewer, such an admirable musician. Oh, she could sing so well she'd charm a savage bear to gentleness! She's so clever and intelligent!

IAGO

All these traits make her even worse.

OTHELLO

Oh, they make her a thousand times worse! And she has such a gentle nature!

IAGO

Yes, too gentle.

OTHELLO

That's certainly true. But what a pity this is, Iago! Oh, Iago, the pity!

IAGO

If you still care about her after her sinfulness, give her permission to cheat on you. If it doesn't bother you, it doesn't harm anyone.

OTHELLO

I will chop her up into little bits! Cheat on me, will she?

IAGO

Oh, it's really a foul thing for her to do.

OTHELLO

With my own lieutenant!

IAGO

That's even worse.

OTHELLO

Iago, get me some poison this very night. I won't speak to her, so her body and beauty don't trick my mind again. Get me the poison tonight, Iago!

IAGO

220 Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed, even
the bed she hath contaminated.

OTHELLO

Good, good, the justice of it pleases! Very good!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Excellent good.

A trumpet within

225 What trumpet is that same?

IAGO

I warrant something from Venice. 'Tis Lodovico, this,
comes from the duke. See, your wife's with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

LODOVICO

Save you, worthy general!

OTHELLO

With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO

230 The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

(gives him a letter)

OTHELLO

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

DESDEMONA

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO

I am very glad to see you, signior. Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO

I thank you. How does lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO

235 Lives, sir.

DESDEMONA

Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breach, but you shall make all well.

OTHELLO

Are you sure of that?

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

240 *(reads)* "This fail you not to do, as you will—"

LODOVICO

He did not call, he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

IAGO

Don't poison her. Strangle her in her bed--the very bed she
contaminated with her affair.

OTHELLO

Good idea! Poetic justice! Very good!

IAGO

And as for Cassio, let me handle him. You'll hear more
about it by midnight.

OTHELLO

Very good.

A trumpet sounds off-stage.

What is that trumpet?

IAGO

It must be some news from Venice. Here comes Lodovico,
from the Duke. Look, your wife is with him.

LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and attendants enter.

LODOVICO

Hello, noble General.

OTHELLO

Hello, sir.

LODOVICO

The Duke and Senators of Venice send their greetings.


LODOVICO gives OTHELLO a letter.

OTHELLO

I kiss the letter that contains their commands.

DESDEMONA

And what's the news, good [cousin](#) Lodovico?

 *Lodovico, like Gratiano, is one of
Desdemona's father Brabantio's
kinsmen.*

IAGO

I am very glad to see you, sir. Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO

Thank you. How is Lieutenant Cassio doing?

IAGO

He's alive, sir.

DESDEMONA

Cousin, there's a rift now between my husband and him.
But you can mend it.

OTHELLO

Are you sure about that?

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

[Reading the letter] "Don't fail to do this, since you will—"

LODOVICO

He wasn't talking to you, Desdemona. He's busy reading the
letter. Is there really a dispute between my lord and Cassio?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

245 Fire and brimstone!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

Are you wise?

DESDEMONA

What, is he angry?

LODOVICO

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

DESDEMONA

By my troth, I am glad on 't.

OTHELLO

Indeed!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

255 I am glad to see you mad.

DESDEMONA

Why, sweet Othello—

OTHELLO

Devil! *(strikes her)*

DESDEMONA

I have not deserved this.

LODOVICO

260 My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw 't. 'Tis very much.
Make her amends, she weeps.

OTHELLO

265 Oh, devil, devil!
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

Mistress!

DESDEMONA

270 My lord?

OTHELLO

What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Who, I, my lord?

DESDEMONA

Yes, a most unhappy one. I would do anything to repair
their friendship, because of my love for Cassio.

OTHELLO

Fire and brimstone!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

Do you have any sense?

DESDEMONA

What, is he angry?

LODOVICO

Maybe the letter upset him. I think they've ordered him to
return home and leave Cassio in charge here.

DESDEMONA

Truthfully, I'm glad about that.

OTHELLO

Really!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

I'm glad to see that you are angry.

DESDEMONA

Why, sweet Othello—

OTHELLO

You devil! *[He hits DESDEMONA]*

DESDEMONA

I haven't done anything to deserve this.

LODOVICO

My lord, no one in Venice would believe you just did that--
even if I swore that I saw it with my own eyes. This is no
small matter. Apologize to her. She's crying.

OTHELLO

Oh, devil, devil! If the whole world were filled with the tears
of women, they'd all be fake tears! Get out of my sight!

DESDEMONA

I will not stay, if it offends you.

LODOVICO

She is truly an obedient lady. I beg you, my lord, call her
back.

OTHELLO

Mistress!

DESDEMONA

Yes, my lord?

OTHELLO

What do you want with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Me, my lord?

OTHELLO

Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.
 Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
 275 And turn again. And she can weep, sir, weep.
 And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
 Very obedient. (To *DESDEMONA*) Proceed you in your
 tears.
 (To *LODOVICO*) Concerning this, sir— (To *DESDEMONA*) Oh,
 280 well-painted passion!
 (To *LODOVICO*) I am commanded home. (To *DESDEMONA*) Get
 you away,
 I'll send for you anon. (To *LODOVICO*) Sir, I obey the
 mandate
 285 And will return to Venice. (To *DESDEMONA*) Hence,
 avaunt!

Exit DESDEMONA

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight
 I do entreat that we may sup together.
 You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and monkeys!

Exit

LODOVICO

290 Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
 Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature
 Whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue
 The shot of accident nor dart of chance
 Could neither graze nor pierce?

IAGO

295 He is much changed.

LODOVICO

Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?

IAGO

He's that he is. I may not breathe my censure
 What he might be. If what he might be is not,
 I would to heaven he were!

LODOVICO

300 What? Strike his wife?

IAGO

'Faith, that was not so well. Yet would I knew
 That stroke would prove the worst!

LODOVICO

Is it his use?
 Or did the letters work upon his blood
 305 And new-create his fault?

IAGO

Alas, alas!
 It is not honesty in me to speak
 What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,
 And his own courses will denote him so
 310 That I may save my speech. Do but go after
 And mark how he continues.

LODOVICO

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

Exeunt

OTHELLO

Yes, you're the one who wanted me to have her turn around
 and come back here. She can turn around all right; she's
 very good at turning on you. And she can weep, sir. And
 she's obedient, as you say, very obedient.

[To *DESDEMONA*] Keep on crying.

[To *LODOVICO*] About this letter, sir.

[To *DESDEMONA*] Oh you are pretending really well!

[To *LODOVICO*] I have been ordered to come home.


[To *DESDEMONA*] Go away. I'll call for you later.

[To *LODOVICO*] Sir, I obey my orders and will return to
 Venice.

[To *DESDEMONA*] Get away from here! Away!

DESDEMONA exits.

Cassio will take over for me here. And, sir, tonight I ask you
 to have dinner together with me. Welcome to Cyprus, sir.
 Oh, goats and monkeys!

 These two animals were associated with sexual licentiousness.

OTHELLO exits.

LODOVICO

Is this the same noble Moor that our whole senate thinks so
 highly of? Is this the person who supposedly could not be
 shaken by passion? The man whose solid virtue was
 invulnerable to anything chance or fortune could throw at
 it?

IAGO

He has changed a lot.

LODOVICO

Does he still have his wits? Has he gone crazy, too?

IAGO

He is as he is. I can't say a bad word about what he might be
 like. If he is not what he has the potential to be, then I wish
 to heaven he was!

LODOVICO

What was that about? Why did he hit his wife?

IAGO

That really was not so good. But I wish I could say that was
 the worst he'll do.

LODOVICO

Does he usually hit her like that? Or did the letter he was
 reading raise his temper and make him so angry that he hit
 her?

IAGO

Alas, alas! It is not right for me to tell you about what I have
 seen and learned. You will see for yourself, and his actions
 will show you what he is like, so that I don't have to tell you.
 Go follow after him, and just watch how he acts.

LODOVICO

I'm sorry I misjudged him.

LODOVICO and IAGO exit.

Act 4, Scene 2

Shakespeare

*Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA***OTHELLO**

You have seen nothing then?

EMILIA

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

OTHELLO

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

EMILIA

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
5 Each syllable that breath made up between them.

OTHELLO

What, did they never whisper?

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

Nor send you out o' th' way?

EMILIA

Never.

OTHELLO

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

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's strange.

EMILIA

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other
15 Remove your thought, it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true
There's no man happy. The purest of their wives
20 Is foul as slander.

OTHELLO

Bid her come hither. Go.

