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# Othello, the Moor of Venice



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**O***thello* differs in several respects from the other three major Shakespearean tragedies with which it is usually ranked. Written seemingly about the time of its performance at court by the King's Men (Shakespeare's acting company) on November 1, 1604, after *Hamlet* (c. 1599–1601) and before *King Lear* (1605–1606) and *Macbeth* (c. 1606–1607), *Othello* shares with these other plays a fascination with evil in its most virulent and universal aspect. These plays study the devastating effects of ambitious pride, ingratitude, wrath, jealousy, and vengeful hate—the deadly sins of the spirit—with only a passing interest in the political strife to which Shakespeare's Roman or classical tragedies are generally devoted. Of the four, *Othello* is the most concentrated upon one particular evil. The action concerns sexual jealousy, and, although human sinfulness is such that jealousy ceaselessly touches on other forms of depravity, the center of interest always returns in *Othello* to the destruction of a love through jealousy. *Othello* is a tragic portrait of a marriage. The protagonist is not a king or a prince, as in the tragedies already mentioned, but a general recently married. There are no supernatural visitations, as in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Ideas of divine justice, while essential to *Othello*'s portrayal of a battle between good and evil for the allegiance of the protagonist, do not encompass the wide sweep of *King Lear*, nor do we find here the same broad indictment of humanity. Social order is not seriously shaken by *Othello*'s tragedy. The fair-minded Duke of Venice remains firmly in control, and his deputy Lodovico oversees a just conclusion on Cyprus.

By the same token, *Othello* does not offer the remorseless questioning about humanity's relationship to the cosmos that we find in *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. The battle of good and evil is, of course, cosmic, but in *Othello* that battle is realized through a taut narrative of jealousy and murder. Its poetic images are accordingly focused to a large extent on the natural world. One cluster of images is domestic and animal, having to do with goats, mon-

keys, wolves, baboons, guinea hens, wildcats, spiders, flies, asses, dogs, copulating horses and sheep, serpents, and toads; other images, more wide-ranging in scope, include green-eyed monsters, devils, poisons, money purses, tarnished jewels, music untuned, and light extinguished. The story is immediate and direct, retaining the sensational atmosphere of its Italian prose source by Giovanni Battista Giraldo Cinthio, in his *Hecatommithi* of 1565 (translated into French in 1584). Events move even more swiftly than in Cinthio's work, for Shakespeare has compressed the story into two or three nights and days (albeit with an intervening sea journey and with an elastic use of stage time to allow for the maturing of long-term plans, as when we learn that Iago has begged Emilia "a hundred times" to steal Desdemona's handkerchief, 3.3.308, or that Iago has accused Cassio of making love to Desdemona "A thousand times," 5.2.219). *Othello* does not have a fully developed double plot, as in *King Lear*, or a comparatively large group of characters serving as foils to the protagonist, as in *Hamlet*. *Othello*'s cast is small, and the plot is concentrated to an unusual degree on Othello, Desdemona, and Iago. What *Othello* may lose in breadth it gains in dramatic intensity.

Daringly, Shakespeare opens this tragedy of love, not with a direct and sympathetic portrayal of the lovers themselves, but with a scene of vicious insinuation about their marriage. The images employed by Iago to describe the coupling of Othello and Desdemona are revoltingly animalistic, sodomistic. "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe," he taunts Desdemona's father, Brabantio. (Tupping is a word used specifically for the copulating of sheep.) "You'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you"; "your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs"; "the devil will make a grandsire of you" (1.1.90–3, 113–20). This degraded view reduces the marriage to one of utter carnality, with repeated emphasis on the word "gross": Des-

demonia has yielded “to the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor” and has made “a gross revolt” against her family and society (lines 129, 137). Iago’s second theme, one that is habitual with him, is money. “What ho, Brabantio! Thieves, thieves, thieves! / Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags” (lines 81–2). The implication is of a sinister bond between thievery in sex and thievery in gold. Sex and money are both commodities to be protected by watchful fathers against libidinous and opportunistic children.

We as audience make plentiful allowance for Iago’s bias in all this, since he has admitted to Roderigo his knavery and resentment of Othello. Even so, the carnal vision of love we confront is calculatedly disturbing, because it seems so equated with a pejorative image of blackness. Othello is unquestionably a black man, referred to disparagingly by his detractors as the “thick-lips,” with a “sooty bosom” (1.1.68; 1.2.71); Elizabethan usage applied the term “Moor” without attempting to distinguish between Arabian and African peoples. From the ugly start of the play, Othello and Desdemona have to prove the worth of their love in the face of preset attitudes against miscegenation. Brabantio takes refuge in the thought that Othello must have bewitched Desdemona. His basic assumption—one to be echoed later by Iago and when Othello’s confidence is undermined by Othello himself—is that miscegenation is unnatural by definition. In confronting and accusing Othello, he repeatedly appeals “to all things of sense” (that is, to common sense) and asks if it is not “gross in sense” (self-evident) that Othello has practiced magic on her, since nothing else could prompt human nature so to leave its natural path. “For nature so preposterously to err, / Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense, / Sans witchcraft could not” (1.2.65, 73; 1.3.64–6). We as audience can perceive the racial bias in Brabantio’s view and can recognize also in him the type of imperious father who conventionally opposes romantic love. It is sadly ironic that he should now prefer Roderigo as a son-in-law, evidently concluding that any white Venetian would be preferable to the prince of blacks. Still, Brabantio has been hospitable to the Moor and trusting of his daughter. He is a sorrowful rather than ridiculous figure, and the charge he levels at the married pair, however much it is based on a priori assumptions of what is “natural” in human behavior, remains to be answered.

After all, we find ourselves wondering, what did attract Othello and Desdemona to one another? Even though he certainly did not use witchcraft, may Othello not have employed a subtler kind of enchantment in the exotic character of his travels among “the Cannibals that each other eat, / The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders” (1.3.145–7)? These “passing strange” events fascinate Desdemona as they do everyone, including the Duke of Venice (“I think

this tale would win my daughter too”). Othello has not practiced unfairly on her—“This only is the witchcraft I have used” (lines 162, 171–3). Yet may he not represent for Desdemona a radical novelty, being a man at once less devious and more interesting than the dissolute Venetian swaggerers, such as Roderigo and the “wealthy curled darlings of our nation” (1.2.69), who follow her about? Was her deceiving of her father by means of the elopement a protest, an escape from conventionality? Why has she been attracted to a man older than herself? For his part, Othello gives the impression of being inexperienced with women, at least of Desdemona’s rank and complexion, and is both intrigued and flattered by her attentions. “She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them” (1.3.169–70). Desdemona fulfills a place in Othello’s view of himself. Does she also represent status for him in Venetian society, where he has been employed as a military commander but treated nonetheless as something of an alien?

These subtle but impertinent ways of doubting the motivations of Othello and Desdemona, adding to the difficulties that are inherent in an attempt to understand the mysteries of attraction in any relationship, are thrust upon us by the play’s opening and are later crucial to Iago’s strategy of breeding mistrust. Just as importantly, however, these insinuations are refuted by Othello and especially by Desdemona. Whatever others may think, she never gives the slightest indication of regarding her husband as different because he is black and old. In fact, the images of blackness and age are significantly reversed during the play’s early scenes. Othello has already embraced the Christian faith, whereas Iago, a white Italian in a Christian culture, emerges as innately evil from the very start of the play. Othello’s first appearance onstage, when he confronts a party of torch-bearing men coming to arrest him and bids his followers sheathe their swords (1.2.60), is perhaps reminiscent of Christ’s arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane; if so, it suggests a fleeting comparison between Othello and the Christian God whose charity and forbearance he seeks to emulate. Othello’s blackness may be used in part as an emblem of fallen humanity, but so are we all fallen. His age similarly strengthens our impression of his wisdom, restraint, and leadership. Any suggestions of comic sexual infidelity in the marriage of an older man and an attractive young bride are confuted by what we see in Desdemona’s chaste yet sensual regard for the good man she has chosen.

Desdemona is devoted to Othello, admiring, and faithful. We believe her when she says that she does not even know what it means to be unfaithful; the word *whore* is not in her vocabulary. She is defenseless against the charges brought against her because she does not even comprehend them and cannot believe that anyone would imagine such things. Her love, both erotic and chaste, is of that transcendent wholesomeness common to several

late Shakespearean heroines, such as Cordelia in *King Lear* and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*. Her "preferring" Othello to her father, like Cordelia's placing her duty to a husband before that to a father, is not ungrateful but natural and proper. And Othello, however much he may regard Desdemona in terms of his own identity (he calls her "my fair warrior"), does cherish Desdemona as she deserves. "I cannot speak enough of this content," he exclaims when he rejoins her on Cyprus. "It stops me here; it is too much of joy" (2.1.182, 196–7). The passionate intensity of his love prepares the way for his tragedy; he speaks more truly than he knows in saying, "when I love thee not, / Chaos is come again" (3.3.99–100). Iago speaks truly also when he observes that Othello "Is of a constant, loving, noble nature" (2.1.290). Othello's tragedy is not that he is easily duped, but that his strong faith can be destroyed at such terrible cost. Othello never forgets how much he is losing. The threat to his love is not an initial lack of his being happily married, but rather the insidious assumption that Desdemona cannot love him because such a love might be unnatural. The fear of being unlovable exists in Othello's mind, but the human instrument of this vicious gospel is Iago.

Iago belongs to a select group of villains in Shakespeare who, while plausibly motivated in human terms, also take delight in evil for its own sake: Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus*, Richard III, Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Edmund in *King Lear*. They are not, like Macbeth or like Claudius in *Hamlet*, men driven by ambition to commit crimes they clearly recognize to be wrong. Although Edmund does belatedly try to make amends, these villains are essentially conscienceless, sinister, and amused by their own cunning. They are related to one another by a stage metaphor of personified evil derived from the Vice of the morality play, whose typical role is to win the Mankind figure away from virtue and to corrupt him with worldly enticements. Like that engaging tempter, Shakespeare's villains in these plays take the audience into their confidence, boast in soliloquy of their cleverness, exult in the triumph of evil, and improvise plans with daring and resourcefulness. They are all superb actors, deceiving virtually every character onstage until late in the action with their protean and hypocritical display. They take pleasure in this "sport" and amaze us by their virtuosity. The role is paradoxically comic in its use of ingenious and resourceful deception—the grim and ironic comedy of vice. We know that we are to condemn morally even while we applaud the skill.

This theatrical tradition of the Vice may best explain a puzzling feature of Iago, noted long ago and memorably phrased by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as "the motive hunting of a motiveless malignity." To be sure, Iago does offer plausible motives for what he does. Despite his resemblance to the morality Vice, he is no allegorized abstraction but an ensign in the army, a junior field officer who

hates being out-ranked by a theoretician or staff officer. As an old-school professional, he also resents that he has not been promoted on the basis of seniority, the "old gradation" (1.1.38). Even his efforts at using influence with Othello have come to naught, and Iago can scarcely be blamed for supposing that Cassio's friendship with Othello has won him special favor. Thus, Iago has reason to plot against Cassio as well as Othello. Nevertheless a further dimension is needed to explain Iago's gloating, his utter lack of moral reflection, his concentration on destroying Desdemona (who has not wronged Iago), his absorption in ingenious methods of plotting, his finesse and style. Hatred precedes any plausible motive in Iago and ultimately does not depend on psychological causality. Probably the tradition of the stage Machiavel (another type of gloating villain based on stereotyped attitudes toward the heretical political ideas of Niccolò Machiavelli), as in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, contributes to the portraiture; this tradition was readily assimilated with that of the Vice.

Iago's machinations yield him both "sport" and "profit" (1.3.387); that is, he enjoys his evildoing, although he is also driven by a motive. This Vice-like behavior in human garb creates a restless sense of a destructive metaphysical reality lying behind his visible exterior. Even his stated motives do not always make sense. When in an outburst of hatred he soliloquizes that "I hate the Moor; / And it is thought abroad that twixt my sheets / He's done my office," Iago goes on to concede the unlikelihood of this charge. "I know not if't be true; / But I, for mere suspicion in that kind, / Will do as if for surety" (lines 387–91). The charge is so absurd, in fact, that we have to look into Iago himself for the origin of this jealous paranoia. The answer may be partly emblematic: as the embodiment and genius of sexual jealousy, Iago suffers with ironic appropriateness from the evil he preaches, and without external cause. Emilia understands that jealousy is not a rational affliction but a self-induced disease of the mind. Jealous persons, she tells Desdemona, "are not ever jealous for the cause, / But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster / Begot upon itself, born on itself" (3.4.161–3). Iago's own testimonial bears this out, for his jealousy is at once wholly irrational and agonizingly self-destructive. "I do suspect the lusty Moor / Hath leaped into my seat, the thought whereof / Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my innards" (2.1.296–8). In light of this nightmare, we can see that even his seemingly plausible resentment of Cassio's promotion is jealous envy. The "daily beauty" in Cassio's life makes Iago feel "ugly" by comparison (5.1.19–20), engendering in Iago a profound sense of lack of worth from which he can temporarily find relief only by reducing Othello and others to his own miserable condition. He is adept at provoking self-hatred in others because he suffers from it himself. His declaration to Othello that "I am your own forever"

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(3.3.495) is, of course, cynical, but it also signals the extent to which Iago has succeeded in wooing Othello away from Desdemona and Cassio into a murderous union between two women-hating men. The Iago who thus dedicates himself as partner in the fulfillment of Othello's homicidal fantasies is, we learn, capable of fantasizing a bizarre amorous encounter between himself and Cassio (lines 429–41).

Othello comes at last to regard Iago as a “demi-devil” who has tempted Othello to damn himself “beneath all depth in hell”; Lodovico speaks of Iago in the closing lines of the play as a “hellish villain” (5.2.142, 309, 379); and Iago himself boasts that “When devils will the blackest sins put on, / They do suggest at first with heavenly shows, / As I do now” (2.3.345–7). Iago thus bears some affinity to both the Vice and the devil, suggesting his relationship both to Othello's inner temptation and to a pre-existent evil force in the universe itself. Conversely, Desdemona is in Emilia's words an “angel,” purely chaste; “So come my soul to bliss as I speak true” (5.2.134, 259). When Desdemona lands on Cyprus, she is greeted in words that echo the *Ave Maria*: “Hail to thee, lady! And the grace of heaven . . . Enwheel thee round” (2.1.87–9). These images introduce metaphorically a conflict of good and evil in which Othello, typical of fallen humanity, has chosen evil and destroyed the good at the prompting of a diabolical counselor. Again we see the heritage of the morality play, especially of the later morality play in which the Mankind figure was sometimes damned rather than saved. Even so, to allegorize *Othello* is to obscure and misread its clash of human passion. In fact, we see that the impulse to reduce human complexity to simplistic moral absolutes is a fatal weakness in Othello; by insisting on viewing Desdemona as a type or abstraction, he loses sight of her wonderful humanity. The theological issue of salvation or damnation is not relevant in dramatic terms; the play is not a homily on the dangers of jealousy. The metaphysical dimensions of a homiletic tradition are transmuted into human drama. Acknowledging these limitations, we can notwithstanding see a spiritual analogy in Iago's devil-like method of undoing his victims.

His trick resembles that of the similarly mischief-making Don John in *Much Ado About Nothing*: an optical illusion by which the blameless heroine is impugned as an adulteress. The concealed Othello must watch Cassio boasting of sexual triumphs and believe he is talking about Desdemona. Like the devil, Iago is given power over people's frail senses, especially the eyes. He can create illusions to induce Othello to see what Iago wants him to see, as Don John does with Claudio, but Othello's acceptance of the lie must be his own responsibility, a failure of his corrupted will. Iago practices on Othello with an a priori logic used before on Brabantio and Roderigo, urging the proneness of all mortals to sin and the alleged

unnaturalness of a black-white marriage. All women have appetites; Desdemona is a woman; hence, Desdemona has appetites. “The wine she drinks is made of grapes,” he scoffs to Roderigo. “If she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor” (2.1.253–5). She is a Venetian, and “In Venice they do let God see the pranks / They dare not show their husbands” (3.3.216–17). Therefore, she, too, is a hypocrite; “She did deceive her father” (line 220). Most of all, it stands to reason that she must long for a man of her own race. Iago succeeds in getting Othello to concur: “And yet, how nature erring from itself—” (line 243). This proposition that Nature teaches all persons, including Desdemona, to seek a harmonious matching of “clime, complexion, and degree” strikes a responsive chord in Othello, since he knows that even though he has authority as a general serving his adopted city he is also black and in some senses a foreigner, an alien. “Haply, for I am black / And have not those soft parts of conversation / That chamberers have.” Then, too, he is sensitive that he is older than she, “declined / Into the vale of years” (lines 246, 279–82), “the young affects / In me defunct” (1.3.266–7). And so, if one must conclude from the preceding that Desdemona will seek a lover, the only question is who. “This granted—as it is a most pregnant and unforced position—who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does?” (2.1.236–9). Once Othello has accepted this syllogistic sequence of proofs, specious not through any lapse in logic but because the axiomatic assumptions about human nature are degraded and do not apply to Desdemona, Othello has arrived at an unshakable conclusion to which all subsequent evidence must be applied. “Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,” he commissions Iago (3.3.375). Desdemona's innocent pleading for Cassio only makes things look worse. Cassio's reputed muttering while asleep, like the handkerchief seen in his possession or his giddy talk about his mistress Bianca, “speaks against her [Desdemona] with the other proofs” (line 456).

How has Othello fallen so far? His bliss with Desdemona as they are rejoined on Cyprus knows no limit. These two persons represent married love at its very best, erotic and spiritual, she enhancing his manliness, he cherishing her beauty and virtue. His blackness and age are positive images in him, despite earlier insinuations to the contrary. Indeed, we have no reason to suppose that Othello is what we would call “old,” despite his worries about being “declined / Into the vale of years” and having lost the “young effects” of sexual desire; he appears to be middle-aged and vigorous, so much so that Desdemona is attracted to him sexually as well as in other ways. He is a man of public worthiness, of command, of self-assurance. Desdemona is the most domestic of Shakespeare's tragic heroines, even while she is also representative of so much that is transcendent. Husband and wife are bound happily in one of Shakespeare's few

detailed portraits of serious commitment in marriage. Othello initially has the wisdom to know that Desdemona's feminine attractiveness ought not to be threatening to him: he need not be jealous because she is beautiful, "free of speech," and loves dancing and music, since "Where virtue is, these are more virtuous." Nor does he see any reason at first to fear her "revolt" simply because he is black and older than his wife; "she had eyes, and chose me" (3.3.197–203). Othello's self-assurance through the love he perceives in Desdemona is the strongest sign of his happiness in marriage.

What then gives way? We look at Iago for one important insight, but ultimately the cause must be in Othello himself. Arthur Kirsch has argued persuasively (in *Shakespeare and the Experience of Love*, 1981) that Othello's most grave failing is an insufficient regard for himself. It is in part an inability to counter the effects on him of a culture that regards him as an outsider; he is at last persuaded to see himself with the eyes of Venice, not just of Iago, but of Brabantio (who gladly entertains Othello until he has the presumption to elope with Brabantio's white daughter) and others. The resulting destruction of self-regard is devastating. Othello's jealousy stems from a profound suspicion that others cannot love him because he does not deem himself lovable.

Othello has loved Desdemona as an extension of himself, and, in his moments of greatest contentedness, his marriage is sustained by an idealized vision of himself serving as the object of his exalted romantic passion. When he destroys Desdemona, as he realizes with a terrible clarity, Othello destroys himself; the act is a prelude to his actual suicide. Iago's means of temptation, then, is to persuade Othello to regard himself with the eyes of Venice, to accept the view that Othello is himself alien and that any woman who loves him does so perversely. In Othello's tainted state of mind, Desdemona's very sexuality becomes an unbearable threat to him, her warmth and devotion a "proof" of disloyalty. Othello's most tortured speeches (3.4.57–77, 4.2.49–66) reveal the extent to which he equates the seemingly betraying woman, whom he has so depended on for happiness, with his own mother, who was given a handkerchief by an Egyptian sorceress and was warned that, if she should lose it, she would lose her husband's affection. Othello has briefly learned and then forgotten the precious art of harmonizing erotic passion and spiritual love, and, as these two great aims of love are driven apart in him, he comes to loathe and fear the sexuality that puts him so much in mind of his physical frailty and dependence on woman. The horror and pity of *Othello* rests, above all, in the spectacle of a love that was once so whole and noble made filthy by self-hatred. The tragic flaw thus lies in Othello's maleness, in his fear of betrayal by the innocent woman he loves, and his apparent need to degrade her for the very thing he finds desirable in her—a tendency so common among men that Freud, in the early

twentieth century, could declare it to be "the most prevalent form of degradation in erotic life" (in Freud's *Sammlung*, volume 4).

The increasing surrender of Othello's judgment to passion can be measured in three successive trial scenes in the play: the entirely fair trial of Othello himself by the Venetian Senate concerning the elopement, Othello's trial of Cassio for drinking and rioting (when, ominously, Othello's "blood begins my safer guides to rule," 2.3.199), and finally the prejudged sentencing of Desdemona without providing her any opportunity to defend herself. In a corollary decline, Othello falls from the Christian compassion of the opening scenes (he customarily confesses to heaven "the vices of my blood," 1.3.125) to the pagan savagery of his vengeful and ritualistic execution of his wife. "My heart is turned to stone" (4.1.184–5), he vows, and at the play's end he grievously characterizes himself as a "base Indian" who "threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe" (5.2.357–8). Iago knows that he must persuade Othello to sentence and to execute Desdemona himself, for only by active commitment to evil will Othello damn himself. In nothing does Iago so resemble the devil as in his wish to see Othello destroy the innocence and goodness on which his happiness depends.

The fate of some of the lesser characters echoes that of Othello, for Iago's evil intent is to "enmesh them all" (2.3.356). Cassio, in particular, is, like Othello, an attractive man with a single, vulnerable weakness—in his case, a fleshly appetite for wine and women. For him, alternately idolizing and depreciating women as he does, the gap between spiritual and sensual love remains vast, but he is essentially good-natured and trustworthy. His seemingly genial flaws lead to disaster, because they put him at the mercy of a remorseless enemy. Iago is, with fitting irony, the apostle of absolute self-control: "Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners" (1.3.323–4). Thus, Cassio's tragedy is anything but a straightforward homily on the virtues of temperance. Similarly, Bianca is undone, not through any simple cause-and-effect punishment of her sexual conduct—she is, after all, fond of Cassio and loyal to him, even if he will not marry her—but because Iago is able to turn appearances against her. With his usual appeal to a priori logic, he builds a case that she and Cassio are in cahoots: "I do suspect this trash / To be a party in this injury . . . This is the fruits of whoring" (5.1.86–7, 118). Roderigo is another of Iago's victims, a contemptible one, led by the nose because he, too, has surrendered reason to passion. Emilia cannot escape Iago's evil influence and steals the handkerchief for him, despite knowing its value for Desdemona. Flaws are magnified into disasters by a remorseless evil intelligence. Men and women both must be ceaselessly circumspect; a good reputation is sooner lost than recovered. Emilia is a conventionally decent enough woman—she jests to Desdemona that she would

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be faithless in marriage only for a very high price—and yet her one small compromise with her conscience contributes to the murder of her mistress. Like Othello, she offers atonement too late, by denouncing her husband in a gesture of defiance toward male authority that says much about the tragic consequences of male mistrust of women. Desdemona is the only person in the play too good to be struck down through some inner flaw, which may explain why Iago is so intent on destroying her along with Othello and Cassio.

As a tragic hero, Othello obtains self-knowledge at a terrible price. He knows finally that what he has destroyed was ineffably good. The discovery is too late for him to make amends, and he dies by his own hand as atonement. The deaths of Othello and Desdemona are, in their separate ways, equally devastating; he is in part the victim of racism, though he nobly refuses to deny his own culpability, and she is the victim of sexism, lapsing sadly into the stereotypical role of passive and silent sufferer that the Venetian world expects of women. Despite the loss, however, Othello's reaffirmation of faith in Desdemona's goodness undoes what the devil-like Iago had most hoped to achieve: the separation of Othello from his loving trust in one who is good. In this important sense, Othello's self-knowledge is cathartic and a compensation for the terrible price he has paid. The very existence of a person as good as Desdemona gives the lie to Iago's creed that everyone has his or her price. She is the sacrificial victim who must die for Othello's loss of faith and, by dying, rekindle that faith. ("My life upon her faith!" Othello prophetically affirms, in response to her father's warning that she may deceive [1.3.297].) She cannot restore him to himself, for self-hatred has done its ugly work, but she is the means by which he understands at last the chimerical and wantonly destructive nature of his jealousy. His greatness appears in his acknowledgment of this truth and in the heroic struggle with which he has confronted an inner darkness we all share.

Onstage and in film and television, *Othello* proves itself to be jarringly relevant to modern concerns about racial conflict and about men's mistreatment of women. Janet Suzman chose to produce the play onstage and subsequently for educational television in Johannesburg,

South Africa, at a time when apartheid was soon to be dismantled, even though that surprising if inevitable event was not yet discernible. A racially mixed audience came to see a racially mixed cast, with John Kani, a well-known South African Black actor, as Othello, and a very fair-haired South African actress as Desdemona. Iago unmistakably represented the mindset of a state police officer obsessed with preserving the purity of the White race and therefore venomous in his racial hatred of Othello for his miscegenated marriage with a White woman. The explosively powerful emotions of that production carry over into a memorable film version. Orson Welles's 1951 film version, recently remastered, featured Othello in blackface as the protagonist; so did Laurence Olivier's film of 1965, based on a National Theatre stage production of 1964 with Frank Finlay as Iago and Maggie Smith as Desdemona. Indeed, most Othellos onstage over the centuries have been White actors (including Edmund Kean, John Philip Kemble, Edwin Booth, Charles Macready, Edwin Forrest, Henry Irving, Tommaso Salvini, and Paul Scofield, many of whom also played Iago), with notable exceptions that include Ira Aldridge, Earle Hyman, and Paul Robeson. Robeson's galvanizing performances at the Savoy Theatre in 1930 with Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona, and then in Margaret Webster's New York production of 1943–1945 with Uta Hagen as Desdemona and José Ferrer as Iago, helped establish the role of Othello as one that great Black actors could perform. Today racially mixed casting allows for all sorts of permutations, though Kenneth Branagh's recent film chooses the more recognizable pattern with Branagh himself as Iago and Laurence Fishburne as Othello. In another recent development, Emilia has stood out in several productions as the *raisonneur* and heroic figure in the play, speaking as she does on behalf of maltreated women, urging Desdemona to stand up for her rights. One recent Chicago production went so far as to rewrite the ending: Othello and Iago both survive unpunished for what they have done, while Desdemona and Emilia lie dead as their innocent victims. This deliberate and provocative overstatement might seem extreme to some viewers, but unquestionably did signal the direction of recent performance history of this profoundly disturbing play.

# Othello, the Moor of Venice



## M The Names of the Actors

OTHELLO, *the Moor*  
 BRABANTIO, [*a senator,*] *father to Desdemona*  
 CASSIO, *an honorable lieutenant [to Othello]*  
 IAGO, [*Othello's ancient,*] *a villain*  
 RODERIGO, *a gulled gentleman*  
 DUKE OF VENICE  
 SENATORS [*of Venice*]  
 MONTANO, *Governor of Cyprus*  
 GENTLEMEN *of Cyprus*  
 LODOVICO and GRATIANO, [*kinsmen to Brabantio,*] *two noble Venetians*  
 SAILORS  
 CLOWN

DESDEMONA, [*daughter to Brabantio and*] *wife to Othello*  
 EMILIA, *wife to Iago*  
 BIANCA, *a courtesan [and mistress to Cassio]*  
 [A MESSENGER  
 A HERALD  
 A MUSICIAN

Servants, Attendants, Officers, Senators, Musicians, Gentlemen

SCENE: *Venice; a seaport in Cyprus*]

### 1.1

*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.  
 If ever I did dream of such a matter,  
 Abhor me.  
 RODERIGO  
 Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.  
 IAGO Despise me  
 If I do not. Three great ones of the city,  
 In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
 Off-capped to him; and by the faith of man,  
 I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.  
 But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
 Evades them with a bombast circumstance

Horribly stuffed with epithets of war, 15  
 And, in conclusion,  
 Nonsuits my mediators. For, "Certes," says he, 17  
 "I have already chose my officer."  
 And what was he?  
 Forsooth, a great arithmetician, 20  
 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,  
 A fellow almost damned in a fair wife, 22  
 That never set a squadron in the field  
 Nor the division of a battle knows 24  
 More than a spinster—unless the bookish theoretic, 25  
 Wherein the togaed consuls can propose 26  
 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 29  
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds

#### 1.1. Location: Venice. A street.

**1 never tell me** (An expression of incredulity, like "tell me another one.") **3 this** i.e., Desdemona's elopement. **4 'Sblood** By His (Christ's) blood **7 him** Othello **14 bombast circumstance** wordy evasion. (*Bombast* is cotton padding.)

**14 15 epithets of war** military expressions **17 Nonsuits** rejects the petition of. **Certes** Certainly **20 arithmetician** i.e., a man whose military knowledge is merely theoretical, based on books of tactics **22 A . . . wife** (Cassio does not seem to be married, but his counterpart in Shakespeare's source does have a woman in his house. See also 4.1.131.) **24 division of a battle** disposition of a military unit **25 a spinster** i.e., a housewife, one whose regular occupation is spinning. **theoretic** theory **26 togaed consuls** toga-wearing counselors or senators. **propose** discuss **29 his** Othello's

Christened and heathen, must be beleed and calmed  
 By debtor and creditor. This countercafter,  
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
 And I—God bless the mark!—His Moorship’s ancient.

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

RODERIGO I would not follow him then.

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

31 **beleed and calmed** left to leeward without wind, becalmed. (A sailing metaphor.) 32 **debtor and creditor** (A name for a system of bookkeeping, here used as a contemptuous nickname for Cassio.) **countercafter** i.e., bookkeeper, one who tallies with *counters*, or “metal disks.” (Said contemptuously.) 33 **in good time** opportunely, i.e., forsooth 34 **God bless the mark** (Perhaps originally a formula to ward off evil; here an expression of impatience.) **ancient** standard-bearer, ensign. 35 **his hangman** the executioner of him. 37 **Preferment** promotion. **letter and affection** personal influence and favoritism 38 **old gradation** step-by-step seniority, the traditional way 40 **term** respect. **affined** bound 43 **content** you don’t you worry about that. 46 **truly** faithfully 50 **cashiered** dismissed from service. 51 **Whip me** Whip, as far as I’m concerned 52 **trimmed** . . . **duty** dressed up in the mere form and show of dutifulness 55 **lined their coats** i.e., stuffed their purses 56 **Do themselves homage** i.e., attend to self-interest solely. 59 **Were . . . Iago** i.e., if I were able to assume command, I certainly would not choose to remain a subordinate, or, I would keep a suspicious eye on a flattering subordinate. 62 **peculiar** particular, personal 64 **native** innate. **figure** shape, intent 65 **compliment extern** outward show (conforming in this case to the inner workings and intention of the heart)

31 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
 32 For daws to peck at. I am not what I am. 67

RODERIGO  
 34 What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe  
 If he can carry’t thus! 68

IAGO  
 35 Call up her father. 69  
 Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,  
 Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,  
 37 And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
 38 Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy,  
 Yet throw such changes of vexation on’t  
 40 As it may lose some color. 75

RODERIGO  
 M Here is her father’s house. I’ll call aloud.

IAGO  
 43 Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell 77  
 As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
 46 Is spied in populous cities. 78

RODERIGO  
 E What ho, Brabantio! Signor Brabantio, ho!

S  
 A  
 50 Awake! What ho, Brabantio! Thieves, thieves, thieves!  
 51 Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!  
 52 Thieves, thieves! 83

Brabantio [enters] above [at a window].

S  
 H  
 BRABANTIO  
 What is the reason of this terrible summons?  
 55 What is the matter there?

RODERIGO  
 A  
 56 Signor, is all your family within?

IAGO  
 N  
 Are your doors locked?

BRABANTIO  
 59 Why, wherefore ask you this?

IAGO  
 O  
 62 Zounds, sir, you’re robbed. For shame, put on your  
 gown!  
 Your heart is burst; you have lost half your soul.  
 64 Even now, now, very now, an old black ram  
 65 Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise!  
 8 Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
 92 Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.  
 93 Arise, I say!

BRABANTIO  
 5 What, have you lost your wits?

RODERIGO  
 9 Most reverend signor, do you know my voice?

B  
 U  
 67 **daws** small crowlike birds, proverbially stupid and avaricious.  
**I am not what I am** i.e., I am not one who wears his heart on his sleeve. 68 **full** swelling. **thick-lips** (Elizabethans often applied the term “Moor” to Negroes.) **owe** own 69 **carry’t thus** carry this off. 72-3 **though . . . flies** though he seems prosperous and happy now, vex him with misery. 73 **Though . . . be joy** Although he seems fortunate and happy. (Repeats the idea of line 72.) 74 **changes of vexation** vexing changes 75 **As . . . color** that may cause it to lose some of its first gloss. 77 **timorous** frightening 78 **As . . . fire** as when a fire, having gained hold by negligence at night 83.1 **at a window** (This stage direction, from the Quarto, probably calls for an appearance on the gallery above and rearstage.) 88 **Zounds** By His (Christ’s) wounds 91 **tugging** covering, copulating with. (Said of sheep.) 92 **snorting** snoring 93 **the devil** (The devil was conventionally pictured as black.)