Exit EMILIA

She says enough, yet she's a simple bawd
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,
A closet, lock and key, of villainous secrets.

25 And yet she'll kneel and pray, I have seen her do 't.

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA***DESDEMONA**

My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO

Pray you, chuck, come hither.

Shakescleare Translation

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

You haven't seen anything, then?

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

But you've seen Desdemona and Cassio together.

EMILIA

But I didn't see anything wrong then, and I heard every syllable they uttered to each other.

OTHELLO

What, did they never whisper so you couldn't hear?

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

And they never sent you away?

EMILIA

Never.

OTHELLO

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.

 Here, Emilia makes a biblical reference to God's punishment of the serpent after the Fall of Man.

DESDEMONA

What is your pleasure?

OTHELLO

Let me see your eyes.

30 Look in my face.

DESDEMONA

What horrible fancy's this?

OTHELLO

(*to EMILIA*) Some of your function, mistress,
Leave procreants alone and shut the door.
Cough or cry "hem" if any body come.

35 Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch!

Exit EMILIA

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Why, what art thou?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

45 Heaven doth truly know it.

OTHELLO

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

DESDEMONA

To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?

OTHELLO

Ah, Desdemona, away, away, away!

DESDEMONA

50 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.

OTHELLO

55 Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction, had they rained
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips,
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
60 I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me
The fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow and moving finger at!
Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.
65 But there where I have garnered up my heart,
Where either I must live or bear no life,
The fountain from the which my current runs
Or else dries up—to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
70 To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

DESDEMONA

What would you like?


OTHELLO


Let me see your eyes. Look into my face.

DESDEMONA

What horrible things are you imagining?

OTHELLO

[*To EMILIA*] Do your job, mistress, and leave us lovers alone.
Shut the door. Cough or say "ahem" if anyone comes.
That's your job, your [job](#) ! Go!

 *Othello's description of Emilia's job compares Emilia to the keeper of a brothel.*

EMILIA exits.

DESDEMONA

I beg you here on my knees--tell me, what do you mean by your speech? I can see that you are angry, but I don't understand what you mean.

OTHELLO

Well, what are you?

DESDEMONA

I am your wife, my lord. Your true and loyal wife.

OTHELLO

Come and swear that's true, damn yourself by making a false oath. Otherwise, since you look so angelic, the devils themselves would be afraid to seize you. So doubly damn yourself by swearing falsely that you are honest!

DESDEMONA

Heaven knows the truth.

OTHELLO

Heaven knows the truth: that you are false as hell.

DESDEMONA

To whom, my lord? With whom have I been unfaithful? How am I false?

OTHELLO

Ah, Desdemona, go away, away, away!

DESDEMONA

Alas, this is a sad day. Why are you crying? Am I the cause of these tears, my lord? If you suspect that my father has something to do with your being called back home, don't blame me for it. If he has cut ties with you, well then he has cut ties with me, too.

OTHELLO

If God had decided to give me some affliction, if he had put all kinds of shameful sores on my bare head, had made me extremely poor, and made me a prisoner with no hope, I would have found a way to endure it. But, alas, to make me a laughing-stock forever, and an object of scorn! And yet, I could even endure that too, very well. But to do something to my heart, on which my life depends, which pumps all the blood through my veins, to dry it up and turn into a basin for foul toads to wallow and couple in! The very god of Patience could look at my heart with her young, rosy lips, and her complexion would turn grim as hell!

Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin,—
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DESEMONA

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO

Oh, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,
75 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er
been born!

DESEMONA

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO

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

DESEMONA

By heaven, you do me wrong!

OTHELLO

Are you not a strumpet?

DESEMONA

No, as I am a Christian.
If to preserve this vessel for my lord
95 From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO

What, not a whore?

DESEMONA

No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO

Is 't possible?

DESEMONA

100 Oh, heaven forgive us!

OTHELLO

I cry you mercy, then,
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
That married with Othello.— You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter
105 And keep the gate of hell!

Enter EMILIA

You, you, ay, you!
We have done our course. There's money for your pains.
I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel.

Exit

DESEMONA

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!

DESEMONA

Alas, what sin have I committed without knowing about it?

OTHELLO

Did God create in you a beautiful blank slate just to write
"whore" on it? What sin did you commit? Commit? Oh, you
public prostitute! If I even spoke of what you did, my mouth
would burn up modesty itself just by uttering the words.
What sin have you committed? Heaven and the moon itself,
the wind and the depths of the earth all turn away and
don't want to hear about it. What sin have you committed?
You shameless whore!

DESEMONA

By heaven, you accuse me wrongly!

OTHELLO

Are you not a whore?

DESEMONA

No, I swear on my Christianity. If the definition of not being
a whore is to preserve my virginity for my husband and not
let any other foul man unlawfully touch me, then I am not
one.

OTHELLO

What, not a whore?

DESEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Can this be true?


DESEMONA


Oh, God forgive us!

OTHELLO

I beg your pardon, then. I mixed you up with that cunning
whore from Venice who married that man Othello. You,
madam, must be Saint Peter's diabolical counterpart, the
gate-keeper of hell!

EMILIA enters.

Oh, you now! We're all done in here. Here's the money I owe
you for it. Please now, keep this little rendezvous a secret. 

 Othello continues to talk as if Emilia runs a brothel, and has arranged an illicit meeting between Othello and her prostitute Desdemona.

OTHELLO exits.

EMILIA

Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

110 How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

DESDEMONA

Faith, half asleep.

EMILIA

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DESDEMONA

With who?

EMILIA

Why, with my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA

115 Who is thy lord?

EMILIA

He that is yours, sweet lady.

DESDEMONA

I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.

I cannot weep, nor answers have I none,

But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight

120 Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember,
And call thy husband hither.

EMILIA

Here's a change indeed!

Exit

DESDEMONA

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.

How have I been behaved that he might stick

125 The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

Enter EMILIA with IAGO

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes

Do it with gentle means and easy tasks.

He might have chid me so, for, in good faith,

130 I am a child to chiding.

IAGO

What is the matter, lady?

EMILIA

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her,

Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,

That true hearts cannot bear it.

DESDEMONA

135 Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, fair lady?

DESDEMONA

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

EMILIA

He called her "whore." A beggar in his drink

Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

EMILIA

Alas, what is this gentleman talking about? How are you

doing, madam? My good lady, are you okay?

DESDEMONA

I've practically fainted, to tell the truth.

EMILIA

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DESDEMONA

With who?

EMILIA

With my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA

Who is your lord?

EMILIA

Your husband, sweet lady.

DESDEMONA

I have no husband. Do not talk to me, Emilia. I cannot weep,

and I have nothing to say besides what could be expressed

by tears. Please, make my bed tonight with the sheets from

my wedding night. Remember to do this, and call your

EMILIA

Everything has changed so much!

EMILIA exits.

DESDEMONA

It's appropriate that I am treated like this, very appropriate.

What have I ever done to make him find the smallest thing

to complain about?

EMILIA and IAGO enter.

IAGO

What do you want, madam? How are things going with you?

DESDEMONA

I can't tell. Those who teach young children do it in a gentle

way with easy tasks. He should have scolded me in this kind

of a gentle way, for I am truly like a child who has been

scolded.

IAGO

What is the matter, lady?

EMILIA

Alas, Iago, my lord has called her a whore, and called her

such serious, spiteful names that someone with a true heart

couldn't bear to hear them.

DESDEMONA

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, fair lady?

DESDEMONA

The one my lord called me.

EMILIA

He called her "whore." A drunken beggar wouldn't call his

girl such a name.

IAGO

140 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!

EMILIAHath she forsook so many noble matches,
Her father and her country, and her friends,

145 To be called "whore"? Would it not make one weep?

DESDEMONA

It is my wretched fortune.

IAGOBeshrew him for 't!
How comes this trick upon him?**DESDEMONA**

Nay, heaven doth know.

EMILIA150 I will be hanged, if some eternal villain,
Some busy and insinuating rogue,
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else!**IAGO**

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

DESDEMONA

155 If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMILIAA 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?160 The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
O heavens, that such companions thou'dst unfold,
And put in every honest hand a whip
To lash the rascals naked through the world
Even from the east to th' west!**IAGO**

165 Speak within door.

EMILIAOh, 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.

DESDEMONA170 Alas Iago,
What shall I do to win my lord again?
Good friend, go to him. For, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
175 Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them, or any other form,
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
And ever will— though he do shake me off
180 To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,**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!

EMILIADid 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.