BRABANTIO	Not I. What are you?		That, from the sense of all civility,	134
RODERIGO	My name is Roderigo.		I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.	135
BRABANTIO	The worsè welcome.		Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,	
	I have chargèd thee not to haunt about my doors.		I say again, hath made a gross revolt,	
	In honest plainness thou hast heard me say		Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes	138
	My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,		In an extravagant and wheeling stranger	139
	Being full of supper and distemp'ring drafts,	102	Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself.	140
	Upon malicious bravery dost thou come	103	If she be in her chamber or your house,	
	To start my quiet.	104	Let loose on me the justice of the state	
RODERIGO	Sir, sir, sir—		For thus deluding you.	
BRABANTIO	But thou must needs be sure		BRABANTIO [ <i>calling</i> ] Strike on the tinder, ho!	144
	My spirits and my place have in their power	106	Give me a taper! Call up all my people!	
	To make this bitter to thee.		This accident is not unlike my dream.	146
RODERIGO	Patience, good sir.		Belief of it oppresses me already.	
BRABANTIO	What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is Venice;		Light, I say, light!	<i>Exit [above].</i>
	My house is not a grange.		IAGO Farewell, for I must leave you.	
RODERIGO	Most grave Brabantio,	109	It seems not meet nor wholesome to my place	149
	In simple and pure soul I come to you.	110	To be productèd—as, if I stay, I shall—	150
IAGO	Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not		Against the Moor. For I do know the state,	
	serve God if the devil bid you. Because we come to do		However this may gall him with some check,	152
	you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have		Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embarked	153
	your daughter covered with a Barbary horse; you'll	114	With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,	154
	have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have coursers	115	Which even now stands in act, that, for their souls,	155
	for cousins and jennets for germans.	116	Another of his fathom they have none	156
BRABANTIO	What profane wretch art thou?		To lead their business; in which regard,	157
IAGO	I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter		Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,	
	and the Moor are now making the beast with two		Yet for necessity of present life	159
	backs.		I must show out a flag and sign of love,	
BRABANTIO	Thou art a villain.		Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find	
IAGO	You are—a senator.	121	him,	
BRABANTIO	This thou shalt answer. I know thee, Roderigo.	122	Lead to the Sagittary the raised search,	162
RODERIGO	Sir, I will answer anything. But I beseech you,		And there will I be with him. So farewell.	<i>Exit.</i> 163
	If't be your pleasure and most wise consent—		<i>Enter [below] Brabantio [in his nightgown] with</i>	
	As partly I find it is—that your fair daughter,		<i>servants and torches.</i>	
	At this odd-even and dull watch o'th' night,		BRABANTIO	
	Transported with no worse nor better guard		It is too true an evil. Gone she is;	
	But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,	124	And what's to come of my despisèd time	165
	To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor—		Is naught but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,	
	If this be known to you and your allowance	126	Where didst thou see her?—Oh, unhappy girl!—	
	We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs.	127	With the Moor, say'st thou?—Who would be a father!—	
	But if you know not this, my manners tell me	128	How didst thou know 'twas she?—Oh, she deceives	
	We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe	130	me	
		131	Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more	
			tapers.	
			Raise all my kindred.—Are they married, think you?	

102 *distemp'ring* intoxicating 103 *Upon malicious bravery* with hostile intent to defy me 104 *start* startle, disrupt 106 *My . . . power* my temperament and my authority of office have it in their power 109 *grange* isolated country house. 110 *simple* sincere 114 *Barbary* from northern Africa (and hence associated with Othello) 115 *nephews* i.e., grandsons 115–16 *you'll . . . germans* you'll consent to have powerful horses for kinfolks and small Spanish horses for near relatives. 121 *a senator* (Said with mock politeness, as though the word itself were an insult.) 122 *answer* be held accountable for. 124 *wise* well-informed 126 *At . . . night* at this hour that is between day and night, neither the one nor the other 127 *with by* 128 *But with a knave* than by a low fellow, a servant 130 *and your allowance* and has your permission 131 *saucy* insolent

134 *from* contrary to. *civility* good manners, decency 135 *your reverence* (1) the respect due to you (2) Your Reverence. 138 *wit* intelligence 139–40 *In . . . everywhere* to a wandering and vagabond foreigner of uncertain origins. 140 *Straight* Straightaway 144 *tinder* charred linen ignited by a spark from flint and steel, used to light torches or *tapers* (lines 145, 170) 146 *accident* occurrence, event 149 *meet* fitting. *place* position (as ensign) 150 *productèd* produced (as a witness) 152 *gall* rub; oppress. *check* rebuke 153 *cast* dismiss. *embarked* engaged 154 *loud* urgent 155 *stands in act* have started. *for their souls* to save their souls 156 *fathom* i.e., ability, depth of experience 157 *in which regard* out of regard for which 159 *life* livelihood 162 *Sagittary* (An inn or house where Othello and Desdemona are staying, named for its sign of Sagittarius, or Centaur.) *raisèd search* search party roused out of sleep 163.1 *nightgown* dressing gown. (This costuming is specified in the Quarto text.) 165 *time* i.e., remainder of life

RODERIGO Truly, I think they are.  
 BRABANTIO  
 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 175  
 By which the property of youth and maidhood 176  
 May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo, 177  
 Of some such thing?  
 RODERIGO 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  
 I think I can discover him, if you please 182  
 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 night.—  
 On, good Roderigo. I will deserve your pains. 187

*Exeunt.*



1.2

*Enter Othello, Iago, 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  
 I had thought t'have yerked him here under the ribs.  
 OTHELLO  
 'Tis better as it is.  
 IAGO Nay, but he prated,  
 And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
 Against your honor  
 That, with the little godliness I have,  
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,  
 Are you fast married? Be assured of this,  
 That the magnifico is much beloved,  
 And hath in his effect a voice potential  
 As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you,  
 Or put upon you what restraint or grievance  
 The law, with all his might to enforce it on,  
 Will give him cable.  
 OTHELLO Let him do his spite.  
 My services which I have done the seigniory

Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know— 19  
 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 22  
 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune 23  
 As this that I have reached. For know, Iago,  
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
 I would not my unhousèd free condition 26  
 Put into circumscription and confine 27  
 For the seas' worth. But look, what lights come yond? 28

*Enter Cassio [and officers] with torches.*

IAGO  
 Those are the raisèd father and his friends.  
 You were best go in.  
 OTHELLO Not I. I must be found.  
 My parts, my title, and my perfect soul 31  
 Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?  
 IAGO By Janus, I think no. 33  
 OTHELLO  
 The servants of the Duke? And my lieutenant?  
 The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
 What is the news?  
 CASSIO The Duke does greet you, General,  
 And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance  
 Even on the instant.  
 OTHELLO What is the matter, think you?  
 CASSIO  
 Something from Cyprus, as I may divine. 39  
 It is a business of some heat. The galleys 40  
 Have sent a dozen sequent messengers 41  
 This very night at one another's heels,  
 And many of the consuls, raised and met, 43  
 Are at the Duke's already. You have been hotly called  
 for;  
 When, being not at your lodging to be found,  
 The Senate hath sent about three several quests 46  
 To search you out.  
 OTHELLO 'Tis well I am found by you.  
 I will but spend a word here in the house  
 And go with you. *[Exit.]*  
 CASSIO Ancient, what makes he here? 49  
 IAGO  
 Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land carrack. 50  
 If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever. 51

175 charms spells 176 property special quality, nature 177 abused deceived. 182 discover reveal, uncover 185 command demand assistance 187 deserve show gratitude for  
 1.2. Location: Venice. Another street, before Othello's lodgings.  
 2 very stuff essence, basic material. (Continuing the metaphor of trade from line 1.) 3 contrived premeditated 5 yerked stabbed.  
 him i.e., Roderigo 10 I . . . him I restrained myself with great difficulty from assaulting him. 12 magnifico Venetian grandee, i.e., Brabantio 13 in his effect at his command. potential powerful  
 17 cable i.e., scope. 18 seigniory Venetian government

19 yet to know not yet widely known 22 siege i.e., rank. (Literally, a seat used by a person of distinction.) demerits deserts 23 unbonneted without removing the hat, i.e., on equal terms. (? Or "with hat off," "in all due modesty.") 26 unhousèd unconfined, undomesticated 27 circumscription and confine restriction and confinement 28 the seas' worth all the riches at the bottom of the sea. 28.1 officers (The quarto text specifies, "Enter Cassio with lights, Officers, and torches.") 31 My . . . soul My natural gifts, my position or reputation, and my unflawed conscience 33 Janus Roman two-faced god of beginnings 39 divine guess. 40 heat urgency. 41 sequent successive 43 consuls senators 46 about all over the city. several separate 49 makes does 50 boarded gone aboard and seized as an act of piracy. (With sexual suggestion.) carrack large merchant ship. 51 prize booty

CASSIO  
I do not understand.  
IAGO He's married.  
CASSIO To who?  
[Enter Othello.]  
IAGO  
Marry, to—Come, Captain, will you go?  
OTHELLO Have with you.  
CASSIO  
Here comes another troop to seek for you.  
*Enter Brabantio, Roderigo, with officers and torches.*  
IAGO  
It is Brabantio. General, be advised.  
He comes to bad intent.  
OTHELLO Holla! Stand there!  
RODERIGO  
Signor, it is the Moor.  
BRABANTIO Down with him, thief!  
[They draw on both sides.]  
IAGO  
You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I am for you.  
OTHELLO  
Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.  
Good signor, 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, 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, Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight. Judge me the world if 'tis not gross in sense That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms, Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals That weakens motion. I'll have't disputed on; 'Tis probable and palpable to thinking. I therefore apprehend and do attach thee For an abuser of the world, a practicer Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.— Lay hold upon him! If he do resist,

Subdue him at his peril.  
OTHELLO Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining and the rest. 83  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it 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 88  
Call thee to answer.  
OTHELLO 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 'Tis true, most worthy signor.  
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. 96  
Mine's not an idle cause. The Duke himself, 97  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;  
For if such actions may have passage free, 100  
Bondslaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.  
*Exeunt.*

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1.3

*Enter Duke [and] Senators [and sit at a table, with lights], and Officers. [The Duke and Senators are reading dispatches.]*

DUKE  
There is no composition in these news 1  
That gives them credit.  
FIRST SENATOR Indeed, they are disproportioned. 3  
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.  
DUKE  
And mine, a hundred forty.  
SECOND SENATOR And mine, two hundred. 6  
But though they jump not on a just account— 7  
As in these cases, where the aim reports  
'Tis oft with difference—yet do they all confirm  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.  
DUKE  
Nay, it is possible enough to judgment.  
I do not so secure me in the error 11  
But the main article I do approve 12  
In fearful sense.

53 Marry (An oath, originally “by the Virgin Mary”; here used with wordplay on *married*.) 54 Have with you i.e., Let’s go. 55.1–2 *officers and torches* (The quarto text calls for “*others with lights and weapons*.”) 56 *be advised* be on your guard. 60 *Keep up* Keep in the sheath 65 I’ll . . . *sense* I’ll submit my case to one and all 71 *guardage* guardianship 73 *gross in sense* obvious 75 *minerals* i.e., poisons 76 *weakens motion* impair the vital faculties. *disputed* on argued in court by professional counsel, debated by experts 78 *attach* arrest 79 *abuser* deceiver 80 *arts inhibited* prohibited arts, black magic. *out of warrant* illegal.

83 *inclining* following, party 88 *course of direct session* regular or specially convened legal proceedings 96 *away* right along. 97 *idle* trifling 100 *may . . . free* are allowed to go unchecked 1.3. Location: Venice. A council chamber. 0.1–2 *Enter . . . Officers* (The quarto text calls for the Duke and senators to “*set at a Table with lights and Attendants*.”) 1 *composition* consistency 3 *disproportioned* inconsistent. 6 *jump* agree. *just* exact 7 *the aim* conjecture 11–12 *I do not . . . approve* I do not take such (false) comfort in the discrepancies that I fail to perceive the main point, i.e., that the Turkish fleet is threatening

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

*Enter Sailor.*

OFFICER A messenger from the galleys.

DUKE Now, what's the business?

SAILOR

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

DUKE

How say you by this change?

FIRST SENATOR

This cannot be  
By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant  
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider  
Th'importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,  
And let ourselves again but understand  
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,  
So may he with more facile question bear it,  
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,  
But altogether lacks th'abilities  
That Rhodes is dressed in—if we make thought of this,  
We must not think the Turk is so unskillful  
To leave that latest which concerns him first,  
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,  
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 restem  
Their backward course, bearing with frank  
appearance  
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signor Montano,  
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,  
With his free duty recommends you thus,  
And prays you to believe him.

DUKE 'Tis certain then for Cyprus.

Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

FIRST SENATOR He's now in Florence.

DUKE

Write from us to him, post-post-haste. Dispatch.

FIRST SENATOR

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago,  
Roderigo, and officers.*

DUKE

16 Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you 50  
Against the general enemy Ottoman. 51  
[*To Brabantio*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle 52  
signor.  
We lacked your counsel and your help tonight.

19 BRABANTIO

20 So did I yours. Good Your Grace, pardon me;  
21 Neither my place nor aught I heard of business 55  
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general  
care  
Take hold on me, for my particular grief 57  
Is of so floodgate and o'erbearing nature 58  
26 That it engluts and swallows other sorrows 59  
27 And it is still itself.

28 DUKE

Why, what's the matter? 60

29 BRABANTIO

30 My daughter! Oh, my daughter!  
DUKE AND SENATORS Dead?

32 BRABANTIO

Ay, to me.

She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted 62  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;  
For nature so preposterously to err,  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense, 65  
Sans witchcraft could not. 66

DUKE

Who'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 71  
After your own sense—yea, though our proper son  
Stood in your action.

39 BRABANTIO

Humbly I thank Your Grace. 72

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

42 ALL

We are very sorry for't.

43 DUKE [*to Othello*]

5 What, in your own part, can you say to this?  
BRABANTIO Nothing, but this is so.

9 OTHELLO

Most potent, grave, and reverend signors,  
My very noble and approved good masters: 79  
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 82

16 preparation fleet prepared for battle 19 by about 20 assay test. pageant mere show 21 in false gaze looking the wrong way. 25 So may . . . it so also he (the Turk) can more easily capture it (Cyprus) 26 For that since. brace state of defense 27 th'abilities the means of self-defense 28 dressed in equipped with 29 unskillful deficient in judgment 30 latest last 32 wake and wage stir up and risk 37 injoined them joined themselves. after second, following 39–40 restem . . . course retrace their original course 40 frank appearance undisguised intent 42 servitor officer under your command 43 free duty freely given and loyal service. recommends commends himself and reports to

50 straight straightaway 51 general enemy universal enemy to all Christendom 52 gentle noble 55 place official position 57 particular personal 58 floodgate i.e., overwhelming (as when floodgates are opened) 59 engluts engulfs 60 is still itself remains undiminished. 62 abused deceived 65 deficient defective. lame of sense deficient in sensory perception 66 Sans without 71 After . . . sense according to your own interpretation. our proper my own 72 Stood . . . action were under your accusation. 79 approved proved, esteemed 82 head and front height and breadth, entire extent

Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech, 83  
 And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace;  
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith, 85  
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used 86  
 Their dearest action in the tented field;  
 And little of this great world can I speak 87  
 More than pertains to feats of broils and battle,  
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,  
 I will a round unvarnished tale deliver 92  
 Of my whole course of love—what drugs, what  
 charms,  
 What conjuration, and what mighty magic,  
 For such proceeding I am charged withal,  
 I won his daughter.  
 BRABANTIO A maiden never bold;  
 Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion  
 Blushed at herself; and she, in spite of nature,  
 Of years, of country, credit, everything,  
 To fall in love with what she feared to look on!  
 It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect  
 That will confess perfection so could err  
 Against all rules of nature, and must be driven  
 To find out practices of cunning hell  
 Why this should be. I therefore vouch again  
 That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
 Or with some dram conjured to this effect,  
 He wrought upon her.  
 DUKE To vouch this is no proof,  
 Without more wider and more overt test  
 Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
 Of modern seeming do prefer against him.  
 FIRST SENATOR But Othello, speak.  
 Did you by indirect and forc'd courses  
 Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?  
 Or came it by request and such fair question  
 As soul to soul affordeth?  
 OTHELLO I do beseech you,  
 Send for the lady to the Sagittary  
 And let her speak of me before her father.  
 If you do find me foul in her report,  
 The trust, the office I do hold of you  
 Not only take away, but let your sentence  
 Even fall upon my life.  
 DUKE Fetch Desdemona hither.  
 OTHELLO [to Iago]  
 Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.  
 [Exeunt Iago and attendants.]