EMILIAI would bet my life that some villain--some scheming,
insinuating rogue, some deceitful, double-crossing rogue--
has slandered Desdemona in order to get some military
position. If I'm wrong, let me be hanged!**IAGO**But there is no man who would do such a thing. It is
impossible.**DESDEMONA**

If there is any such man, may God have mercy on him!

EMILIALet him get his mercy from a noose, and let devils in hell
gnaw on his bones! Why should Othello call Desdemona a
whore? Who does she sleep with? Where? When? How?
What proof is there? The Moor has been tricked by some
absolutely villainous lowlife--some base, well-known fool,
some vile man. Oh God, if only you would reveal the evil
people in the world and give every honest person a whip to
lash the rascals with as they run naked east to west across
the whole globe!**IAGO**

Quiet down.

EMILIAOh, 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.

DESDEMONAAlas, Iago, what should I do to win back my husband? Good
friend, go to him. For I swear by heaven, I do not know what
I did to lose him. I kneel down here and swear it: if I ever
betrayed his love, either by some actual deed or even by
just thinking about doing something; if my eyes, ears, or
anything else ever delighted in any other man; if I never
really loved him or don't love him now, or won't continue to
love him dearly (even as he tries to divorce me), then may I
lose all comforts! Unkindness is powerful--and his
unkindness could kill me--but it can never change my love
for him. I cannot say "whore." The word catches in my
throat even as I try to say it now. Not all the pleasures in the

And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore,"
It does abhor me now I speak the word.

185 To do the act that might the addition earn
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

190 If 'twere no other—

IAGO

'Tis but so, I warrant.

Trumpets sound

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper.
The messengers of Venice stays the meat.
Go in, and weep not. All things shall be well.

Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA

Enter RODERIGO

195 How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

What in the contrary?

RODERIGO

200 Every day thou daff'st me with some device, Iago, and
rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from me all
conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage
of hope. I will indeed no longer endure it, nor am I yet
persuaded to put up in peace what already I have
foolishly suffered.

IAGO

Will you hear me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

You charge me most unjustly.

RODERIGO

210 With naught but truth. I have wasted myself out of my
means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver
Desdemona would half have corrupted a votaress. You have
told me she hath received them and returned me
expectations and comforts of sudden respect and
acquaintance, but I find none.

IAGO

Well, go to. Very well.

RODERIGO

215 "Very well," "go to"! I cannot go to, man, nor 'tis
not very well. Nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to
find myself fopped in it.

IAGO

Very well.

world could make me do the act that would earn me that
name.

IAGO

I beg you, don't get upset. Othello is just in a bad mood.
State business has angered him, and he's just taking out his
anger on you.

DESDEMONA

If there were no other reason—

IAGO

That's it, I promise.

Trumpets sound offstage.

Listen, these trumpets announce that dinner is ready. The
messenger from Venice is waiting on the food. Go inside,
and don't cry. Everything will be okay.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.

RODERIGO enters.

How are things, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

I don't think you've been honest with me.

IAGO

Why not?

RODERIGO

Every day you play some trick on me, Iago. And it seems to
me now that you are making things more difficult for me
rather than giving me any advantage or hope of success. I
won't tolerate this any longer, and as for what you've
already done and what I've foolishly suffered because of
you, I'm not just going to take it peacefully.

IAGO

Will you listen to me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

I have heard you speak too much, and your actions and
words don't match up.

IAGO

You accuse me unjustly.

RODERIGO

I accuse you with nothing but the truth. I have spent all my
money. The jewels you took from me to send to Desdemona
would have been enough to corrupt a nun. You told me she
received them, and promised that, in return, I would see
hope and encouragement by her immediate affection. But I
have seen nothing.

IAGO

Well, fine.

RODERIGO

"Fine!" Things aren't "fine," man. Things are not going very
well. No, things are going horribly, and now I've been
tricked into a big mess.

IAGO

Very well.

RODERIGO

220 I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known
to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels I will
give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation.
If not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO

You have said now.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

230 Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even from
this instant to build on thee a better opinion than ever
before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou hast taken
against me a most just exception, but yet I protest I
have dealt most directly in thy affair.

RODERIGO

It hath not appeared.

IAGO

235 I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion
is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou
hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason
to believe now than ever—I mean purpose, courage and
valor—this night show it. If thou the next night
following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world
with treachery and devise engines for my life.

RODERIGO

Well, what is it? Is it within reason and compass?

IAGO

240 Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to
depute Cassio in Othello's place.

RODERIGO

Is that true? Why, then Othello and Desdemona return
again to Venice.

IAGO

245 Oh, no, he goes into Mauritania and taketh away with
him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered
here by some accident—wherein none can be so determinate
as the removing of Cassio.

RODERIGO

How do you mean, removing of him?

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

And that you would have me to do!

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

It is *not* very well, I tell you. I will tell everything to
Desdemona. If she will return my jewels, I will give up on
courting her and take back my unlawful advances. If she
doesn't, I'll seek repayment from you.

IAGO

You've spoken your piece, now.

RODERIGO

Yes, and I've said just what I intend to do.

IAGO

Well, now I see you have a backbone, and I think more
highly of you now than ever before. Give me your hand,
Roderigo. Your accusation against me is understandable,
but I still insist that I have behaved honestly in helping you
with your situation.

RODERIGO

It doesn't appear that way.

IAGO

I admit it doesn't seem that way, and you are not stupid or
unjustified to have suspicions. But, Roderigo, if you have
courage, dedication, and bravery—which I now more than
ever think you do—then prove it tonight. If you do not
spend the next night with Desdemona, then feel free to take
me away and devise ways to kill me.

RODERIGO

Well, what is your plan? Is it reasonable?


IAGO


Sir, a special order has come from Venice to put Cassio in
charge here, in Othello's place.

RODERIGO

Is that true? Then Othello and Desdemona are returning to
Venice.

IAGO

Oh, no, he is going to Mauritania,  and taking the fair
Desdemona with him, unless some freak accident keeps
him here. And nothing would serve this purpose more than
the removal of Cassio.

 Mauritania is a country in North
Africa.

RODERIGO

What do you mean by "removal?"

IAGO

Well, I mean making him incapable of taking Othello's
place. Knocking out his brains.

RODERIGO

And you want me to do that!

IAGO

Yes, if you dare do something that would help yourself.
Cassio is having dinner tonight with a prostitute, and I am
going to go meet him there. He doesn't know yet about his
good luck with this promotion. If you will be on the lookout
for him there (and I'll make it so he is walking by between
twelve and one o'clock) you can get him. I'll be nearby to
help you, and he'll be surrounded by us. Come on, don't
stand there dumbfounded. Go along with me. I will prove to
you that you absolutely *must* kill Cassio, and you will realize
you have no choice but to do it. It is now almost dinner
time, and time is wasting. Go do it!

RODERIGO

I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO

And you shall be satisfied.

Exeunt

RODERIGO

I'll come and hear what reasons you have for doing this.

IAGO

You won't regret it.

RODERIGO and IAGO exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

Shakespeare

Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA and attendants

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

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

LODOVICO

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

DESDEMONA

Your honor is most welcome.

OTHELLO

5 Will you walk, sir?—O Desdemona—

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

10 I will, my lord.

Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

He says he will return incontinent,
And hath commanded me to go to bed
And bid me to dismiss you.

EMILIA

15 Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA

It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.
We must not now displease him.

EMILIA

Ay. Would you had never seen him!

DESDEMONA

20 So would not I. My love doth so approve him
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—
Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor.

Shakescleare Translation

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

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

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

LODOVICO

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

DESDEMONA

You are most welcome, your Honor.

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Yes, my lord?

OTHELLO

Go to bed right away. I will come back soon. Dismiss your
servant there in the bedroom. Make sure you do this.

DESDEMONA

I will, my lord.

OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants exit.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

He said he's coming back immediately and commanded me
to go to bed and dismiss you for the night.

EMILIA

Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA

That's what he ordered. Therefore, good Emilia, give me my
night gown and then goodbye. We must not displease
Othello now.

EMILIA

Okay. I wish you had never seen him!

DESDEMONA

I don't wish that. My love for him is so strong that I don't
mind—please help unpin this for me—even his
stubbornness, his reprimands, his frowns.

EMILIA

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

DESDEMONA

25 All's one. Good Father, how foolish are our minds!
If I do die before thee, prithee, shroud me
In one of these same sheets.

EMILIA

Come, come! You talk!

DESDEMONA

30 My mother had a maid called Barbary,
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a song of "Willow,"
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune
And she died singing it. That song tonight
Will not go from my mind. I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
35 And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA

Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

DESDEMONA

No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA

40 He speaks well.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

(singing)
The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
45 Sing all a green willow.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
50 Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones
Sing willow, willow, willow—
Lay by these—
Willow, willow—
Prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon—
55 Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve—
Nay, that's not next—Hark! Who is 't that knocks?