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven  
 I do confess the vices of my blood, 125  
 So justly to your grave ears I'll present 126  
 How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,  
 And she in mine.  
 DUKE Say it, Othello.  
 OTHELLO  
 Her father loved me, oft invited me,  
 Still questioned me the story of my life 131  
 From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes  
 That I have passed.  
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days  
 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,  
 Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,  
 Of moving accidents by flood and field, 137  
 Of hairbreadth scapes i'th'imminent deadly breach, 138  
 Of being taken by the insolent foe  
 And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence,  
 And portance in my travels' history, 141  
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle, 142  
 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch  
 heaven, 143  
 It was my hint to speak—such was my process—  
 And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads 146  
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear  
 Would Desdemona seriously incline;  
 But still the house affairs would draw her thence,  
 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 153  
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
 But not intentively. I did consent, 157  
 And often did beguile her of her tears,  
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
 That my youth suffered. My story being done,  
 She gave me for my pains a world of sighs.  
 She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing  
 strange, 162  
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.  
 She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished  
 That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked  
 me, 165  
 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. 168  
 She loved me for the dangers I had passed,

83 **Rude** Unpolished 85 **since** . . . **pith** i.e., since I was seven. (*Pith* means "strength, vigor.") 86 **Till** . . . **wasted** until some nine months ago (since when Othello has evidently not been on active duty, but in Venice) 87 **dearest** most valuable 92 **round** plain 95 **withal** with 97-8 **her** . . . **herself** i.e., she blushed easily at herself. (*Motion* can suggest the impulse of the soul or of the emotions, or physical movement.) 99 **years** i.e., difference in age. **credit** virtuous reputation 102 **confess** concede (that) 104 **practices** plots 105 **vouch** assert 106 **blood** passions 107 **dram** . . . **effect** dose made by magical spells to have this effect 109 **more wider** fuller. **test** testimony 110 **habits** garments, i.e., appearances. **poor likelihoods** weak inferences 111 **modern seeming** commonplace assumption. **prefer** bring forth 113 **forced courses** means used against her will 115 **question** conversation

125 **blood** passions, human nature 126 **justly** truthfully, accurately 131 **Still** continually 137 **moving accidents** stirring happenings 138 **i'th'imminent** . . . **breach** in death-threatening gaps made in a fortification 141 **portance** conduct 142 **antres** caverns. **idle** barren, desolate 143 **Rough quarries** rugged rock formations 144 **hint** occasion, opportunity 146 **Anthropophagi** man-eaters. (A term from Pliny's *Natural History*.) 153 **pliant** well-suited 155 **dilate** relate in detail 156 **by parcels** piecemeal 157 **intentively** with full attention, continuously. 162 **passing** exceedingly 165 **made her** (1) created her to be (2) made for her 168 **hint** (1) opportunity (2) hint (in the modern sense)

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.  
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.  
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;  
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. *[He joins the hands of Othello  
and Desdemona.]*

I here do give thee that with all my heart  
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,  
I am glad at soul I have no other child,  
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

DUKE

Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence  
Which, as a grece 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.  
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.

175 **Take . . . best** make the best of a bad bargain. 184 **education** upbringing 185 **learn** teach 186 **of duty** to whom duty is due 190 **challenge** claim 194 **get** beget 196 **with all my heart** wherein my whole affection has been engaged 197 **with all my heart** willingly, gladly 198 **For your sake** Because of you 200 **escape** elopement 201 **clogs** (Literally, blocks of wood fastened to the legs of criminals or animals to inhibit escape.) 202 **like yourself** i.e., as you would, in your proper temper. **lay a sentence** apply a maxim 203 **grece** step 205–6 **When . . . depended** When all hope of remedy is past, our sorrows are ended by realizing that the worst has already happened which lately we hoped would not happen. 207 **mischieff** misfortune, injury 208 **next** nearest 209–10 **What . . . makes** When fortune takes away what cannot be saved, patience makes a mockery of fortune's wrongdoing.

The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief;  
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief. 212

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 215  
But the free comfort which from thence he hears, 216  
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow 217  
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow. 218  
These sentences, to sugar or to gall, 219  
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal. 220  
But words are words. I never yet did hear  
That the bruised heart was piercèd through the ear. 222

M

DUKE

The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes  
for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best 225  
known to you; and though we have there a substitute 226  
of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign 227  
mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you. 228  
You must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of 229  
your new fortunes with this more stubborn and 230  
boisterous expedition. 231

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OTHELLO

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize 234  
A natural and prompt alacrity 235  
I find in hardness, and do undertake 236  
These present wars against the Ottomites.  
Most humbly therefore bending to your state, 238  
I crave fit disposition for my wife,  
Due reference of place and exhibition, 240  
With such accommodation and besort 241  
As levels with her breeding. 242

DUKE

Why, at her father's.

BRABANTIO

I will not have it so.

OTHELLO

Nor I.

DESDEMONA

Nor I. I would not there reside,  
To put my father in impatient thoughts  
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,  
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear, 247

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212 **spends a bootless grief** indulges in unavailing grief. 215–18 **He bears . . . borrow** A person can easily be comforted by your maxim that enjoys its platitudinous comfort without having to experience the misfortune that occasions sorrow, but anyone whose grief bankrupts his poor patience is left with your saying and his sorrow, too. (*Bears the sentence* also plays on the meaning, "receives judicial sentence.") 219–20 **These . . . equivocal** These fine maxims are equivocal, being equally appropriate to happiness or bitterness. 222 **piercèd . . . ear** relieved by mere words reaching it through the ear. 225 **fortitude** strength 226 **substitute** deputy 227 **allowed** acknowledged 227–8 **opinion . . . on you** general opinion, an important determiner of affairs, chooses you as the best man. 229 **slubber** soil, sully 230–1 **stubborn . . . expedition** rough and violent expedition, for which haste is needed. 234 **thrice-driven** thrice sifted, winnowed. **agnize** know in myself, acknowledge 236 **hardness** hardship 238 **bending . . . state** bowing or kneeling to your authority 240–2 **Due . . . breeding** proper respect for her place (as my wife) and maintenance, with such suitable provision and attendance as befits her upbringing. 247 **my unfolding** what I shall unfold or say. **prosperous** favorable

And let me find a charter in your voice,  
 T'assist my simpleness.  
 DUKE What would you, Desdemona?  
 DESDEMONA  
 That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
 My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
 May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued  
 Even to the very quality of my lord.  
 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,  
 The rites for why 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 therefor beg it not  
 To please the palate of my appetite,  
 Nor to comply with heat—the young affects  
 In me defunct—and proper satisfaction,  
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind.  
 And heaven defend your good souls that you think  
 I will your serious and great business scant  
 When she is with me. No, when light-winged toys  
 Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness  
 My speculative and officed instruments,  
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
 Let huswives 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,  
 And speed must answer it.  
 A SENATOR You must away tonight.  
 DESDEMONA  
 Tonight, my lord?  
 DUKE This night.  
 OTHELLO With all my heart.  
 DUKE  
 At nine i'th' morning here we'll meet again.  
 Othello, leave some officer behind,  
 And he shall our commission bring to you,  
 With such things else of quality and respect  
 As doth import you.  
 OTHELLO So please Your Grace, my ancient;

248 A man he is of honesty and trust.  
 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.  
 252 Good night to everyone. [*To Brabantio*] And, noble  
 signor,  
 254 If virtue no delighted beauty lack, 292  
 Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.  
 256 FIRST SENATOR  
 Adieu, brave Moor. Use Desdemona well.  
 BRABANTIO  
 259 Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.  
 260 She has deceived her father, and may thee.  
 261 *Exeunt* [*Duke, Brabantio, Cassio, Senators, and*  
 262 *officers*].  
 263 OTHELLO  
 My life upon her faith!—Honest Iago,  
 My Desdemona must I leave to thee.  
 266 I prithee, let thy wife attend on her,  
 267 And bring them after in the best advantage. 300  
 268 Come, Desdemona. I have but an hour  
 269 Of love, of worldly matters and direction, 302  
 To spend with thee. We must obey the time. 303  
*Exit* [*with Desdemona*].  
 272 RODERIGO Iago—  
 273 IAGO What say'st thou, noble heart?  
 274 RODERIGO What will I do, think'st thou?  
 IAGO Why, go to bed and sleep.  
 276 RODERIGO I will incontinently drown myself. 308  
 277 IAGO If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why,  
 thou silly gentleman?  
 RODERIGO It is silliness to live when to live is torment;  
 and then have we a prescription to die when death is 312  
 our physician.  
 IAGO Oh, villainous! I have looked upon the world for 314  
 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 318  
 would change my humanity with a baboon. 319  
 RODERIGO What should I do? I confess it is my shame  
 to be so fond, but it is not in my virtue to amend it. 321  
 IAGO Virtue? A fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or 322  
 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 325  
 with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, 326  
 either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with 327

248 **charter** privilege, authorization 252 **My . . . fortunes** my plain and total breach of social custom 254 **quality** moral and spiritual identity 256 **parts** qualities 259 **moth** i.e., one who consumes merely 260 **rites** rites of love. (With a suggestion, too, of "rights," sharing.) 261 **heavy** burdensome 262 **dear** grievous 263 **voice** consent. 266 **heat** sexual passion. **young affects** passions of youth, adolescent desires 267 **defunct** done with, at an end. **proper** personal 268 **free** generous 269 **defend** forbid. **think** should think 272 **seel** i.e., make blind (as in falconry, by sewing up the eyes of the hawk during training) 273 **My . . . instruments** my eyes, whose function is to see 274 **That . . . business** in such a way that my sexual pastimes interfere with my official duties 276 **indign** unworthy, shameful 277 **Make head** raise an army. **estimation** reputation. 285 **of quality and respect** of importance and relevance 286 **import** concern

292 **delighted** capable of delighting 300 **in . . . advantage** at the most favorable opportunity. 302 **direction** instructions 303 **the time** the urgency of the present crisis. 308 **incontinently** immediately, without self-restraint 312 **prescription** (1) right based on long-established custom (2) doctor's prescription 314 **villainous** i.e., what perfect nonsense. 318 **guinea hen** (A slang term for a prostitute.) 319 **change** exchange 321 **fond** infatuated. **virtue** strength, nature 322 **fig** (To give a fig is to thrust the thumb between the first and second fingers in a vulgar and insulting gesture.) 325 **hyssop** a herb of the mint family 326 **gender** kind. **distract it with** divide it among 327 **idleness** want of cultivation

industry—why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the beam of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.

RODERIGO It cannot be.

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

328 **corrigible authority** power to correct 329 **beam** balance  
 330 **poise** counterbalance 331 **blood** natural passions 333 **motions**  
 appetites 334 **unbitted** unbridled, uncontrolled 335 **sect or scion**  
 cutting or offshoot. 339 **blind** i.e., newborn and helpless 341 **per-**  
**durable** very durable. **stead** assist 343 **defeat thy favor** disguise  
 your face. **usurped** (The suggestion is that Roderigo is not man  
 enough to have a beard of his own.) 347–8 **an answerable seques-**  
**tration** a corresponding cutting off or estrangement 349 **wills** carnal  
 appetites 351 **locusts** fruit of the carob tree (see Matthew 3:4), or  
 perhaps honeysuckle 352 **coloquintida** colocynth or bitter apple, a  
 purgative. 356 **Make** Raise, collect 357 **sanctimony** (1) an aura of  
 goodness (2) love-worship 358 **erring** wandering, vagabond,  
 unsteady 361 **clean . . . way** entirely unsuitable as a course of action.  
 362 **compassing** encompassing, embracing 364 **fast** true 365 **issue**  
 (successful) outcome. 368 **hearted** fixed in the heart, heartfelt  
 369 **conjunctive** united 372 **Traverse** (A military marching term.)

RODERIGO Where shall we meet i'th' morning?  
 IAGO At my lodging.  
 RODERIGO I'll be with thee betimes. [*He starts to leave.*]  
 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's done my office. I know not if't be true;  
 But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
 Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;  
 The better shall my purpose work on him.  
 Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now:  
 To get his place and to plume up my will  
 In double knavery—How, how?—Let's see:  
 After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
 That he is too familiar with his wife.  
 He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
 To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
 The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
 And will as tenderly be led by the nose  
 As asses are.  
 I have't. It is engendered. Hell and night  
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. *[Exit.]*



2.1

*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  
 Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;  
 A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.  
 U If it hath ruffianed so upon the sea,

376 **betimes** early. 377 **Go to** (An expression of impatience or jolly-  
 ing along others.) 386 **snipe** woodcock, i.e., fool 388 **it is thought**  
 abroad it is rumored 389 **my office** i.e., my sexual function as hus-  
 band. 391 **do . . . surety** act as if on certain knowledge. **holds me**  
**well** regards me favorably 393 **proper** handsome 394 **plume up**  
 put a feather in the cap of, i.e., glorify, gratify 396 **abuse** deceive  
 397 **he** Cassio. **his** Othello's 398 **dispose** disposition 399 **framed**  
 formed, made 400 **free and open** frank and unsuspecting 402 **ten-**  
**derly** readily  
 2.1. **Location:** A seaport in Cyprus. **An open place** near the quay.  
 2 **high-wrought flood** very agitated sea. 3 **main** ocean. (Also at line  
 41.) 7 **ruffianed** raged



What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,  
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

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

MONTANO If that the Turkish fleet  
Be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned;  
It is impossible to 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  
On most part of their fleet.

MONTANO How? Is this true?

THIRD GENTLEMAN The ship is here put in,  
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,  
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,  
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  
And prays the Moor be safe, for they were parted  
With foul and violent tempest.

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN Come, let's do so,  
For every minute is expectancy

8 mountains i.e., of water 9 hold the mortise hold their joints together. (A mortise is the socket hollowed out in fitting timbers.) 10 segregation dispersal 12 chidden i.e., rebuked, repelled (by the shore), and thus shot into the air 13 monstrous mane (The surf is like the mane of a wild beast.) 14 the burning Bear i.e., the constellation Ursa Minor or the Little Bear, which includes the polestar (and hence regarded as the guards of th'ever-fixèd pole in the next line; sometimes the term guards is applied to the two "pointers" of the Big Bear or Dipper, which may be intended here.) 16 like molestation comparable disturbance 17 enchafèd angry 18 If that If 19 embayed sheltered by a bay 20 bear it out survive, weather the storm. 23 designment halts enterprise is crippled. (Literally, "is lame.") 24 wreck shipwreck. sufferance damage, disaster 28 Veronesa from Verona (and perhaps in service with Venice) 34 sadly gravely 38 full perfect 41 the main . . . blue the sea and the sky 42 An indistinct regard indistinguishable in our view. 43 is expectancy gives expectation

8 Of more arrivance. 44  
9 *Enter Cassio.*  
10 CASSIO  
Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,  
12 That so approve the Moor! Oh, let the heavens 46  
Give him defense against the elements,  
13 For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.  
14 MONTANO Is he well shipped?  
CASSIO  
16 His bark is stoutly timbered, and his pilot  
17 Of very expert and approved allowance; 51  
18 Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death, 52  
19 Stand in bold cure.  
20 [A cry] within: "A sail, a sail, a sail!" 53  
CASSIO What noise?  
A GENTLEMAN  
The town is empty. On the brow o'th' sea  
Stand ranks of people, and they cry "A sail!" 55  
23 CASSIO  
24 My hopes do shape him for the governor. 57  
[A shot within.]  
, SECOND GENTLEMAN  
They do discharge their shot of courtesy; 58  
28 Our friends at least.  
CASSIO I pray you, sir, go forth,  
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.  
SECOND GENTLEMAN I shall. *Exit.*  
MONTANO  
But, good Lieutenant, is your general wived?  
CASSIO  
Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid  
34 That paragons description and wild fame, 64  
35 One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens, 65  
36 And in th'essential vesture of creation 66  
Does tire the engineer.  
38 *Enter [Second] Gentleman.*  
How now? Who has put in? 67  
SECOND GENTLEMAN  
41 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the General.  
CASSIO  
42 He's had most favorable and happy speed.  
43 Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
The guttered rocks and congregated sands— 71  
Traitors ensteeped to clog the guiltless keel— 72  
As having sense of beauty, do omit 73  
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by 74

44 arrivance arrival. 46 approve admire, honor 51 approved allowance tested reputation 52–3 not . . . cure not worn thin through repeated application or delayed fulfillment, strongly persist. 55 brow o'th' sea cliff-edge 57 My . . . governor I hope and imagine this ship to be Othello's. 58 discharge . . . courtesy fire a salute in token of respect and courtesy 64 paragons surpasses. wild fame extravagant report 65 quirks witty conceits. blazoning setting forth as though in heraldic language 66–7 And in . . . engineer and in her real, God-given, beauty, (she) defeats any attempt to praise her. (An engineer is one who devises, here a poet.) 67 put in i.e., to harbor. 71 guttered jagged, trenched 72 ensteeped lying under water 73 As as if. omit forbear to exercise 74 mortal deadly

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  
A sennight'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,  
And bring all Cyprus comfort!

*Enter Desdemona, Iago, Roderigo, and Emilia.*

Oh, behold,  
The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.  
[*The gentlemen make curtsy to Desdemona.*]  
Hail to thee, lady! And the grace of heaven  
Before, behind thee, and on every hand  
Enwheel thee round!

DESDEMONA I thank you, valiant Cassio.  
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?  
CASSIO  
He is not yet arrived, nor know I aught  
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

DESDEMONA  
Oh, but I fear—How lost you company?  
CASSIO  
The great contention of the sea and skies  
Parted our fellowship.  
(*Within*) "A sail, a sail!" [*A shot.*]  
But hark. A sail!

SECOND GENTLEMAN  
They give their greeting to the citadel.  
This likewise is a friend.

CASSIO See for the news.  
[*Exit Second Gentleman.*]  
Good Ancient, you are welcome. [*Kissing Emilia.*]  
Welcome, mistress.  
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,  
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding  
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

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

DESDEMONA Alas, she has no speech!  
IAGO In faith, too much.  
I find it still, when I have list 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. 110

78–9 **Whose . . . speed** whose arrival here has happened a week sooner than we expected. 81 **tall** tall-masted 100 **extend** give scope to. **breeding** training in the niceties of etiquette 105 **she has no speech** i.e., she's not a chatterbox, as you allege. 107 **still** always. **list** desire 110 **with thinking** i.e., in her thoughts only.