EMILIA

It's the wind.

DESDEMONA

(sings)
60 I called my love false love but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow.
If I court more women you'll couch with more men—
So, get thee gone, good night. Mine eyes do itch,
Doth that bode weeping?

EMILIA

65 'Tis neither here nor there.

EMILIA

I have made your bed with the sheets from your wedding
night, as you asked.

DESDEMONA

All right. Good God, how foolish our minds can be! If I die
before you, please wrap me in one of these same sheets.

EMILIA

Oh come on! You're just saying that.

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid named Barbary. She was in love, and
the man she loved turned out to be crazy and abandoned
her. She had a song called "Willow," an old song that
expressed what she had experienced, and she died singing
it. I can't stop thinking of that song tonight. I almost can't
help but droop my head and sing it just like poor Barbary.
Please, hurry.

EMILIA

Should I go and get your nightgown?

DESDEMONA

No, just unpin this for me here. That Lodovico is a good
man.

EMILIA

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA

He's well-spoken.

EMILIA

I know a lady in Venice who would have walked barefoot to
Palestine just to touch his lower lip.

DESDEMONA

(Singing)
The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Everyone sing a green willow.
With her hand on her chest and her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured along with her
moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones,
Sing willow, willow, willow—
Put these things down over there, Emilia.
(Singing)
Willow, willow—
Please, hurry up, he'll come any minute now.
(Singing)
Everyone sing a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him, I approve of his scorn—
No, that's not the next line. Listen! Who is that knocking at
the door?

EMILIA

It's just the wind

DESDEMONA

(Singing)
I called my love false love, but what did he say then?
Sing willow, willow, willow.
If I court more women, you'll sleep with more men—
Okay, you can go now, good night. My eyes itch. Does that
mean I'm going to cry?

EMILIA

It might, or it might not.

DESEMONA

I have heard it said so. Oh, these men, these men!
Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—
That there be women do abuse their husbands
In such gross kind?

EMILIA

70 There be some such, no question.

DESEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, would not you?

DESEMONA

No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA

75 Nor I neither, by this heavenly light.
I might do 't as well i' th' dark.

DESEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

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

DESEMONA

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

80 In troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I had
done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a
joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns,
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for
the whole world? Why, who would not cheat on her
85 cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture
purgatory for 't.

DESEMONA

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

EMILIA

90 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.

DESEMONA

I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA

Yes, a dozen, and as many to th' vantage as would store
the world they played for.
95 But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us. Or say they strike us,
100 Or scant our former having in despite.
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
105 As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is 't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too. And have not we affections,
110 Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?
Then let them use us well, else let them know,

DESEMONA

I've heard that it means that. Oh these men, these men! Tell
me, Emilia: do you think that there are women who deceive
and cheat on their husbands as badly as men do to women?

EMILIA

No question, there are some.

DESEMONA

Would you ever cheat on your husband, for all the world?

EMILIA

Well, wouldn't you?

DESEMONA

No, by the light of heaven!

EMILIA

Well I wouldn't do it by light either. I might do it in the dark,
though.

DESEMONA

Would you really do such a thing for all the world?

EMILIA

All the world is a huge thing. It would be a great reward for a
little misdeed.

DESEMONA

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.

DESEMONA

The devil may take me if I should ever do such a wrong for
the whole world.

EMILIA

But the wrong is just a wrong in the world, so if the world is
yours, then it is a wrong in *your own* world. And then you
could quickly make it right.

DESEMONA

I don't think there is any such woman who would do it.

EMILIA

Yes—there are a dozen, and in fact as many as would
populate the whole world that they wagered for. But I think
that if wives are unfaithful, it is their husbands' fault. Let's
say they stop sleeping with us and give themselves to other
women instead, or break out in fits of jealousy and impose
restraints on us. Or let's say they hit us, or spitefully cut
back on our allowance. Why, we feel resentment, and
although we have some grace, we can still have some
revenge, too. Let husbands know that their wives have
good sense just like them. They see and smell and can taste
both sweet and sour, just like their husbands can. What are
they doing when they switch us out for other women? Is it
for fun? I think so. And does physical attraction lead to it? I
think so. Is it a weakness to do this wrong? I think so, too.
And don't we have physical attractions, desire for fun, and
weakness, just like men? They should treat us well, or else
they should know that whatever bad things we do, we are
only following their example.

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

DESDEMONA

Good night, good night. May heaven send me the ability not
to behave badly by following bad examples, but to behave
well by avoiding bad examples.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.

Act 5, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO

IAGO

Here, stand behind this bulk, straight will he come.
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.
Quick, quick! Fear nothing. I'll be at thy elbow.
It makes us, or it mars us. Think on that,
5 And fix most firm thy resolution.

RODERIGO

Be near at hand, I may miscarry in 't.

IAGO

Here, at thy hand. Be bold, and take thy stand.

Withdraws

RODERIGO

I have no great devotion to the deed
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons.
10 'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

IAGO

(aside) I have rubbed this young quat almost to the
sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
15 Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him
As gifts to Desdemona.
It must not be. If Cassio do remain
20 He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly. And besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him—there stand I in much peril.
No, he must die. But so, I hear him coming.

Enter CASSIO

RODERIGO

I know his gait, 'tis he.—Villain, thou diest!

Thrusts at CASSIO

CASSIO

25 That thrust had been mine enemy indeed
But that my coat is better than thou know'st
I will make proof of thine.

Draws, and wounds RODERIGO

RODERIGO

Oh, I am slain!

IAGO from behind wounds CASSIO in the legs, exits

Shakescleare Translation

IAGO and RODERIGO enter.

IAGO

Here, stand behind this wall. He'll come soon. Keep your
sword unsheathed, and then drive it into him. Quick, quick!
Don't be scared. I'll be at your side. We win or lose
everything with this. Think about that, and be firmly
resolved for the task.

RODERIGO

Be nearby, since I might mess this up.

IAGO

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

IAGO steps back.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

[To himself] I rubbed this young pimple as much as I can,
and he's getting angry. Now, whether he kills Cassio or
Cassio kills him, or they each kill each other, it's all good for
me. If Roderigo lives, he will make me pay him back for all
the gold and jewels I took from him as gifts for Desdemona.
I can't have that. If Cassio survives, his beauty every day
makes me seem ugly by comparison. And besides, the Moor
might tell him what I've said about him—that would be very
dangerous for me. No, he must die. But I hear him coming.

CASSIO enters.

RODERIGO

I know his walk. It's him. Villain, time for you to die!

RODERIGO thrusts his sword at CASSIO.

CASSIO

That thrust would have been quite bad for me indeed,
except that my coat is thicker than you realize. Now I'll put
your coat to the test.

CASSIO draws his sword and stabs RODERIGO.

RODERIGO

Oh, I've been killed!

IAGO stabs CASSIO in the legs from behind and then exits.

CASSIO

I am maimed for ever. Help, ho! Murder! Murder!

Enter OTHELLO

OTHELLO

30 The voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

RODERIGO

Oh, villain that I am!

OTHELLO

It is even so.

CASSIO

Oh, help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

OTHELLO

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

Exit

Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO

CASSIO

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

GRATIANO

'Tis some mischance, the cry is very direful.

CASSIO

Oh, help!

LODOVICO

45 Hark!

RODERIGO

Oh, wretched villain!

LODOVICO

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

RODERIGO

50 Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.

LODOVICO

Hark!

Enter IAGO

GRATIANO

Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

IAGO

Who's there? Whose noise is this that ones on murder?

LODOVICO

We do not know.

CASSIO

I am crippled forever. Help, hey! Murder! Murder!

OTHELLO enters.

OTHELLO

It's the voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

RODERIGO

Oh, I am a villain.

OTHELLO

Yes, you are.

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

It's him. Oh, brave Iago, you are honest and just, to care so
much for a wrong done to your friend! You teach me by your
example. Unchaste woman, your dear boyfriend lies dead,
and your own damned fate hurries your way. Whore, I'm
coming for you. Your charms, your eyes, are erased from my
heart. Your bed, stained with lust, will soon be stained with
your lusty blood.

OTHELLO exits.

LODOVICO and GRATIANO enter.

CASSIO

What's going? No one on guard? No one passing by?
Murder! Murder!

GRATIANO

Something's wrong. That cry is very serious.

CASSIO

Oh, help!

LODOVICO

Look!

RODERIGO

Oh, that wretched villain!