IAGO  
Come on, come on. You are pictures out of doors, 111  
Bells in your parlors, wildcats in your kitchens, 112  
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended, 113  
Players in your huswifery, and huswives in your beds. 114

78 DESDEMONA Oh, fie upon thee, slanderer!

79 IAGO  
Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk. 116  
81 You rise to play, and go to bed to work.

EMILIA  
You shall not write my praise.  
IAGO No, let me not.

DESDEMONA  
**M** What wouldst write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?  
IAGO  
**I** Oh, gentle lady, do not put me to't,  
For I am nothing if not critical. 121

DESDEMONA  
**L** Come on, essay.—There's one gone to the harbor? 122  
IAGO Ay, madam.

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

IAGO  
**S** I am about it, but indeed my invention  
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze— 128  
**H** It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors, 129  
**A** And thus she is delivered:  
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,  
The one's for use, the other useth it. 132

DESDEMONA  
**N** Well praised! How if she be black and witty? 133  
IAGO  
**O** If she be black, and thereto have a wit,  
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit. 135

DESDEMONA  
**N** Worse and worse.  
EMILIA How if fair and foolish?  
IAGO  
**8** She never yet was foolish that was fair,  
**100** For even her folly helped her to an heir. 138

DESDEMONA These are old fond paradoxes to make fools 139

**5**  
**9**  
**B** **111 pictures out of doors** i.e., as pretty as pictures, and silently well-behaved in public **112 Bells** i.e., jangling, noisy, and brazen. **in your kitchens** i.e., in domestic affairs. (Ladies would not do the cooking.) **113 Saints . . . injuries** i.e., putting on airs of sanctity and innocence when wronged by others **114 Players . . . beds** play-actors at domesticity and truly energetic only as lovers in bed. **116 a Turk** an infidel, not to be believed. **121 critical** censorious. **122 essay** try. **125 The thing I am** i.e., my anxious self **128 birdlime** sticky substance used to catch small birds. **frieze** coarse woolen cloth **129 labors** (1) exerts herself (2) prepares to deliver a child. (With a following pun on *delivered* in line 130.) **132 The one's . . . it** i.e., her cleverness will make use of her beauty. **133 black** dark-complexioned, brunette **135 She'll . . . fit** she will find a fair-complexioned mate suited to her dark complexion. (Punning on *wight*, person, and contrasting *white* and *black*, with suggestion of sexual coupling.) **138 folly** (With added meaning of "lechery, wantonness.") **to an heir** i.e., to bear a child. **139 fond** foolish

laugh i'th'alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou  
for her that's foul and foolish? 141

IAGO  
There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,  
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do. 142

DESDEMONA Oh, heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the worst  
best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserv-  
ing woman indeed, one that, in the authority of her mer-  
it, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself? 147

IAGO  
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,  
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,  
She was a wight, if ever such wight were—  
DESDEMONA To do what?  
IAGO  
To suckle fools and chronicle small beer. 160

DESDEMONA Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion! Do  
not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband.  
How say you, Cassio? Is he not a most profane and  
liberal counselor? 163

CASSIO He speaks home, madam. You may relish him  
more in the soldier than in the scholar. 165

[Cassio and Desdemona stand together,  
conversing intimately.]

IAGO [aside] He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said,  
whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as  
great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; I will  
gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true; 'tis so,  
indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your  
lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed  
your three fingers so oft, which now again you are  
most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well kissed! An  
excellent courtesy! 'Tis so, indeed. Yet again your fin-  
gers to your lips? Would they were clyster pipes for  
your sake! [Trumpet within.] The Moor! I know his  
trumpet. 176

CASSIO 'Tis truly so.  
DESDEMONA Let's meet him and receive him.

141 foul ugly 142 thereunto in addition 143 foul sluttish 147 put  
... vouch compel the approval 149 Had ... will was never at a loss  
for words 150 gay extravagantly clothed 151 Fled ... may avoided  
temptation where the choice was hers 153 Bade ... stay i.e.,  
resolved to put up with her injury and bade her anger to cease  
155 To ... tail i.e., to be selfishly demanding and ambitious. (The  
fish's lower body, below the rib cage, has fewest bones and is gener-  
ally the succulent portion. With sexual implication as well: *cod's head*  
can be slang for "penis," and *tail* for "pudendum.") 160 To ... beer  
i.e., To breastfeed babies and keep petty household accounts.  
163–4 profane and liberal irreverent and licentious 165 home right  
to the target. (A term from fencing.) relish appreciate 166 in in the  
character of 167 well said well done 170 gyve fetter, shackle.  
courtship courtesy, show of courtly manners. You say true i.e.,  
That's right, go ahead 174 the sir i.e., the fine gentleman  
176 clyster pipes tubes used for enemas and douches

CASSIO Lo, where he comes!  
*Enter Othello and attendants.*

OTHELLO  
Oh, my fair warrior!  
DESDEMONA My dear Othello!  
OTHELLO  
It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me. O 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  
Olympus-high, and duck again as low  
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,  
'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear  
My soul hath her content so absolute  
That not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate.

DESDEMONA The heavens forbid 193  
But that our loves and comforts should increase  
Even as our days do grow!  
OTHELLO Amen to that, sweet powers!  
I cannot speak enough of this content.  
It stops me here; it is too much of joy.  
And this, and this, the greatest discords be 199  
[They kiss.]  
That e'er our hearts shall make!  
IAGO [aside] Oh, you are well tuned now!  
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music, 202  
As honest as I am. 203

OTHELLO Come, let us to the castle.  
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. Oh, my sweet, 207  
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts.—I prithee, good Iago,  
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers. 209  
Bring thou the master to the citadel;  
He is a good one, and his worthiness 211  
Does challenge much respect.—Come, Desdemona.— 212  
Once more, well met at Cyprus!  
*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona [and all  
but Iago and Roderigo].*

IAGO [to a departing attendant] Do thou meet me presently at  
the harbor. [To Roderigo] Come hither. If thou be'st  
valiant—as, they say, base men being in love have 218  
then a nobility in their natures more than is native to  
them—list me. The Lieutenant tonight watches on 220  
the court of guard. First, I must tell thee this: 221  
Desdemona is directly in love with him.

193 Succeeds ... fate i.e., can follow in the unknown future.  
199.1 They kiss (The direction is from the quarto.) 202 set down  
loosen (and hence untune the instrument) 203 As ... I am for all my  
supposed honesty. 207 desired sought after 209 out of fashion  
indecorously, incoherently 211 coffers chests, baggage. 212 master  
ship's captain 214 challenge lay claim to, deserve 218 base men  
even ignoble men 220 list listen to 221 court of guard guardhouse.  
(Cassio is in charge of the watch.)

RODERIGO With him? Why, 'tis not possible.  
 IAGO Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. 224  
 Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor,  
 but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies. To love 226  
 him still for prating? Let not thy discreet heart think it.  
 Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have  
 to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with  
 the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it 230  
 and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor,  
 sympathy in years, manners, and beauties—all which 232  
 the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of these  
 required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will 234  
 find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish  
 and abhor the Moor. Very nature will instruct her in it 236  
 and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this  
 granted—as it is a most pregnant and unforced 238  
 position—who stands so eminent in the degree of this  
 fortune as Cassio does? A knave very voluble, no 240  
 further conscionable than in putting on the mere form  
 of civil and humane seeming for the better compass- 242  
 ing of his salt and most hidden loose affection. Why,  
 none, why, none. A slipper and subtle knave, a finder 244  
 out of occasions, that has an eye can stamp and  
 counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never 246  
 present itself; a devilish knave. Besides, the knave is  
 handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him  
 that folly and green minds look after. A pestilent 249  
 complete knave, and the woman hath found him 250  
 already.  
 RODERIGO I cannot believe that in her. She's full of  
 most blessed condition. 253  
 IAGO Blessed fig's end! The wine she drinks is made of 254  
 grapes. If she had been blessed, she would never have  
 loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see 256  
 her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark  
 that?  
 RODERIGO Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.  
 IAGO Lechery, by this hand. An index and obscure pro- 260  
 logue 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 264  
 mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes  
 the master and main exercise, th'incorporate conclu- 265  
 sion. Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought

224 **thus** i.e., on your lips 226 **but only** 230 **the act of sport** sex  
 231 **favor** appearance 232 **sympathy** correspondence, similarity  
 234 **required conveniences** things conducive to sexual compatibility  
 235 **abused** cheated, revolted. **heave the gorge** experience nausea  
 236 **Very nature** Her very instincts 238 **pregnant** evident, cogent  
 239 **in . . . of as next in line for** 240 **voluble** facile, glib 241 **con-**  
**scionable** conscientious, conscience-bound 242 **humane** polite,  
 courteous 243 **salt** licentious. **affection** passion. 244 **slipper** slip-  
 pery 245 **an eye can stamp** an eye that can coin, create 246 **advan-**  
**tages** favorable opportunities 249 **folly** wantonness. **green**  
 immature 250 **found him** sized him up, perceived his intent  
 253 **condition** disposition. 254 **fig's end** (See 1.3.322 for the vulgar  
 gesture of the fig.) 256 **pudding** sausage. 260 **index** table of con-  
 tents. **obscure** veiled, hidden 264 **mutualities** exchanges, intima-  
 cies. **hard at hand** closely following 265 **th'incorporate** the carnal

you from Venice. Watch you tonight; for the com- 267  
 mand, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll 268  
 not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to  
 anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting 270  
 his discipline, or from what other course you please,  
 which the time shall more favorably minister. 272  
 RODERIGO Well.  
 IAGO Sir, he's rash and very sudden in choler, and haply 274  
 may strike at you. Provoke him that he may, for  
 even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny, 276  
 whose qualification shall come into no true taste again 277  
 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 280  
 profitably removed, without the which there were no  
 expectation of our prosperity.  
 RODERIGO I will do this, if you can bring it to any  
 opportunity.  
 IAGO I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. 285  
 I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.  
 RODERIGO Adieu. *Exit.*  
 IAGO  
 That Cassio loves her, I do well believe't;  
 That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit. 289  
 The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
 Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,  
 And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
 A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,  
 Not out of absolute lust—though peradventure  
 I stand accountant for as great a sin— 295  
 But partly led to diet my revenge 296  
 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
 Hath leaped into my seat, the thought whereof  
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my innards;  
 And nothing can or shall content my soul  
 Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,  
 Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
 At least into a jealousy so strong  
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace 305  
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip, 306  
 Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb— 307  
 For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too— 308  
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me 309  
 For making him egregiously an ass  
 And practicing upon his peace and quiet 312

267 **Watch you** Stand watch 267–8 **for . . . you** I'll arrange for you to  
 be appointed, given orders; or, I'll put you in charge. 270 **tainting**  
 disparaging 272 **minister** provide. 274 **choler** wrath. **haply** per-  
 haps 276 **mutiny** riot 277 **qualification** pacification. **true taste**  
 i.e., acceptable state 280 **prefer** advance 285 **warrant** assure.  
**by and by** immediately 289 **apt** probable. **credit** credibility.  
 295 **accountant** accountable 296 **diet** feed 305 **trace** i.e., pursue,  
 dog; or, keep hungry (?) or perhaps *trash*, a hunting term, meaning to  
 put weights on a hunting dog in order to slow him down 306 **For**  
 to make more eager for. **stand . . . on** responds properly when I incite  
 him to quarrel 307 **on the hip** at my mercy, where I can throw him.  
 (A wrestling term.) 308 **Abuse** slander. **rank garb** coarse manner,  
 gross fashion 309 **with my nightcap** i.e., as a rival in my bed, as one  
 who gives me cuckold's horns 312 **practicing upon** plotting against

Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused.  
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. *Exit.*



## 2.2

*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 make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him. For, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

*Exit.*



## [2.3]

*Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and attendants.*

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

CASSIO  
Iago hath direction what to do,  
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. [*To Desdemona*] Come,  
my dear love,  
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;  
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.—  
Good night.

*Exit [Othello, with Desdemona and attendants].*

*Enter Iago.*

CASSIO Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch.

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

CASSIO She's a most exquisite lady.

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

### 2.2. Location: Cyprus.

**3 mere perdition** complete destruction **4 triumph** public celebration  
**6 addition** inclination **8 offices** rooms where food and drink are kept  
**2.3. Location: Cyprus. The citadel.**  
**2 stop** restraint **3 outsport** celebrate beyond the bounds of **7 with your earliest** at your earliest convenience **9–10 The purchase** . . . you i.e., though married, we haven't yet consummated our love. (Possibly, too, Othello is referring to pregnancy. At all events, his desire for sexual union is manifest.) **13 Not this hour** Not for an hour yet **14 cast** dismissed **15 who** i.e., Othello

CASSIO Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature.  
IAGO What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley 21  
to provocation.

CASSIO An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.  
IAGO And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love? 24

CASSIO She is indeed perfection.

IAGO Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, Lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of 27  
Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the 28  
health of black Othello.

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

IAGO Oh, they are our friends. But one cup! I'll drink for you. 34  
35

CASSIO I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity and dare not task my weakness with any more. 37  
38

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 I'll do't, but it dislikes me. *Exit.* 44

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 47  
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool  
Roderigo,  
Whom love hath turned almost the wrong side out,  
To Desdemona hath tonight caroused 50  
Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch.  
Three lads of Cyprus—noble swelling spirits,  
That hold their honors in a wary distance, 52  
The very elements of this warlike isle—  
Have I tonight flustered with flowing cups, 53  
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of  
drunkards 54  
Am I to put our Cassio in some action 56  
That may offend the isle.—But here they come.

*Enter Cassio, Montano, and gentlemen; [servants following with wine].*

If consequence do but approve my dream, 59  
My boat sails freely both with wind and stream. 60

CASSIO 'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already. 61

**21 sounds a parley** calls for a conference, issues an invitation  
**24 alarum** signal calling men to arms. (Continuing the military metaphor of *parley*, line 21.) **27 stoup** measure of liquor, two quarts. **without** outside. **brace** pair **28 fain have a measure** gladly drink a toast **34–5 for you** in your place. (Iago will do the steady drinking to keep the gallants company while Cassio has only one cup.) **37 qualified** diluted. **innovation** disturbance, insurrection **38 here** i.e., in my head. **44 it dislikes me** i.e., I'm reluctant. **47 offense** readiness to give or take offense **50 caroused** drunk off **51 pottle-deep** to the bottom of the tankard. **watch** stand watch.  
**52 swelling** proud **53 hold** . . . **distance** i.e., are extremely sensitive of their honor **54 elements** lifeblood **56 watch** are members of the guard **59 If** . . . **dream** If subsequent events will only confirm my dreams and hopes **60 stream** current. **61 rouse** full draft of liquor

MONTANO Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

IAGO Some wine, ho!  
 [He sings.] "And let me the cannikin clink, clink,  
 And let me the cannikin clink.  
 A soldier's a man,  
 Oh, man's life's but a span;  
 Why, then, let a soldier drink."  
 Some wine, boys!

CASSIO 'Fore God, an excellent song.  
 IAGO I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander—drink, ho!—are nothing to your English.

CASSIO Is your Englishman so exquisite in his drinking?  
 IAGO Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit ere the next pottle can be filled.

CASSIO To the health of our general!  
 MONTANO I am for it, Lieutenant, and I'll do you justice.  
 IAGO O sweet England! [He sings.]

"King Stephen was and-a worthy peer,  
 His breeches cost him but a crown;  
 He held them sixpence all too dear,  
 With that he called the tailor lown.

He was a wight of high renown,  
 And thou art but of low degree.  
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down;  
 Then take thy auld cloak about thee."

Some wine, ho!  
 CASSIO 'Fore God, 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, God's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO It's true, good Lieutenant.  
 CASSIO For mine own part—no offense to the General, nor any man of quality—I hope to be saved.

IAGO And so do I too, Lieutenant.

CASSIO 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.—God forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now. I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

GENTLEMEN Excellent well.  
 CASSIO Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk. *Exit.*

65 MONTANO To th' platform, masters. Come, let's set the watch. 114  
 [Exeunt Gentlemen.]

68 IAGO You see this fellow that is gone before. He's a soldier fit to stand by Caesar And give direction; and do but see his vice. 'Tis to his virtue a just equinox, 118  
 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.

M I MONTANO But is he often thus?  
 77 L IAGO

'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep. He'll watch the horologe a double set, 124  
 If drink rock not his cradle.

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

87 S Enter Roderigo.  
 H IAGO [aside to him] How now, Roderigo?  
 I pray you, after the Lieutenant; go. [Exit Roderigo.]

A MONTANO And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor  
 90 Should hazard such a place as his own second 133  
 91 With one of an engrafted infirmity. 134  
 It were an honest action to say so  
 To the Moor.

O IAGO Not I, for this fair island.  
 N I do love Cassio well and would do much  
 To cure him of this evil. [Cry within: "Help! Help!"]  
 But, hark! What noise? 138

8 Enter Cassio, pursuing Roderigo.

O CASSIO Zounds, you rogue! You rascal!

MONTANO What's the matter, Lieutenant?

5 CASSIO A knave teach me my duty? I'll beat the knave  
 into a twiggen bottle. 142

9 Roderigo Beat me?

CASSIO Dost thou prate, rogue? [He strikes Roderigo.]