LODOVICO

Two or three people are groaning. It's the middle of the
night—they might be trying to trick us. Let's not rush in
unsafely by ourselves, without any other help.

RODERIGO

Will nobody come? I'm going to bleed to death.

LODOVICO

Look!

IAGO enters.

GRATIANO

Here comes someone in his night shirt, with a light and
weapons.

IAGO

Who's there? Whose voice is it that keeps saying murder?

LODOVICO

We don't know.

IAGO
55 Do not you hear a cry?

CASSIO
Here, here! For heaven's sake, help me!

IAGO
What's the matter?

GRATIANO
(*to LODOVICO*) This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LODOVICO
The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.

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

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

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

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

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

RODERIGO
Oh, help me there!

CASSIO
70 That's one of them.

IAGO
O murd'rous slave! O villain!

Stabs RODERIGO

RODERIGO
O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!

IAGO
75 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
I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

GRATIANO
80 Cassio!

IAGO
Don't you hear a cry?

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

IAGO
What's the matter?

GRATIANO
[*To LODOVICO*] This is Othello's flag-bearer, I think.

LODOVICO
This is him, a very brave man.

IAGO
[*To CASSIO*] Who are you that's crying out in such pain?

CASSIO
Iago? Oh, I have been ruined and undone by villains! Give me some help.

IAGO
Oh my, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

CASSIO
I think one of them is around here, and cannot run away.

IAGO
Oh, treacherous villains!

[*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO*] Who are you over there?
Come here and give some help.

RODERIGO
Oh, help me!

CASSIO
That's one of the villains that did this to me.

IAGO
Oh, murdering scoundrel! Oh, villain!

IAGO stabs RODERIGO.

RODERIGO
Oh, damned Iago! You inhuman dog!

IAGO
Where are these bloody thieves who are killing men in the dark? This town is so silent! Hey! Murder! Murder! Who are you? Are you good or evil?

LODOVICO
Judge us by our actions.

IAGO
Sir Lodovico?

LODOVICO
That's me, sir.

IAGO
I ask for your forgiveness. This here is Cassio, hurt by some villains.

GRATIANO
Cassio!

IAGO

How is 't, brother!

CASSIO

My leg is cut in two.

IAGO

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

Enter BIANCA

BIANCA

85 What is the matter, ho? Who is 't that cried?

IAGO

Who is 't that cried?

BIANCA

Oh, my dear Cassio!
My sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

90 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!

BIANCA

95 Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash
To be a party in this injury.—
Patience awhile, good Cassio.— Come, come,
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?
100 Alas, my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo! No—yes, sure! Yes, 'tis Roderigo.

GRATIANO

What, of Venice?

IAGO

Even he, sir. Did you know him?

GRATIANO

Know him? Ay.

IAGO

105 Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon,
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners
That so neglected you.

GRATIANO

I am glad to see you.

IAGO

How do you, Cassio?—Oh, a chair, a chair!

GRATIANO

110 Roderigo!

IAGO

How are you, brother?

CASSIO

My leg has been cut in half.

IAGO

No, heaven forbid! Gentlemen, give me some light so I can
bind the wound with my shirt.

BIANCA enters.

BIANCA

Hey, what is the matter? Who is it that cried out?

IAGO

Who is it that cried out?

BIANCA

Oh, my dear Cassio! My sweet Cassio! Oh, Cassio, Cassio,
Cassio!

IAGO

You notorious whore! Cassio, do you have any idea who
attacked you?

CASSIO

No.

GRATIANO

I am sorry to find you like this. I've been out looking for you.

IAGO

Lend me a stocking. There. Oh, if only we had a chair, to
carry him off easily!

BIANCA

Alas, he is fainting! Oh, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

All of you gentlemen, I suspect that this piece of trash has
played a role in Cassio's injury. Hold on just a bit, good
Cassio. Come on, give me some light. Do we know this face
or not? Alas, it is my friend and my dear countryman
Roderigo! No, it can't be—yes, it is for sure! Yes, it's
Roderigo.

GRATIANO

Roderigo from Venice?

IAGO

That's the man, sir. Do you know him?

GRATIANO

Know him? Yes.

IAGO

Sir Gratiano, is that you? I beg your pardon. This bloody
incident has made it so that I couldn't treat you with proper
manners.

GRATIANO

I am glad to see you.

IAGO

Are you okay, Cassio? Oh, we need a chair, a chair!

GRATIANO

Roderigo!

IAGO

He, he, 'tis he.

A chair is brought in

Oh, that's well said—the chair!
Some good man bear him carefully from hence.
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.— (to *BIANCA*) For you,
115 mistress,
Save you your labor.—He that lies slain here, Cassio,
Was my dear friend. What malice was between you?

CASSIO

None in the world, nor do I know the man.

IAGO

(to *BIANCA*)

120 What, look you pale?—Oh, bear him out o' the air.—

CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?—Stay you, good
gentlemen.—Look you pale, mistress?—
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.—
Behold her well. I pray you, look upon her.
125 Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness
Will speak, though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA

EMILIA

Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter, husband?

IAGO

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark
By Roderigo and fellows that are 'scaped.
130 He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

EMILIA

Alas, good gentleman! Alas, good Cassio!

IAGO

This is the fruits of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supped tonight.—
(to *BIANCA*) What, do you shake at that?

BIANCA

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

IAGO

Oh, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

EMILIA

Oh, fie upon thee, strumpet!

BIANCA

I am no strumpet, but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

EMILIA

140 As I! Fie upon thee!

IAGO

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.—
Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.
Emilia, run you to the citadel
And tell my lord and lady what hath happed.—
145 Will you go on afore?
(*aside*)
This is the night
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

IAGO

It's him, yes, him

A chair is brought onstage.

Ah, well done, the chair! Some good man carry him away
carefully. I'll go get the general's doctor.

[To *BIANCA*] As for you, mistress, don't bother trying to
help. Cassio, the man who lies murdered here was my dear
friend. What bad blood was there between the two of you?

CASSIO

None at all, and I don't even know him.

IAGO

[To *BIANCA*] What, are you looking pale? Someone carry
him off.

CASSIO and RODERIGO are carried off.

Do you see the fright in her eyes? Stay here, good
gentlemen. Do you look a little pale, mistress? Keep
watching her; we'll hear more about what happened soon.
Watch her carefully. I beg you, look at her. Do you see,
gentlemen? Guiltiness speaks, even when the guilty person
holds his or her tongue.

EMILIA enters.

EMILIA

Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter, husband?

IAGO

Cassio has been attacked here in the dark by Roderigo and
some men who have run away. Cassio was almost killed,
and Roderigo is dead.

EMILIA

Alas, he was a good gentleman! And alas, poor Cassio!

IAGO

This is what you get from whoring around. Please, Emilia,
go ask Cassio where he had dinner tonight.

[To *BIANCA*] Why do you shake with worry at that?

BIANCA

He had dinner at my house, but that's not why I'm shaking.

IAGO

Oh did he? I order you, come with me.

EMILIA

Oh, shame on you, whore!

BIANCA

I am no whore. I am as chaste as you who accuse me.

EMILIA

As chaste as me? Shame on you!

IAGO

Kind gentlemen, let's go make sure poor Cassio's wounds
get tended to. Come on, mistress, you must tell us another
story. Emilia, run to the castle and tell Othello and
Desdemona what has happened. Will you go on ahead?

[To *himself*] This is the night that either makes me, or
utterly ruins me.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 5, Scene 2

Shakespeare

*DESDEMONA asleep in bed Enter OTHELLO with a light***OTHELLO**

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,
 It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
 5 And smooth as monumental alabaster.
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light.
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore
 10 Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy rose
 I cannot give it vital growth again,
 15 It must needs wither. I'll smell thee on the tree.
 Oh, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
 Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee
 And love thee after. *(kissing her)* One more, and that's
 20 the last.
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly,
 It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO

25 Ay, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO

If you bethink yourself of any crime
 30 Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
 Solicit for it straight.

DESDEMONA

Alack, my lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO

Well, do it, and be brief. I will walk by.
 I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.
 35 No, heavens forbid, I would not kill thy soul!

DESDEMONA

Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO

Ay, I do.

Shakescleare Translation

*DESDEMONA is asleep in bed. OTHELLO enters with a lit candle.***OTHELLO**

That's the reason for this, that's the reason, my soul. I won't say the reason to the chaste stars in the sky, but it is the reason. But I won't shed her blood, or scar that skin of hers that is whiter than snow and as smooth as alabaster. Still, she must die or else she'll betray more men. Extinguish the light, and then extinguish her light. If I extinguish you, flame, I can light you again if I have second thoughts. But as for you--you most artfully, excellently fashioned woman--once I put out your light, I don't know of any magical fire that can bring your life back. When I have plucked the rose of your life, I can't re-plant it again--it must wither. I'll smell you while you're still alive. Oh, your gentle breath almost persuades Justice herself to put away her sword! One more, one more kiss. If you look like this when you are dead, I will kill you and love you after. *[He kisses DESDEMONA]* One more, and that's the last. There was never anything so sweet and yet so deadly as you. I can't help but weep, but that is not a sign of pity. This sorrow is like that of God, who must strike down the creatures he loves. She's waking up.

DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO

Yes, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Yes, my lord.

OTHELLO

If you can think of any crime you haven't atoned for, make amends with God right now.

DESDEMONA

My lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO

Just do it. And quickly. I will walk around. I would not want to kill you when you haven't prepared your soul by confessing and repenting. No, heaven forbid it, I would not send your soul to hell.

DESDEMONA

You're talking about killing?

OTHELLO

Yes, I am.

DESDEMONA

Then heaven
Have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

40 Amen, with all my heart.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Humph!

DESDEMONA

And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,
45 Since guiltiness I know not. But yet I feel I fear.

OTHELLO

Think on thy sins.

DESDEMONA

They are loves I bear to you.

OTHELLO

Ay, and for that thou diest.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Peace, and be still.

DESDEMONA

55 I will so. What's the matter?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Ay—but not yet to die!

OTHELLO

Presently.
65 Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin,
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DESDEMONA

Oh, heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

70 I say "amen."

DESDEMONA

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

Be quiet, and stay still.

DESDEMONA

I will. What's the matter?

OTHELLO

That handkerchief that I loved so much and gave to you,
you gave to Cassio.

DESDEMONA

No, I swear on my life and soul! Send for him and ask him.

OTHELLO

You sweet soul, careful now, be careful about lying. You are
on your deathbed.

DESDEMONA

Yes, but it's not yet time for me to die!

OTHELLO

It will be soon. Therefore confess your sin openly. Your
denial of every part of it can do nothing to remove the
horrible idea that I have in my head. You are about to die.

DESDEMONA

Oh, heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

I say amen to that.

DESDEMONA

And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life, never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love. I never gave him token.

OTHELLO

75 By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.
O perjured woman, thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call what I intend to do
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice!
I saw the handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

80 He found it then,
I never gave it him. Send for him hither,
Let him confess a truth.

OTHELLO

He hath confessed.

DESDEMONA

What, my lord?

OTHELLO

85 That he hath usèd thee.

DESDEMONA

How? Unlawfully?

OTHELLO

Ay.

DESDEMONA

He will not say so.

OTHELLO

90 No, his mouth is stopped. Honest Iago
Hath ta'en order for 't.

DESDEMONA

Oh! My fear interprets. What, is he dead?

OTHELLO

Had all his hairs been lives
My great revenge had stomach for them all.

DESDEMONA

Alas, he is betrayed and I undone.

OTHELLO

95 Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

DESDEMONA

Oh, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

OTHELLO

Down, strumpet!

DESDEMONA

Kill me tomorrow—let me live tonight!

OTHELLO

Nay, if you strive—

DESDEMONA

100 But half an hour!

OTHELLO

Being done, there is no pause.

DESDEMONA

And you have mercy, too! I never did anything to offend you
in my life. I never loved Cassio except in a general way, as a
friend. I never gave him a token of my affection.

OTHELLO

By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand. Oh, you lying
woman! You turn my heart to stone and make me call what
I intend to do a murder, instead of a sacrifice! I saw the
handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

Then he must have found it. I never gave it to him. Send for
him to come here, and let him tell you the truth.

OTHELLO

He has confessed.

DESDEMONA

What, my lord?

OTHELLO

He has confessed that he has had sex with you.

DESDEMONA

What? Adulterous sex with me?

OTHELLO

Yes.

DESDEMONA

He would not say that.

OTHELLO

No, he cannot speak. Honest Iago has taken care of that.

DESDEMONA

Oh! I am afraid I know what you mean by that. What, is he
dead?

OTHELLO

If he had had as many lives as hairs on his head, I would
have had enough revenge for each one of them.

DESDEMONA

Alas, he has been betrayed, and now I am ruined.

OTHELLO

Enough, whore! Do you dare to weep for him in front of me?

DESDEMONA

Oh, my lord, banish me, but do not kill me.

OTHELLO

Get down, whore!

DESDEMONA

Kill me tomorrow—let me live tonight!

OTHELLO

No, if you struggle—

DESDEMONA

Just half an hour!

OTHELLO

Once I've started this, I cannot stop.

DESDEMONA

But while I say one prayer!

OTHELLO

It is too late. *(he smothers her)*

EMILIA

(within) My lord, my lord! What, ho! My lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

105 What noise is this?—Not dead? Not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful,
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.
So, so.

EMILIA

(within) What, ho! My lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

110 Who's there?

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

Yes, 'tis Emilia.— *(to EMILIA)* By and by.— She's dead.—
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death,
The noise was high. Ha! No more moving?
115 Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were 't good?
I think she stirs again—No. What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife—
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
Oh, insupportable! Oh, heavy hour!
120 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

EMILIA

(within)

I do beseech you

125 That I may speak with you, O good my lord!

OTHELLO

I had forgot thee—Oh, come in, Emilia.
Soft, by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou?

Unlocks the door. Enter EMILIA

What's the matter with thee now?

EMILIA

130 O my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

OTHELLO

What, now?

EMILIA

But now, my lord.

OTHELLO

It is the very error of the moon,
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
135 And makes men mad.

DESDEMONA

Let me say just one prayer!

OTHELLO

It is too late. *[OTHELLO smothers DESDEMONA]*

EMILIA

[Offstage] My lord, my lord! What is going on? My lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

What is this noise? Is she not dead? Not quite dead yet? I may be cruel, but I am merciful too: I don't want you to die slowly and painfully. So here.

EMILIA

[Offstage] Hey! My lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

Who's there?

EMILIA

[Offstage] Oh, my good lord, I want to have a word with you!

OTHELLO

Yes, it is Emilia.

[To EMILIA] One minute.

[To himself] She's dead. Emilia is likely coming to tell me about Cassio's death. There was a lot of noise outside. Ha! Not moving anymore, Desdemona? Still as the grave. Should Emilia come in here? Would that be good? Is Desdemona moving again? No. What should I do? If she comes in, she'll definitely want to speak to my wife. My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife. Oh, this is unbearable! Oh, what a terrible time! I think there should be a huge eclipse now of both the sun and the moon, and the ground itself should break open at what has happened.

EMILIA

[Offstage] I beg you to let me speak with you, my good lord!

OTHELLO

I forgot you were out there. Come in, Emilia. Quietly, now. Let me draw the bed curtains. Where are you?

OTHELLO unlocks the door. EMILIA enters.

What's the matter with you now?

EMILIA

Oh, my good lord, foul murders have been committed outside!

OTHELLO

What? Just now?

EMILIA

Just now, my lord.

OTHELLO

This has something to do with the odd path of the moon. It is closer to the earth than normal, and this makes men crazy.

EMILIA

Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian
Called Roderigo.

OTHELLO

Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed!

EMILIA

No, Cassio is not killed.

OTHELLO

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

DESEMONA

Oh, falsely, falsely murdered!

EMILIA

Alas, what cry is that?

OTHELLO

That? What?

EMILIA

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

Opens the bedcurtains

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

DESEMONA

A guiltless death I die.

EMILIA

Oh, who hath done this deed?

DESEMONA

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

Dies

OTHELLO

Why, how should she be murdered?

EMILIA

Alas, who knows?

OTHELLO

You heard her say herself it was not I.

EMILIA

155 She said so. I must needs report the truth.

OTHELLO

She's like a liar gone to burning hell.
'Twas I that killed her.

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

160 She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

EMILIA

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTHELLO

She was false as water.

EMILIA

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.

DESEMONA

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!

DESEMONA

I die as an innocent.

EMILIA

Oh, who has done this to you?

DESEMONA

Nobody. I did it to myself. Farewell. Send my love to my
kind lord. Oh, farewell!

DESEMONA dies.

OTHELLO

Why, how could she have been murdered?

EMILIA

Alas, who knows?

OTHELLO

You heard her say herself that it wasn't me.

EMILIA

She said so. I must tell the truth.

OTHELLO

Then she's gone to hell as a liar. I'm the one who killed her.

EMILIA

Oh, this makes her even more of an angel, and you more of
a devil!