MONTANO Nay, good Lieutenant. [Restraining him.] I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

CASSIO Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazard. 148

65 **cannikin** small drinking vessel 68 **span** brief span of time. (Compare Psalm 39:5 as rendered in the Book of Common Prayer: "Thou hast made my days as it were a span long.") 73 **potting** drinking. 77 **drinks you drinks** your Dane your typical Dane 78 **sweats not** i.e., need not exert himself. **Almain** German 82 **I'll** . . . **justice** i.e., I'll drink as much as you. 87 **lown** lout, rascal. 90 **pride** i.e., extravagance in dress 91 **auld** old 102 **quality** rank

114 **set the watch** mount the guard. 118 **just equinox** exact counterpart. (*Equinox* is an equal length of days and nights.) 124 **watch** . . . **set** stay awake twice around the clock or *horologe* 133–4 **hazard** . . . **With risk** giving such an important position as his second in command to 134 **engrafted** engrafted, inveterate 138.1 **pursuing** (The quarto text reads, "*driuing in.*") 142 **twiggen** wicker-covered. (Cassio vows to assail Roderigo until his skin resembles wickerwork or until he has driven Roderigo through the holes in a wickerwork.) 148 **mazard** i.e., head. (Literally, a drinking vessel.)

MONTANO	Come, come, you're drunk.		
CASSIO	Drunk?	[ <i>They fight.</i> ]	
IAGO	[ <i>aside to Roderigo</i> ]		
	Away, I say. Go out and cry a mutiny.	151	
		[ <i>Exit Roderigo.</i> ]	
	Nay, good Lieutenant—God's will, gentlemen—		
	Help, ho!—Lieutenant—sir—Montano—sir—		
	Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch indeed!	154	
		[ <i>A bell rings.</i> ]	
	Who's that which rings the bell?—Diablo, ho!	155	
	The town will rise. God's will, Lieutenant, hold!	156	
	You'll be ashamed forever.		
	<i>Enter Othello and attendants [with weapons].</i>		
OTHELLO	What is the matter here?		
MONTANO	Zounds, I bleed still.		
	I am hurt to th' death. He dies! [ <i>He thrusts at Cassio.</i> ]		
OTHELLO	Hold, for your lives!		
IAGO			
	Hold, ho! Lieutenant—sir—Montano—gentlemen—		
	Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?		
	Hold! The General speaks to you. Hold, for shame!		
OTHELLO			
	Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?		
	Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that	164	
	Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?	165	
	For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl!		
	He that stirs next to carve for his own rage	167	
	Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.	168	
	Silence that dreadful bell. It frights the isle		
	From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?	170	
	Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,		
	Speak. Who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.		
IAGO			
	I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,	174	
	In quarter and in terms like bride and groom	175	
	Devesting them for bed; and then, but now—		
	As if some planet had unwitting men—		
	Swords out, and tilting one at others' breasts	178	
	In opposition bloody. I cannot speak	179	
	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?	182	
CASSIO			
	I pray you, pardon me. I cannot speak.		
OTHELLO			
	Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;	184	
	The gravity and stillness of your youth	185	
	The world hath noted, and your name is great		
	In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter	187	
	That you unlace your reputation thus	188	
	And spend your rich opinion for the name	189	
	Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.		
MONTANO			
	Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.		
	Your officer, Iago, can inform you—		
	While I spare speech, which something now offends		
	me—	193	
	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		
	When violence assails us.		
OTHELLO			
	Now, by heaven,		
	My blood begins my safer guides to rule,	199	
	And passion, having my best judgment collid,	200	
	Essays to lead the way. Zounds, if I stir,	201	
	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;	204	
	And he that is approved in this offense,	205	
	Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,		
	Shall lose me. What? In a town of war	207	
	Yet wild, the people's hearts brim full of fear,		
	To manage private and domestic quarrel?	209	
	In night, and on the court and guard of safety?	210	
	'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began't?		
MONTANO	[ <i>to Iago</i> ]		
	If partially affined, or leagued in office,	212	
	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		
	Than it should do offense to Michael Cassio;		
	Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth		
	Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, General:		
	Montano and myself being in speech,		
	There comes a fellow crying out for help,		
	And Cassio following him with determined sword		
	To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman	222	
		[ <i>indicating Montano</i> ]	
	Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause.	223	
	Myself the crying fellow did pursue,		
	Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out—		
	The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,		

151 mutiny riot. 154 masters sirs. 154.1 *A bell rings* (This direction is from the quarto, as are *Exit Roderigo* at line 131, *They fight* at line 150, and *with weapons* at line 157.1.) 155 *Diablo* The devil 156 rise grow riotous. 164–5 to ourselves . . . Ottomites inflict on ourselves the harm that heaven has prevented the Turks from doing (by destroying their fleet). 167 carve for i.e., indulge, satisfy with his sword 168 Holds . . . light i.e., places little value on his life. upon his motion if he moves. 170 propriety proper state or condition. 174 In quarter . . . terms in conduct and speech 175 Devesting them undressing themselves 178 speak explain 179 peevish odds childish quarrel 182 are thus forgot have forgotten yourself thus.

184 wont be accustomed to be 185 stillness sobriety 187 censure judgment. 188 unlace undo, lay open (as one might loose the strings of a purse containing reputation) 189 opinion reputation 193 something somewhat. offends pains 199 blood passion (of anger). guides i.e., reason 200 collid darkened 201 Essays undertakes 204 rout riot 205 approved in found guilty of 207 town of town garrisoned for 209 manage undertake 210 on . . . safety at the main guardhouse or headquarters and on watch. 212 If . . . office If made partial by personal relationship or by your being fellow officers 222 execute upon him (1) proceed violently against him (2) execute him. 223 his pause him to stop.

Outran my purpose, and I returned, the 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—  
 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.  
 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,  
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,  
 Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received  
 From him that fled some strange indignity,  
 Which patience could not pass.

OTHELLO I know, Iago,  
 Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,  
 Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee,  
 But nevermore be officer of mine.

*Enter Desdemona, attended.*

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

DESDEMONA

What is the matter, dear?

OTHELLO

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

[*Montano is led off.*]

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.

*Exit [with all but Iago and Cassio].*

IAGO What, are you hurt, Lieutenant?

CASSIO Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO Marry, God forbid!

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

IAGO As I am an honest man, I thought you had  
 received some bodily wound; there is more sense in  
 that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most  
 false imposition, oft got without merit and lost with-  
 out deserving. You have lost no reputation at all,  
 unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man,  
 there are more 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.

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

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

235 CASSIO I know not.

237 IAGO Is't possible?

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

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

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

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

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

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

CASSIO I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

IAGO You or any man living may be drunk at a time,  
 man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife  
 is now the general—I may say so in this respect, for  
 that he hath devoted and given up himself to the  
 contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts  
 and graces. Confess yourself freely to her; importune  
 her help to put you in your place again. She is of so  
 free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she  
 holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she  
 is requested. This broken joint between you and her  
 husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes  
 against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love  
 shall grow stronger than it was before.

8  
 0  
 5  
 9  
 B  
 U  
 CASSIO You advise me well.

227 rather sooner 235 forget forget themselves. 237 those . . . best  
 i.e., even those who are well disposed toward them 240 pass pass  
 over, overlook 248 be your surgeon i.e., make sure you receive  
 medical attention. 263 false imposition thing artificially imposed  
 and of no real value 266 recover regain favor with 267 cast in his  
 mood dismissed in a moment of anger 267–8 in policy done for  
 expediency's sake and as a public gesture 268–9 would . . . lion i.e.,  
 would make an example of a minor offender in order to deter more  
 important and dangerous offenders. 269 Sue Petition

272 slight worthless 273 speak parrot talk nonsense, rant. (*Discourse  
 fustian*, lines 274–5, has much the same meaning.) 283 wherefore  
 why. 286 applause desire for applause 293 moraler moralizer.  
 298 Hydra the Lernaean Hydra, a monster with many heads and the  
 ability to grow two heads when one was cut off, slain by Hercules  
 as the second of his twelve labors 301 inordinate immoderate  
 306 approved proved by experience 307 at a time at one time or  
 another 309–10 for that that 311 mark, and denotement (Both  
 words mean "observation.") parts qualities 314 free generous  
 317 splinter bind with splints 318 lay stake, wager



IAGO I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.  
 CASSIO I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.  
 IAGO You are in the right. Good night, Lieutenant. I must to the watch.  
 CASSIO Good night, honest Iago. *Exit Cassio.*  
 IAGO  
 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 As the free elements. And then for her To win the Moor—were't to renounce his baptism, All seals and symbols of redeemed sin— His soul is so enfettered to her love That she may make, unmake, do what she list, 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, 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, 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 That shall enmesh them all.

*Enter Roderigo.*

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

IAGO  
 How poor are they that have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees? 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, hast cashiered Cassio. Though other things grow fair against the sun, Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe. Content thyself awhile. By the Mass, 'tis morning! Pleasure and action make the hours seem short. Retire thee; go where thou art billeted. Away, I say! Thou shalt know more hereafter. Nay, get thee gone.  
*Exit Roderigo.*  
 Two things are to be done. My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress; I'll set her on; Myself the while to draw the Moor apart And bring him jump when he may Cassio find Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way. Dull not device by coldness and delay. *Exit.*

3.1

*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?  
 A MUSICIAN How, sir, how?  
 CLOWN Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?  
 A MUSICIAN Ay, marry, are they, sir.  
 CLOWN Oh, thereby hangs a tail.  
 A MUSICIAN Whereby hangs a tale, sir?  
 CLOWN Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I know. But, masters, here's money for you. *[He gives money.]* And the General so likes your music that he desires you, for love's sake, to make no more noise with it.  
 A MUSICIAN Well, sir, we will not.  
 CLOWN 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.  
 A MUSICIAN We have none such, sir.

321 protest insist, declare 323 freely unreservedly 325 check repulse 331 free (1) free from guile (2) freely given 332 Probal probable, reasonable 334 Th'inclining the favorably disposed. subdue persuade 335 framed as fruitful created as generous 336 free elements i.e., earth, air, fire, and water, unrestrained and spontaneous. 338 seals tokens 341 her appetite her desire, or, perhaps, his desire for her 342 function exercise of faculties (weakened by his fondness for her). 343 parallel i.e., seemingly in his best interests but at the same time threatening 344 Divinity of hell! Inverted theology of hell (which seduces the soul to its damnation)! 345 put on further, instigate 346 suggest tempt 351 repeals him attempts to get him restored 354 pitch i.e., (1) foul blackness (2) a snaring substance 358 fills up the cry merely takes part as one of the pack. 360 issue outcome 361 so much just so much and no more

369 cashiered dismissed from service 370–1 Though . . . ripe i.e., Plans that are well prepared and set expeditiously in motion will soonest ripen into success. 377 move plead 380 jump precisely 382 device plot. coldness lack of zeal  
 3.1. Location: Before the chamber of Othello and Desdemona.  
 1 Masters Good sirs. content your pains reward your efforts  
 4 speak i'th' nose (1) sound nasal (2) sound like one whose nose has been attacked by syphilis. (Naples was popularly supposed to have a high incidence of venereal disease.) 10 wind instrument (With a joke on flatulence. The tail, line 8, that hangs nearby the wind instrument suggests the penis.) 16 may not cannot

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

CASSIO Dost thou hear, mine honest friend?

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

CASSIO Prithee, keep up thy quilllets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee. [*He gives money.*] If the gentlewoman that attends the General's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favor of speech. Wilt thou do this? 24

CLOWN She is stirring, sir. If she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her. 27

CASSIO Do, good my friend. *Exit Clown.*

*Enter Iago.*

In happy time, Iago.

IAGO You have not been abed, then?

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

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

CASSIO I humbly thank you for't. *Exit [Iago].*  
I never knew  
A Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter Emilia.*

EMILIA Good morrow, good Lieutenant. I am sorry For your displeasure; but all will sure be well. 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 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, 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 To speak your bosom freely. 58

24 keep . . . quilllets refrain from quibbling. 27–8 a little . . . speech the favor of a brief talk. 29 stir bestir herself. (With a play on *stirring*, "rousing herself from rest.") 30 seem deem it good, think fit 31 In happy time i.e., Well met 43 Florentine i.e., even a fellow Florentine. (Iago is a Venetian; Cassio is a Florentine.) 45 displeasure fall from favor 47 stoutly spiritedly. 48 fame reputation, importance 49 affinity kindred, family connection 50 protests insists 52 occasion . . . front opportunity by the forelock 58 bosom inmost thoughts

CASSIO I am much bound to you. *[Exeunt.]*



### 3.2

*Enter Othello, Iago, and Gentlemen.*

OTHELLO [*giving letters*] These letters give, Iago, to the pilot, And by him do my duties to the Senate. 2  
That done, I will be walking on the works; 3  
Repair there to me. 30

IAGO Well, my good lord, I'll do't. 4

OTHELLO This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?  
GENTLEMEN We'll wait upon Your Lordship. *Exeunt.* 6



### 3.3

*Enter Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia.*

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

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

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

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

DESDEMONA 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 politic distance. 12

CASSIO Ay, but, lady, That policy may either last so long, Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet, Or breed itself so out of circumstance, That, I being absent and my place supplied, My general will forget my love and service. 13  
15  
16  
17

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. I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience; 23

3.2. Location: The citadel.

2 do my duties convey my respects 3 works breastworks, fortifications 4 Repair return, come 6 wait upon attend

3.3. Location: The citadel.

12 strangeness aloofness 13 politic required by wise policy 15 Or . . . diet or sustain itself at length upon such trivial and meager technicalities 16 breed . . . circumstance continually renew itself so out of chance events, or yield so few chances for my being pardoned 17 supplied filled by another person 19 doubt fear 20 warrant guarantee 23 watch him tame tame him by keeping him from sleeping. (A term from falconry.) out of patience past his endurance

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  
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter Othello and Iago [at a distance].*

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,  
Unfit for mine own purposes.  
DESDEMONA Well, do your discretion. *Exit Cassio.*  
IAGO Ha? I like not that.  
OTHELLO What dost thou say?  
IAGO  
Nothing, my lord; or if—I know not what.  
OTHELLO  
Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?  
IAGO  
Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,  
That he would steal away so guiltylike,  
Seeing you coming.  
OTHELLO I do believe 'twas he.  
DESDEMONA [*joining them*] 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,  
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.  
I prithee, call him back.  
OTHELLO Went he hence now?  
DESDEMONA Yes, faith, so humbled  
That he hath left part of his grief with me  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.  
OTHELLO  
Not now, sweet Desdemon. 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 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, on Wednesday morn.  
I prithee, name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent;

24 board dining table. shrift confessional 27 solicitor advocate  
28 away up. 34 do your discretion do as you think fit. 49 His . . .  
take let him be reconciled to you right away 51 in cunning wittingly  
63 dinner (The noontime meal.)

24 And yet his trespass, in our common reason— 70  
Save that, they say, the wars must make example 71  
Out of her best—is not almost a fault 72  
27 T'incur a private check. When shall he come? 73  
28 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, 76  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part—to have so much to do  
To bring him in! By'r Lady, I could do much— 80  
OTHELLO  
Prithee, no more. Let him come when he will;  
I will deny thee nothing.  
DESDEMONA Why, this is not a boon.  
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit 86  
To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed, 88  
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight, 89  
And fearful to be granted.  
OTHELLO I will deny thee nothing.  
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this, 92  
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. 95  
DESDEMONA  
Emilia, come.—Be as your fancies teach you;  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient. *Exit [with Emilia].* 96  
49 OTHELLO  
Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul 98  
51 But I do love thee! And when I love thee not, 99  
Chaos is come again. 100  
IAGO My noble lord—  
OTHELLO What dost thou say, Iago?  
IAGO  
Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed my lady,  
Know of your love?  
OTHELLO  
He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?  
IAGO  
But for a satisfaction of my thought;  
No further harm.  
OTHELLO Why of thy thought, Iago?

70 common reason everyday judgments 71–2 Save . . . best were it  
not that, as the saying goes, military discipline requires making an  
example of the very best men. (*Her* refers to wars as a singular con-  
cept.) 72 not almost scarcely 73 a private check even a private  
reprimand. 76 mamm'ring on wavering or muttering about.  
80 bring him in restore him to favor. 86 peculiar particular, per-  
sonal 88 touch test 89 poise . . . weight delicacy and weightiness  
92 Whereon In return for which 95 straight straightaway. 96 fan-  
cies inclinations 98 wretch (A term of affectionate endearment.)  
99–100 And . . . again i.e., My love for you will last forever, until the  
end of time when chaos will return. (But with an unconscious, ironic  
suggestion that, if anything should induce Othello to cease loving  
Desdemona, the result would be chaos.)

IAGO  
I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

OTHELLO  
Oh, yes, and went between us very oft.

IAGO Indeed?

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

IAGO Honest, my lord?

OTHELLO Honest. Ay, honest.

IAGO My lord, for aught I know.

OTHELLO What dost thou think?

IAGO Think, my lord?

OTHELLO  
"Think, my lord?" By heaven, thou echo'st me,  
As if there were some monster in thy thought  
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something.  
I heard thee say even now, thou lik'st not that,  
When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?  
And when I told thee he was of my counsel 123  
In my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st "Indeed?"  
And didst contract and purse thy brow together 125  
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me, 127  
Show me thy thought.