OTHELLO

She strayed, and she was a whore.

EMILIA

You slander her, and you are a devil.

OTHELLO

She was as unfaithful as water is inconstant.

EMILIA

Thou art rash as fire,
To say that she was false. Oh, she was heavenly true!

OTHELLO

165 Cassio did top her, ask thy husband else.
Oh, I were damned beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

170 Thy husband.

EMILIA

That she was false to wedlock?

OTHELLO

175 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

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

EMILIA

180 My husband!

OTHELLO

What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

185 He, woman.
I say "thy husband"—dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA

If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th' heart.
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTHELLO draws his sword

OTHELLO

190 Ha!

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

Peace, you were best.

EMILIA

195 Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed—
I care not for thy sword, I'll make thee known

EMILIA

You are as impetuous as fire to say that she was unfaithful.
She was heavenly faithful and honest!

OTHELLO

Cassio slept with her; you can ask your husband. I would be
damned to hell if I didn't seek out just punishment to this
end. Your husband knew all about this.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

Yes, your husband.

EMILIA

He knew that she was unfaithful in her marriage?

OTHELLO

Yes, with Cassio. If she had been faithful, I wouldn't have
traded her for an entire world made entirely of gemstones.

EMILIA

My husband?

OTHELLO

Yes, he was the one who told me about her first. He is an
honest man, and hates the slime of filthy bad deeds.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

Why are you repeating yourself, woman? I said your
husband.

EMILIA

Oh, my mistress--a villain has played tricks with love. My
husband said she was unfaithful!

OTHELLO

Yes, him, woman. I said "your husband"—do you
understand the words? My friend, your husband, the
honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA

If Iago said this, then let his malicious soul rot slowly day
after day! He lies down to his heart. She was too attached to
her filthy marriage to you to be unfaithful.

OTHELLO draws his sword.

OTHELLO

Ha!

EMILIA

Do your worst. This deed you have done is not justified. It is
no more worthy of heaven than you were worthy of her.

OTHELLO

You'd better be quiet.

EMILIA

You don't have enough strength to do me half as much
harm as I can endure. Oh, you fool! You idiot! You are as
ignorant as dirt! You've done something so awful . . . I don't
care about your sword. I'd spread the news of this even if I

200 Though I lost twenty lives.— Help! Help, ho! Help!
The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO

MONTANO

What is the matter? How now, general?

EMILIA

Oh, are you come, Iago? You have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

EMILIA

205 *(to IAGO)* Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false.
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO

210 I told him what I thought, and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMILIA

But did you ever tell him she was false?

IAGO

I did.

EMILIA

215 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

With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

EMILIA

I will not charm my tongue, I am bound to speak.
My mistress here lies murdered in her bed—

ALL

Oh, heavens forbend!

EMILIA

220 And your reports have set the murder on.

OTHELLO

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

GRATIANO

'Tis a strange truth.

MONTANO

Oh, monstrous act!

EMILIA

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

IAGO

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

EMILIA

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

was killed twenty times. Help! Hey, help! The Moor has
killed my mistress! Murder! Murder!

MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO enter.

MONTANO

What is the matter? What is going on, general?

EMILIA

Oh, you've come, Iago? You've done really well, since other
men credit you for their murders .

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

EMILIA

[To IAGO] Refute what this villain has said, if you are a man.
He says that you told him his wife was unfaithful. I know
you did not; you aren't that much of a villain. Speak, for my
heart can't bear your silence any longer.

IAGO

I told him what I thought, and said no more than that which
he himself found out to be true.

EMILIA

But did you ever tell him that she was unfaithful?

IAGO

I did.

EMILIA

You told a lie—a horrible, damned lie. I swear by my soul, it
was a lie, a wicked lie. Desdemona, unfaithful with Cassio!
Did you say with Cassio?

IAGO

Yes, with Cassio, mistress. Now come on, hold your tongue.

EMILIA

I will not hold my tongue. I must speak. My mistress lies
here murdered in her bed—

ALL

Heaven forbid!

EMILIA

And the news you spread led to the murder.

OTHELLO

Don't look so amazed, gentlemen. It is really true.

GRATIANO

It's a strange truth.

MONTANO

What a monstrous act!

EMILIA

Wickedness, wickedness, wickedness! I think about it, and I
think I can smell it, oh wickedness! I suspected it earlier. I
could kill myself out of grief. Oh, wickedness, wickedness!

IAGO

What, are you crazy? I order you to go back home.

EMILIA

Good gentlemen, give me permission to speak. It is proper
for me to obey my husband, but not in this case. Maybe I
will never go home, Iago.

OTHELLO

Oh! Oh! Oh!

EMILIA

Nay, lay thee down and roar,
For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent
235 That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO

Oh, she was foul!—
I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopped.
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRATIANO

240 Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead,
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief
Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,
Yea, curse his better angel from his side
245 And fall to reprobation.

OTHELLO

'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed. Cassio confessed it,
And she did gratify his amorous works
250 With that recognizance and pledge of love
Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand,
It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

EMILIA

Oh, heaven! Oh, heavenly powers!

IAGO

255 Zounds, hold your peace.

EMILIA

'Twill out, 'twill out.—I peace?
No, I will speak as liberal as the north.
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,
All, all cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO

260 Be wise, and get you home.

Draws his sword

EMILIA

I will not.

GRATIANO

Fie! Your sword upon a woman?

EMILIA

O thou dull Moor! That handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune and did give my husband.
265 For often, with a solemn earnestness—
More than indeed belonged to such a trifle—
He begged of me to steal it.

IAGO

Villainous whore!

EMILIA

270 She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it
And I did give 't my husband.

IAGO

Filth, thou liest!

OTHELLO

Oh! Oh! Oh!

EMILIA

Yes, lie down and roar with grief, since you have killed the
sweetest innocent girl that ever lived.

OTHELLO

Oh, she was foul! I barely knew you, Uncle Gratiano, but
there lies your niece, whose life I have just recently stopped
with these very hands. I know this act seems horrible and
grim.

GRATIANO

Poor Desdemona! I am glad your father is dead. Your
marriage was painful to him, and his grief cut his life short.
If he were alive now, this sight would put him in a
downward spiral. Yes, he would curse his good conscience
and stoop to damnation.

OTHELLO

It is pitiful, but Iago knows that Desdemona had shamefully
cheated on me with Cassio a thousand times. Cassio
confessed it, and she repaid his love with a token, the
pledge of love that I first gave her. I saw it in his hand. It was
a handkerchief, an antique my father gave to my mother.

EMILIA

Oh God! Oh heavenly powers!

IAGO

Christ, keep quiet.

EMILIA

The truth will come out, the truth will come out. Me, be
quiet? No, I will speak as freely as the north wind blows. I
don't care if all angels and devils and humans cry out that I
am shameful for disobeying my husband, I will still speak
out.

IAGO

Be smart and go back home.

IAGO draws his sword.

EMILIA

I will not go.

GRATIANO

Shame! You draw your sword against a woman?

EMILIA

Oh, you stupid Moor! I found the handkerchief you speak
of by chance, and gave it to my husband. For he often
eagerly and earnestly begged me to steal it. He was more
concerned about it than one would expect for such a little
thing.

IAGO

Evil whore!

EMILIA

Did Desdemona give it to Cassio? No. I found it and gave it
to my husband.

IAGO

Filth, you are lying!

EMILIA

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.—
(to *OTHELLO*)
O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool
275 Do with so good a wife?

OTHELLO

Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!

He runs at IAGO. IAGO stabs EMILIA

GRATIANO

The woman falls! Sure he hath killed his wife.

EMILIA

Ay, ay. Oh, lay me by my mistress' side.

Exit IAGO

GRATIANO

280 He's gone, but his wife's killed.

MONTANO

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have recovered from the Moor.
Come, guard the door without. Let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
285 For 'tis a damnèd slave.

Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO

OTHELLO

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

EMILIA

290 What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.
And die in music.
(*singing*) *Willow, willow, willow—*
Moor, she was chaste, she loved thee, cruel Moor.
295 So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.
So speaking as I think, alas, I die.

Dies

OTHELLO

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

GRATIANO

300 (*within*) If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear.
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTHELLO

Look in upon me then and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

OTHELLO


305 Behold, I have a weapon.
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day
That with this little arm and this good sword


EMILIA

I swear by heaven, I do not lie, I do not, gentlemen.

[*To OTHELLO*] Oh, you murdering fool! How did such a fool
as you get such a good wife?

OTHELLO

Doesn't Jove  have any thunderbolts he can use to strike
down this complete villain?