IAGO My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO I think thou dost;  
And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,  
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them  
breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more;  
For such things in a false disloyal knave  
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just  
They're 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 Men should be what they seem;  
Or those that be not, would they might seem none! 140

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.  
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,  
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.  
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false,  
As where's that palace whereinto foul things

123 of my counsel in my confidence 125 purse knit 127 conceit fancy. 131 for because 133 stops pauses 135 of custom customary 136–7 They're . . . rule they are secret or involuntary expressions of feeling that are too strong to be kept back. 137 For As for 140 seem none not seem at all, not seem to be honest. 148 that that which. free to free with respect to.

Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure  
But some uncleanly apprehensions  
Keep leets and law days, and in sessions sit 153  
With meditations lawful? 154

OTHELLO  
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago, 155  
If thou but think'st him wronged and mak'st his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

IAGO I do beseech you,  
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess— 158  
As I confess it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy 160  
Shapes faults that are not—that your wisdom then,  
From one that so imperfectly conceits, 162  
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  
Out of his scattering and unsure observance. 164  
It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,  
To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO What dost thou mean?

IAGO  
Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls. 169  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something,  
nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO  
You cannot, if my heart were in your hand, 176  
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

OTHELLO Ha?

IAGO Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy.  
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock 179  
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;  
But oh, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er 181  
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet fondly loves! 182

OTHELLO Oh, misery!

IAGO  
Poor and content is rich, and rich enough, 185  
But riches fineless is as poor as winter 186  
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.

153 Keep leets and law days i.e., hold court, set up their authority in one's heart. (Leets are a kind of manor court; law days are the days courts sit in session, or those sessions.) 153–4 and . . . lawful i.e., and coexist in a kind of spiritual conflict with virtuous thoughts. 155 thy friend i.e., Othello 158 vicious wrong 160 jealousy suspicious nature 162 one i.e., myself, Iago. conceits judges, conjectures 164 scattering random 169 immediate essential, most precious 176 if even if 179–80 which . . . feeds on (Jealousy mocks both itself and the sufferer of jealousy; it is self-devouring and is its own punishment.) 180–1 That . . . wronger A cuckolded husband who knows his wife to be unfaithful can at least take comfort in knowing the truth, so that he will not continue to love her or to befriend her lover. (Othello echoes this sentiment in lines 204–6, when he vows that he would end uncertainty and cease to love an unfaithful wife.) 182 tells counts 185 Poor . . . enough To be content with what little one has is the greatest wealth of all. (Proverbial.) 186 fineless boundless



As worthy cause I have to fear I am—  
 And hold her free, I do beseech Your Honor.  
 OTHHELLO Fear not my government.  
 IAGO I once more take my leave.  
 OTHHELLO  
 This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
 And knows all qualities, with a learnèd spirit,  
 Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
 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  
 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  
 And live upon the vapor of a dungeon  
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
 For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;  
 Prerogativèd are they less than the base.  
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.  
 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, oh, then heaven mocks itself!  
 I'll not believe't.  
 DESDEMONA How now, my dear Othello?  
 Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
 By you invited do attend your presence.  
 OTHHELLO  
 I am to blame.  
 DESDEMONA Why do you speak so faintly?  
 Are you not well?  
 OTHHELLO  
 I have a pain upon my forehead here.  
 DESDEMONA  
 Faith, that's with watching. 'Twill away again.  
 [She offers her handkerchief.]  
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
 It will be well.  
 OTHHELLO Your napkin is too little.  
 Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.  
 [He puts the handkerchief from him, and it drops.]

271 **hold her free** regard her as innocent 272 **government** self-control, conduct. 275 **qualities** natures, types 276 **haggard** wild (like a wild female hawk) 277 **jesses** straps fastened around the legs of a trained hawk 278 **I'd . . . wind** i.e., I'd let her go forever. (To release a hawk downwind was to turn it loose.) 279 **prey at fortune** fend for herself in the wild. **Haply, for** Perhaps because 280 **soft . . . conversation** pleasing social graces 281 **chamberers** drawing-room gallants 283 **abused** deceived 290 **Prerogativèd** privileged (to have honest wives). **the base** ordinary citizens. (Socially prominent men are especially prone to the common destiny of being cuckolded and to the public shame that goes with it.) 292 **forkèd** (An allusion to the horns of the cuckold.) 293 **quicken** receive life. (*Quicken* may also mean to swarm with maggots as the body festers, as in 4.2.69, in which case lines 292–3 suggest that *even then*, in death, we are cuckolded by *forkèd* worms.) 296 **generous** noble 297 **attend** await 301 **watching** too little sleep. 303 **napkin** handkerchief 304 **Let it alone** i.e., Never mind.

DESDEMONA  
 I am very sorry that you are not well.  
 Exit [with Othello].  
 EMILIA [picking up the handkerchief]  
 I am glad I have found this napkin.  
 This was her first remembrance from the Moor.  
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times 308  
 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  
 To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out, 312  
 And give't Iago. What he will do with it  
 Heaven knows, not I;  
 I nothing but to please his fantasy. 315  
 M  
 Enter Iago.  
 IAGO  
 L How now? What do you here alone?  
 EMILIA  
 E Do not you chide. I have a thing for you.  
 S IAGO  
 S You have a thing for me? It is a common thing— 318  
 'EMILIA Ha?  
 ' IAGO To have a foolish wife.  
 'EMILIA  
 S Oh, is that all? What will you give me now  
 For that same handkerchief?  
 H IAGO What handkerchief?  
 H EMILIA What handkerchief?  
 A Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;  
 296 That which so often you did bid me steal.  
 297 IAGO Hast stolen it from her?  
 N EMILIA  
 N No, faith. She let it drop by negligence,  
 O And to th'advantage I, being here, took't up. 329  
 O Look, here 'tis.  
 N IAGO A good wench! Give it me.  
 EMILIA  
 What will you do with't, that you have been so earnest  
 To have me filch it?  
 8 IAGO [snatching it] Why, what is that to you?  
 O EMILIA  
 O If it be not for some purpose of import,  
 5 Give't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad  
 304 When she shall lack it.  
 9 IAGO Be not acknown on't. 335  
 B I have use for it. Go, leave me. Exit Emilia.  
 U I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin 337  
 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.

308 **wayward** capricious 312 **work ta'en out** design of the embroidery copied 315 **fantasy** whim. 318 **common thing** (With bawdy suggestion; *common* suggests coarseness and availability to all comers, and *thing* is a slang term for the pudendum.) 329 **to th'advantage** taking the opportunity 335 **lack** miss. **Be . . . on't** Do not confess knowledge of it; keep out of this. 337 **lose** (The Folio spelling, "loose," is a normal spelling for "lose," but it may also contain the idea of "let go," "release.")

Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons, 342  
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste, 343  
 But with a little act upon the blood 344  
 Burn like the mines of sulfur.  
*Enter Othello.*  
 I did say so.  
 Look where he comes! Not poppy nor mandragora 346  
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world 346  
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep 387  
 Which thou owed'st yesterday.  
 OTHELLO Ha, ha, false to me? 349  
 IAGO Why, how now, General? No more of that.  
 OTHELLO  
 Avaunt! Begone! 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  
 What sense had I of her stolen 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 stolen,  
 Let him not know't and he's not robbed at all.  
 IAGO I am sorry to hear this.  
 OTHELLO  
 I had been happy if the general camp,  
 Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,  
 So I had nothing known. Oh, now, forever  
 Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!  
 Farewell the plumed 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,  
 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!  
 And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
 Th'immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,  
 Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.  
 IAGO Is't possible, my lord?  
 OTHELLO  
 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 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 381  
 To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life!  
 IAGO My noble lord—  
 OTHELLO  
 If thou dost slander her and torture me,  
 Never pray more; abandon all remorse; 385  
 On horror's head horrors accumulate; 386  
 Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed; 387  
 For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
 Greater than that.  
 IAGO O grace! O heaven forgive me!  
 Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?  
 God b'wi'you; take mine office. O wretched fool, 391  
 That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice! 392  
 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 395  
 I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offense. 396  
 OTHELLO Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest. 397  
 IAGO  
 I should be wise, for honesty's a fool  
 And loses that it works for.  
 OTHELLO By the world, 399  
 I think my wife be honest and think she is not;  
 I think that thou art just and think thou art not.  
 I'll have some proof. My name, that was as fresh  
 As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black 403  
 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  
 I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion.  
 I do repent me that I put it to you.  
 You would be satisfied?  
 OTHELLO Would? Nay, and I will.  
 IAGO  
 And may; but how? How satisfied, my lord?  
 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on? 411  
 Behold her topped?  
 OTHELLO Death and damnation! Oh!  
 IAGO  
 It were a tedious difficulty, I think,  
 To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then,  
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster 415  
 More than their own. What then? How then? 416  
 What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?  
 It is impossible you should see this,  
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys, 419

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342 conceits fancies, ideas 343 distaste be distasteful 344 act action, working 346 mandragora an opiate made of the mandrake root 349 thou owed'st you did own 356 free carefree 358 wanting missing 362 Pioneers diggers of mines, the lowest grade of soldiers 363 So provided 365 big mighty 369 quality character, essential nature 370 Pride rich display. circumstance pageantry 371 mortal engines i.e., cannon. (Mortal means "deadly.") 372 Jove's dread clamors i.e., thunder

381 probation proof 385 remorse pity, penitent hope for salvation 386 horrors accumulate add still more horrors 387 amazed confounded with horror 391 O wretched fool (Iago addresses himself as a fool for having carried honesty too far.) 392 vice failing, something overdone. 395 profit profitable instruction. hence henceforth 396 sith since. offense i.e., harm to the one who offers help and friendship. 397 Thou shouldst be It appears that you are. (But Iago replies in the sense of "ought to be.") 399 that what 403 Dian Diana, goddess of the moon and of chastity 411 supervisor onlooker 414 Damn them then i.e., They would have to be really incorrigible 415 bolster go to bed together, share a bolster 416 More other. own own eyes. 419 prime lustful

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 might have't.

OTHELLO  
 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,  
 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,  
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves!"  
 And then, sir, would he grip and wring my hand,  
 Cry "O sweet creature!", then kiss me hard,  
 As if he plucked up kisses by the roots  
 That grew upon my lips; then laid his leg  
 Over my thigh, and sighed, and kissed, and then  
 Cried, "Cursèd 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.  
 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

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

OTHELLO I'll tear her all to pieces.

IAGO  
 Nay, but 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  
 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  
 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!

422 Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne 463  
 To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy freight, 464  
 For 'tis of aspics' tongues! 465

IAGO Yet be content. 466

OTHELLO Oh, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO  
 427 Patience, I say. Your mind perhaps may change.  
 428 OTHELLO  
 Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea,  
 Whose icy current and compulsive course  
 Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
 To the Propontic and the Hellespont, 469  
 Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace 472  
 Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
 Till that a capable and wide revenge 475  
 Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven, 476  
 [Kneeling] In the due reverence of a sacred vow  
 I here engage my words.

IAGO Do not rise yet.  
 [He kneels.] Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
 You elements that clip us round about, 479  
 Witness that here Iago doth give up 480  
 The execution of his wit, hands, heart, 482  
 To wronged Othello's service. Let him command,  
 And to obey shall be in me remorse, 484  
 What bloody business ever. [They rise.]

443 OTHELLO I greet thy love, 485  
 444 Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,  
 And will upon the instant put thee to't. 487  
 Within these three days let me hear thee say  
 That Cassio's not alive.

IAGO My friend is dead;  
 'Tis done at your request. But let her live.

OTHELLO  
 450 Damn her, lewd minx! Oh, damn her, damn her! 491  
 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 I am your own forever. *Exeunt.*

53.4

9 *Enter Desdemona, Emilia, and Clown.*  
 DESDEMONA Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant 1  
 Cassio lies? 2

420 salt wanton, sensual. pride heat 422 imputation . . . circumstances strong circumstantial evidence 427 sith since 428 Pricked spurred 443 foregone conclusion previous experience or action. 444 shrewd doubt suspicious circumstance 450 Spotted with strawberries embroidered with a strawberry pattern 457 the slave i.e., Cassio 460 fond foolish. (But also suggesting "affectionate.")

457 463 hearted fixed in the heart 464 freight burden 465 aspics' venomous serpents' 466 content calm. 469 Pontic Sea Black Sea 472 Propontic Sea of Marmora, between the Black Sea and the Aegean. Hellespont Dardanelles, straits where the Sea of Marmora joins with the Aegean 475 capable ample, comprehensive 476 marble i.e., gleaming, polished, and indifferent to human suffering 479 s.d. He kneels (In the quarto text, Iago kneels here after Othello has knelt at line 477.) 480 clip encompass 482 execution exercise, action. wit mind 484 remorse pity (for Othello's wrongs) 485 ever soever. 487 to't to the proof. 491 minx wanton. 3.4. Location: Before the citadel. 1 sirrah (A form of address to an inferior.) 2 lies lodges. (But the Clown makes the obvious pun.)



CLOWN I dare not say he lies anywhere.  
 DESDEMONA Why, man?  
 CLOWN He's a soldier, and for me 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 I know not where he lodges, and for me to de-  
 vise a lodging and say he lies here, or he lies there,  
 were to lie in mine own throat.  
 DESDEMONA Can you inquire him out, and be edified  
 by report?  
 CLOWN I will catechize the world for him; that is, make  
 questions, and by them answer.  
 DESDEMONA 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 Clown.*  
 DESDEMONA  
 Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?  
 EMILIA 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  
 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  
 I will not leave him now till Cassio  
 Be called to him.—How is't with you, my lord?  
 OTHELLO  
 Well, my good lady. [*Aside*] Oh, hardness to  
 dissemble!—  
 How do you, Desdemona?  
 DESDEMONA Well, my good lord.  
 OTHELLO  
 Give me your hand. [*She gives her hand.*] This hand is  
 moist, my lady.  
 DESDEMONA  
 It yet 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; 41  
 For here's a young and sweating devil here  
 That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,  
 A frank one.  
 DESDEMONA You may indeed say so, 44  
 For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.  
 OTHELLO  
 A liberal hand. The hearts of old gave hands, 46  
 But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts. 47  
 DESDEMONA  
 I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise. 13  
 OTHELLO What promise, chuck? 49  
 DESDEMONA  
 I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you. M  
 OTHELLO  
 I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me; 51  
 Lend me thy handkerchief. 19  
 DESDEMONA Here, my lord. [*She offers a handkerchief.*] L  
 OTHELLO  
 That which I gave you. E  
 DESDEMONA I have it not about me. S  
 OTHELLO Not? ,  
 DESDEMONA No, faith, my lord.  
 OTHELLO  
 That's a fault. That handkerchief 26  
 Did an Egyptian to my mother give. S  
 She was a charmer, and could almost read 59  
 The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it  
 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father 61  
 Entirely to her love, but if she lost it  
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye  
 Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt  
 After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me, 65  
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,  
 To give it her. I did so; and take heed on't; 67  
 Make it a darling like your precious eye.  
 To lose't or give't away were such perdition 69  
 As nothing else could match.  
 DESDEMONA Is't possible?  
 OTHELLO  
 'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it. 8  
 A sibyl, that had numbered in the world 71  
 The sun to course two hundred compasses, 73  
 In her prophetic fury sewed the work; 74  
 The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,  
 And it was dyed in mummy which the skillful 76  
 Conserved of maidens' hearts.  
 DESDEMONA I'faith! Is't true? 77

13 lie . . . throat lie egregiously and deliberately. 19 moved my lord petitioned Othello 26 crusadoes Portuguese gold coins 31 humors (Refers to the four bodily fluids thought to determine temperament.) 38 argues gives evidence of. fruitfulness generosity, amorousness, and fecundity. liberal generous and sexually free 40 sequester sequestration

41 castigation corrective discipline. exercise devout i.e., prayer, religious meditation, etc. 44 frank generous, open. (With sexual suggestion.) 46–7 The hearts . . . hearts i.e., In former times, people would give their hearts when they gave their hands to something, but in our decadent present age the joining of hands no longer has that spiritual sense. 49 chuck (A term of endearment.) 51 salt . . . rheum distressful head cold or watering of the eyes 59 charmer sorceress 61 amiable desirable 65 fancies loves. 67 her i.e., to my wife. 69 perdition loss 71 web fabric, weaving 73 compasses annual circlings. (The sibyl, or prophetess, was two hundred years old.) 74 prophetic frenzy of prophetic inspiration. work embroidered pattern 76 mummy medicinal or magical preparation drained from mummified bodies 77 Conserved of prepared or preserved out of

OTHELLO  
 Most veritable. Therefore look to't well.  
 DESDEMONA  
 Then would to God that I had never seen't!  
 OTHELLO Ha? Wherefore?  
 DESDEMONA  
 Why do you speak so startingly and rash?  
 OTHELLO  
 Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak, is't out o'th' way?  
 DESDEMONA Heaven bless us!  
 OTHELLO Say you?  
 DESDEMONA  
 It is not lost; but what an if it were?  
 OTHELLO How?  
 DESDEMONA  
 I say it is not lost.  
 OTHELLO Fetch't, let me see't.  
 DESDEMONA  
 Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.  
 This is a trick to put me from my suit.  
 Pray you, let Cassio be received again.  
 OTHELLO  
 Fetch me the handkerchief! My mind misgives.  
 DESDEMONA Come, come,  
 You'll never meet a more sufficient man.  
 OTHELLO  
 The handkerchief!  
 DESDEMONA I pray, talk me of Cassio.  
 OTHELLO  
 The handkerchief!  
 DESDEMONA A man that all his time  
 Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,  
 Shared dangers with you—  
 OTHELLO The handkerchief!  
 DESDEMONA I'faith, you are to blame.  
 OTHELLO Zounds! *Exit Othello.*  
 EMILIA Is not this man jealous?  
 DESDEMONA I ne'er saw this before.  
 Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief.  
 I am most unhappy in the loss of it.  
 EMILIA  
 'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.  
 They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;  
 They eat us hungerly, and when they are full  
 They belch us.  
*Enter Iago and Cassio.*  
 Look you, Cassio and my husband.  
 IAGO [to Cassio]  
 There is no other way; 'tis she must do't.  
 And, lo, the happiness! Go and importune her.