 *Othello refers to the mythological god of thunder whom we have seen referenced before in this play.*

OTHELLO runs at IAGO. IAGO stabs EMILIA.

GRATIANO

The woman has fallen down! He's surely killed his own wife.

EMILIA

Yes, yes. Oh, lay me down next to Desdemona.

IAGO exits.

GRATIANO

He's run off, and his wife has been killed.

MONTANO

He is a terrible villain. Take this weapon that I have
obtained from the Moor. Go, guard the outer door. Don't let
Iago get out. Kill him instead. I'll chase after the same
villain, for he is a damned scoundrel.

MONTANO and GRATIANO exit.

OTHELLO

I'm not very strong if some puny little man can take my
sword from me. But then again, why should my honor live
on after my honesty is dead? I'll let it all go.

EMILIA

What did your song foretell, my lady? Listen, can you hear
me? I will be like a swan and die while singing.
[*Singing*] *Willow, willow, willow—* Moor, she was chaste and
she loved you, cruel Moor. I speak the truth, so my soul will
go to heaven. And so, alas, I die--speaking my honest
thoughts.

EMILIA dies.

OTHELLO

I have another weapon in this room. It is a sword from
Spain, hardened in an icy stream. Oh, here it is. Uncle, I
must come out of the room.

GRATIANO

[*Offstage*] If you try to get by, you'll pay for it. You have no
weapon, and so you'll surely get hurt.

OTHELLO

Then come in here and speak with me. Or, unarmed as I am,
I will attack you.

GRATIANO enters.

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

OTHELLO

Look, I have a weapon. A better sword has never graced a
soldier's scabbard. I remember times when, with this little
arm and good sword of mine, I made my way through
obstacles more than twenty times as tough as you. But

I have made my way through more impediments
 310 Than twenty times your stop. But, oh, vain boast!
 Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.
 Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed.
 Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
 And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
 315 Do you go back dismayed? 'tis a lost fear.
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
 And he retires. Where should Othello go?—
 Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starred wench,
 Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt
 320 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven
 And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,
 Even like thy chastity. O cursed, cursed slave!
 Whip me, ye devils,
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!
 325 Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulfur,
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
 Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! Oh! Oh!

Enter LODOVICO, MONTANO, CASSIO carried in a chair, and officers with IAGO, prisoner

LODOVICO

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

OTHELLO

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

LODOVICO

330 Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

IAGO is brought forward

OTHELLO

I look down towards his feet, but that's a fable.
 If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

Stabs IAGO

LODOVICO

Wrench his sword from him.

They take OTHELLO's sword

IAGO

I bleed, sir, but not killed.

OTHELLO

335 I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live,
 For in my sense 'tis happiness to die.

LODOVICO

O thou Othello, thou was once so good,
 Fall'n in the practice of a cursèd slave,
 What shall be said to thee?

OTHELLO

340 Why, anything.
 An honorable murderer, if you will,
 For naught I did in hate, but all in honor.

LODOVICO

This wretch hath part confessed his villainy.
 Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

OTHELLO

345 Ay.

CASSIO

Dear general, I never gave you cause.

what a pointless boast that is! Who can control his fate? I can't now. Don't worry, even though I am carrying a weapon. This is the end of my journey, the end of the rope, and my final destination. Are you backing off, frightened? You have nothing to fear. You could strike at me with nothing more than a reed, and I'd draw back. Where could Othello run to? Do you see how you look now? Oh, you woman with an unlucky fate, as pale as your white nightgown! When we meet on Judgment Day, this look of yours will throw my soul out of heaven and into hell, where devils will snatch it. You are cold, my girl, cold like your chastity, which never gave in to the heat of desire. Oh cursed, cursed villain! Devils, whip me until I no longer see this horrible sight! Blow me around in winds, burn me in sulfur flames, wash me in gulfs of liquid fire! Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! Dead! Oh! Oh!

LODOVICO, MONTANO, and CASSIO (carried in a chair) enter with officers bringing IAGO as a prisoner.

LODOVICO

Where is this impulsive and most unfortunate man?

OTHELLO

You speak of Othello. Here I am.

LODOVICO

And where is that poisonous snake? Bring the villain forward.

IAGO is brought forward.

OTHELLO

I see his feet, so it must just be a fairy tale that the devil has hooves. If you are a devil, then I cannot kill you.

OTHELLO stabs IAGO.

LODOVICO

Take his sword away from him.

They take OTHELLO's sword away from him.

IAGO

I am bleeding, but I haven't been killed, sir.

OTHELLO

Good. I want you to live, because for me death is sweet now.

LODOVICO

Oh, Othello, you used to be so good, and now you've fallen under the control of a cursed villain. What can I say to you?

OTHELLO

Anything. Call me an honorable murderer, if you wish, since I didn't do anything out of hate but instead out of a sense of honor.

LODOVICO

This wretched man has confessed to some of his evil doings. Did you and he conspire to kill Cassio?

OTHELLO

Yes.

CASSIO

Dear general, I gave you no reason to kill me.

OTHELLO

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

IAGO

350 Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word.

LODOVICO

What, not to pray?

GRATIANO

Torments will ope your lips.

OTHELLO

Well, thou dost best.

LODOVICO

355 Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another. The one of them imports
The death of Cassio to be undertook
360 By Roderigo.

OTHELLO

Oh, villain!

CASSIO

Most heathenish and most gross!

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

375 O fool! fool! fool!

CASSIO

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

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

I believe you, and I ask for your forgiveness. Will you please
ask that half-devil why he has tricked me and ruined my
soul and body?

IAGO

Ask me nothing. You know what you know. From now on I
will never speak again.

LODOVICO

Not even to pray?

GRATIANO

We can make you speak with torture.

OTHELLO

Do your best, then.

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

Oh, you villain!

CASSIO

Filthiest heathen!

LODOVICO

And now here's the other paper from his pocket, an angry
letter. It seems Roderigo meant to send it to Iago, but the
damned villain likely killed him before he had the chance.

OTHELLO

Oh, you malicious wretch! Cassio, how did you come across
my wife's handkerchief?

CASSIO

I found it in my room, and Iago himself just confessed that
he left it there on purpose as part of his plan.

OTHELLO

I'm a fool! A fool! A fool!

CASSIO

Moreover, Roderigo's letter describes how Iago told him to
offend me while I was on guard duty, the thing that made
me lose my title of lieutenant. And just now, even though he
seemed to be dead, Roderigo spoke and said that Iago
tricked him and urged him to on.

LODOVICO

[*To OTHELLO*] You must leave this room and come with us.
You have been stripped of your power and command, and
Cassio now rules over Cyprus. As for this scoundrel, he will
get whatever clever, cruel torture we can devise to cause
him a lot of pain for a long time. You will stay a prisoner
until the Venetian government hears of your crime. Come
on, bring him away.

OTHELLO

390 Soft you, a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know 't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
395 Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well.
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme. Of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
400 Richer than all his tribe. Of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this,
And say besides that in Aleppo once,
405 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus.

Stabs himself

LODOVICO

Oh, bloody period!

GRATIANO

410 All that is spoke is marred.

OTHELLO

(to DESDEMONA)

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

Kisses DESDEMONA, dies

CASSIO

415 This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon,
For he was great of heart.

LODOVICO

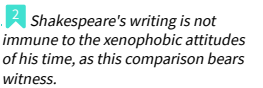
(to IAGO)

O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea,
Look on the tragic loading of this bed.
420 This is thy work. The object poisons sight,
Let it be hid.— Gratiano, keep the house
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you.— T o you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain:
425 The time, the place, the torture. Oh, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

Exeunt

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.

 Shakespeare's writing is not immune to the xenophobic attitudes of his time, as this comparison bears witness.

OTHELLO stabs himself.

LODOVICO

What a bloody conclusion!

GRATIANO

Everything he said is tarnished by what he's done.

OTHELLO

[To DESDEMONA] I kissed you before I killed you. Now that I am killing myself, I must die with a kiss.

OTHELLO kisses DESDEMONA and dies.

CASSIO

I feared this would happen because he was a brave man, but I didn't think he had a weapon.

LODOVICO

[To IAGO] You cruel dog, look at the tragic contents of this bed—worse than pain, starvation, or the tempestuous sea. This is your doing. It hurts to look at this. Cover the bodies.

[To GRATIANO] Gratiano, guard the house and take the Moor's possessions, for you inherit them all.

[To CASSIO] And you, my lord governor, will decide how to punish this hellish villain. You can pick the time, the place, and the kind of torture. And then enforce the punishment! I will go to a ship immediately, and tell the Venetian government about these tragic events with a heavy heart.

They exit.

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