DESDEMONA  
 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 113  
 Exist and be a member of his love  
 Whom I, with all the office of my heart, 115  
 Entirely honor. I would not be delayed.  
 If my offense be of such mortal kind 117  
 That nor my service past, nor present sorrows, 118  
 Nor purposed merit in futurity  
 Can ransom me into his love again,  
 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, 123  
 To fortune's alms.  
 DESDEMONA Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio, 124  
 My advocacy is not now in tune. 125  
 My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,  
 Were he in favor as in humor altered. 127  
 So help me every spirit sanctified 128  
 As I have spoken for you all my best  
 And stood within the blank of his displeasure 130  
 For my free speech! You must awhile be patient. 131  
 What I can do I will, and more I will  
 Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.  
 IAGO  
 Is my lord angry? 94  
 EMILIA He went hence but now,  
 And certainly in strange unquietness. 95  
 IAGO  
 Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon 96  
 When it hath blown his ranks into the air,  
 And like the devil from his very arm  
 Puffed his own brother—and is he angry?  
 Something of moment then. I will go meet him. 140  
 There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.  
 DESDEMONA  
 I prithee, do so. *Exit [Iago].*  
 8  
 Something, sure, of state, 142  
 Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice 143  
 Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
 Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases 145  
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;  
 For let our finger ache, and it indues 148  
 Our other, healthful members even to a sense  
 Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,  
 U

81 **startingly and rash** disjointedly and impetuously, excitedly.  
 82 **out o'th' way** lost, misplaced. 85 **an if** if 93 **sufficient** able, complete 94 **talk** talk to 95–6 **A man . . . love** A man who throughout his career has relied on your favor for his advancement  
 104 **unhappy** (1) unfortunate (2) sad 105 **'Tis . . . man** A year or two is not enough time for us women to know what men really are.  
 106 **but** nothing but 107 **hungerly** hungrily 110 **the happiness** in happy time, fortunately met.

113 **virtuous** (1) efficacious (2) morally good 115 **office** loyal service  
 117 **mortal** fatal 118 **nor . . . nor** neither . . . nor 121 **But . . . benefit** merely to know that my case is hopeless will have to content me (and will be better than uncertainty) 123 **shut . . . in** commit myself to  
 124 **To fortune's alms** throwing myself on the mercy of fortune. 125 **advocation** advocacy 127 **favor** appearance. **humor** mood 128 **So . . . sanctified** So help me all the heavenly host 130 **within the blank** within point-blank range. (The *blank* is the center of the target.)  
 131 **free** frank 140 **of moment** of immediate importance, momentous 142 **of state** concerning state affairs 143 **unhatched practice** as yet unexecuted or undiscovered plot 145 **puddled** muddled  
 148 **indues** endows, brings to the same condition

Nor of them look for such observancy  
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
But now I find I had suborned the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely.

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

DESDEMONA  
Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

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

DESDEMONA  
Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

EMILIA Lady, amen.

DESDEMONA  
I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout.  
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit  
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CASSIO  
I humbly thank Your Ladyship.  
*Exit [Desdemona with Emilia].*

*Enter Bianca.*

BIANCA  
Save you, friend Cassio!

CASSIO What make you from home? 170  
How is't with you, my most fair Bianca?  
I' faith, 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?  
Eightscore-eight hours? And lovers' absent hours  
More tedious than the dial eightscore times?  
Oh, weary reck'ning!

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

BIANCA Oh, Cassio, whence came this? 181  
This is some token from a newer friend.  
To the felt absence now I feel a cause.  
Is't come to this? Well, well.

CASSIO Go to, woman!  
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,

151 **observancy** attentiveness 152 **bridal** wedding (when a bridegroom is newly attentive to his bride). **Beshrew me** (A mild oath.)  
153 **unhandsome** insufficient, unskillful 154 **with** before the bar of  
155 **suborned the witness** induced the witness to give false testimony  
158 **toy** fancy 162 **for** because 163 **Begot upon itself** generated solely from itself 170 **Save** God save. **make do** 175 **Eightscore-eight** one hundred sixty-eight, the number of hours in a week  
176 **the dial** a complete revolution of the clock 179 **continue** uninterrupted 180 **Strike . . . score** settle this account 181 **Take . . . out** copy this embroidery for me. 182 **friend** mistress.

151 From whence you have them. You are jealous now  
152 That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.  
153 No, by my faith, Bianca.  
154 BIANCA Why, whose is it?  
155 CASSIO  
I know not, neither. I found it in my chamber.  
I like the work well. Ere it be demanded— 190  
As like enough it will—I would have it copied. 191  
158 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, 195  
To have him see me womaned.  
162 BIANCA Why, I pray you?  
163 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, 200  
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. 204

*Exeunt omnes.*



## 4.1

*Enter Othello and Iago.*

IAGO  
Will you think so?

OTHELLO Think so, Iago?

IAGO What,  
To kiss in private?

OTHELLO An unauthorized kiss!

175 IAGO  
176 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.  
They that mean virtuously and yet do so,  
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

IAGO  
If they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip. 9  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief—

OTHELLO What then?

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

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

190 **demand** inquired for 191 **like** likely 195 **addition** i.e., addition to my reputation 200 **bring** accompany 204 **be circumstanced** be governed by circumstance, yield to your conditions.

4.1. Location: Before the citadel.

9 **venial** pardonable

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

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

IAGO  
 Ay, what of that?

OTHELLO  
 That's not so good now.

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

OTHELLO  
 Hath he said anything?

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

OTHELLO  
 What hath he said?

IAGO  
 Faith, that he did—I know not what he did.

OTHELLO  
 What? What?

IAGO  
 Lie—

OTHELLO  
 With her?

IAGO  
 With her, on her; what you will.

OTHELLO  
 Lie with her? Lie on her? We say "lie on her"  
 when they belie her. Lie with her? Zounds, that's ful-  
 some.—Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief!  
 —To confess and be hanged for his labor—first to be  
 hanged and then to confess.—I tremble at it. Nature  
 would not invest herself in such shadowing passion  
 without some instruction. It is not words that shakes  
 me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.—Is't possible?  
 —Confess—handkerchief!—O devil!

*Falls in a trance.*

IAGO  
 Work on,  
 My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught,  
 And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,  
 All guiltless, meet reproach.—What, ho! My lord!  
 My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter Cassio.*

How now, Cassio?

CASSIO  
 What's the matter?

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

CASSIO  
 Rub him about the temples.

IAGO  
 No, forbear.

21  
 The lethargy must have his quiet course. 53  
 If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by  
 Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.  
 Do you withdraw yourself a little while.  
 He will recover straight. When he is gone,  
 I would on great occasion speak with you. 58

*[Exit Cassio.]*

25  
 M How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?

26  
 I OTHELLO

27  
 Dost thou mock me?

28  
 L IAGO I mock you not, by heaven. 60  
 E Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

29  
 OTHELLO

S A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO  
 There's many a beast then in a populous city,  
 And many a civil monster. 64

OTHELLO  
 Did he confess it?

S IAGO  
 Good sir, be a man.  
 Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked 67  
 May draw with you. There's millions now alive 68  
 That nightly lie in those unproper beds 69  
 Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better. 70  
 Oh, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,  
 To lip a wanton in a secure couch 72  
 And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know,  
 And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be. 74

C OTHELLO  
 Oh, thou art wise. 'Tis certain.

IAGO  
 Stand you awhile apart;  
 N Confine yourself but in a patient list. 77  
 Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief—  
 A passion most unsuited such a man—  
 8 Cassio came hither. I shifted him away,  
 And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy, 81  
 Bade him anon return and here speak with me,  
 The which he promised. Do but encave yourself 83  
 5 And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns 84  
 9 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. 88

U

17 **They have it** i.e., They enjoy a reputation for it 21 **raven . . . house** (Allusion to the belief that the raven hovered over a house of sickness or infection, such as one visited by the plague.) 25–9 **as . . . blab**—since there are rascals enough who, having seduced a woman either through their own importunity or through the woman's willing infatuation, cannot keep quiet about it— 36 **belie** slander 36–7 **fulsome** foul. 38–9 **first . . . to confess** (Othello reverses the proverbial *confess and be hanged*; Cassio is to be given no time to confess before he dies.) 39–41 **Nature . . . instruction** i.e., Without some foundation in fact, nature would not have dressed herself in such an overwhelming passion that comes over me now and fills my mind with images, or in such a lifelike fantasy as Cassio had in his dream of lying with Desdemona. 41 **words** mere words

53 **lethargy** coma. **his its** 58 **on great occasion** on a matter of great importance 60 **mock me** (Othello takes Iago's question about hurting his head to be a mocking reference to the cuckold's horns.) 64 **civil** i.e., dwelling in a city 67 **yoked** (1) married (2) put into the yoke of infamy and cuckoldry 68 **draw with you** pull as you do, like oxen who are yoked, i.e., share your fate as cuckold. 69 **unproper** not exclusively their own 70 **peculiar** private, their own. **better** i.e., because you know the truth. 72 **lip** kiss. **secure** free from suspicion 74 **And . . . shall be** and, knowing myself to be a cuckold, I'll know for certain that she's a whore. 77 **in . . . list** within the bounds of patience. 80–1 **I shifted . . . ecstasy** I got him out of the way, using your fit as my excuse for doing so 83 **encave** conceal 84 **fleers** sneers 88 **cope** encounter with, have sex with

I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience!  
 Or I shall say you're all-in-all in spleen,  
 And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO Dost thou hear, Iago?  
 I will be found most cunning in my patience;  
 But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

IAGO That's not amiss;  
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?  
 [Othello stands apart.]

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,  
 A huswife that by selling her desires  
 Buys herself bread and clothes. It is a creature  
 That dotes on Cassio—as 'tis the strumpet's plague  
 To beguile many and be beguiled by one.  
 He, when he hears of her, cannot restrain  
 From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.

*Enter Cassio.*

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

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

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

CASSIO [laughing] Alas, poor caitiff!

OTHELLO [aside] Look how he laughs already!

IAGO  
 I never knew a woman love man so.

CASSIO  
 Alas, poor rogue! I think, i'faith, she loves me.

OTHELLO [aside]  
 Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

IAGO  
 Do you hear, Cassio?

OTHELLO [aside] 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 [aside]  
 Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

CASSIO I marry her? What? A customer? Prithee, bear  
 some charity to my wit; do not think it so unwhole-  
 some. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO [aside] So, so, so, so! They laugh that win. 125

IAGO Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her. 126

CASSIO Prithee, say true.

IAGO I am a very villain else. 128

OTHELLO [aside] Have you scored me? Well. 129

CASSIO This is the monkey's own giving out. She is  
 persuaded I will marry her out of her own love and  
 flattery, not out of my promise. 132

OTHELLO [aside] Iago beckons me. Now he begins the  
 story. 133

CASSIO She was here even now; she haunts me in every  
 place. I was the other day talking on the seabank with  
 certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble, and,  
 by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck—  
 [He embraces Iago.] 138

OTHELLO [aside] Crying, "Oh, dear Cassio!" as it were; his  
 gesture imports it. 139

CASSIO So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so  
 shakes and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO [aside] 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. 144

CASSIO Well, I must leave her company. 145

IAGO Before me, look where she comes. 147

*Enter Bianca [with Desdemona's handkerchief].*

CASSIO 'Tis such another fitchew! Marry, a perfumed  
 one.—What do you mean by this haunting of me? 148

BIANCA Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did  
 you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me  
 even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out  
 the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find  
 it in your chamber and know not who left it there!  
 This is some minx's token, and I must take out the  
 work? There; give it your hobbyhorse. [She gives him  
 the handkerchief.] Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out  
 no work on't. 150

CASSIO How now, my sweet Bianca? How now? How  
 now? 153

OTHELLO [aside] By heaven, that should be my hand-  
 kerchief! 161

BIANCA If you'll come to supper tonight, you may; if  
 you will not, come when you are next prepared for.  
 Exit. 164

IAGO After her, after her.

CASSIO Faith, I must. She'll rail in the streets else.

IAGO Will you sup there?

CASSIO Faith, I intend so.

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

90 all-in-all in spleen utterly governed by passionate impulses  
 94 keep time keep yourself steady (as in music) 96 huswife hussy  
 100 restrain refrain 103 his unbookish Othello's uninstructed.  
 conster construe 106 addition title 107 Whose want the lack of  
 which 111 caitiff wretch. 117 Go to (An expression of remon-  
 strance.) Well said Well done. (Sarcastic.) 121 Roman (The  
 Romans were noted for their triumphs or triumphal processions.)  
 122 A customer? Who, I, the whore's customer? (Or, customer could  
 mean "prostitute.") 122-3 bear . . . wit be more charitable to my  
 judgment

125 They . . . win i.e., They that laugh last laugh best. 126 cry rumor  
 128 I . . . else Call me a complete rogue if I'm not telling the truth.  
 129 scored me scored off me, beaten me, made up my reckoning,  
 branded me. 132 flattery self-flattery, self-deception 133 beckons  
 signals to 136 seabank seashore 137 bauble plaything 138 by  
 this hand I make my vow 144-5 not . . . to (Othello imagines him-  
 self cutting off Cassio's nose and throwing it to a dog.) 147 Before  
 me i.e., On my soul 148 'Tis . . . fitchew! What a whore she is! Just  
 like all the others. (Fitchew or "polecat" was a common term of con-  
 tempt for a courtesan or prostitute.) 150 dam mother 153 A likely  
 . . . work A fine story 156 hobbyhorse harlot. 161 should be must  
 be 164 when . . . for when I'm ready for you (i.e., never).

CASSIO Prithce, come. Will you?  
 IAGO Go to. Say no more. [Exit Cassio.] 172  
 OTHELLO [advancing] How shall I murder him, Iago?  
 IAGO Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?  
 OTHELLO Oh, Iago!  
 IAGO And did you see the handkerchief?  
 OTHELLO Was that mine?  
 IAGO Yours, by this hand. And to see how he prizes  
 the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he  
 hath given it his whore.  
 OTHELLO I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine  
 woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman!  
 IAGO Nay, you must forget that.  
 OTHELLO Ay, let her rot and perish, and be damned  
 tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned  
 to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. Oh, the world  
 hath not a sweeter creature! She might lie by an em-  
 peror's side and command him tasks.  
 IAGO Nay, that's not your way. 189  
 OTHELLO Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate  
 with her needle! An admirable musician! Oh, she will  
 sing the savageness out of a bear. Of so high and plen-  
 teous wit and invention! 193  
 IAGO She's the worse for all this.  
 OTHELLO Oh, a thousand, a thousand times! And then,  
 of so gentle a condition! 196  
 IAGO Ay, too gentle. 197  
 OTHELLO Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it, Iago!  
 Oh, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!  
 IAGO If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent 200  
 to offend, for if it touch not you it comes near nobody.  
 OTHELLO I will chop her into messes. Cuckold me? 202  
 IAGO Oh, 'tis foul in her.  
 OTHELLO With mine officer?  
 IAGO That's fouler.  
 OTHELLO Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not  
 expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unpro- 207  
 vide my mind again. This night, Iago. 208  
 IAGO Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed,  
 even the bed she hath contaminated.  
 OTHELLO Good, good! The justice of it pleases. Very good.  
 IAGO And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You 212  
 shall hear more by midnight.  
 OTHELLO  
 Excellent good. [A trumpet within.] What trumpet is  
 that same?  
 IAGO I warrant, something from Venice.  
 Enter Lodovico, Desdemona, and attendants.  
 'Tis Lodovico. This comes from the Duke.  
 See, your wife's with him.

LODOVICO  
 God save you, worthy General!  
 OTHELLO With all my heart, sir. 218  
 LODOVICO [giving him a letter]  
 The Duke and the senators of Venice greet you.  
 OTHELLO  
 I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.  
 [He opens the letter, and reads.]  
 DESDEMONA  
 And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?  
 IAGO  
 I am very glad to see you, signor.  
 Welcome to Cyprus.  
 LODOVICO  
 I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?  
 IAGO Lives, sir.  
 DESDEMONA  
 L Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord  
 E An unkind breach; but you shall make all well. 227  
 S OTHELLO Are you sure of that?  
 O DESDEMONA My lord?  
 OTHELLO [reads] "This fail you not to do, as you will—" 193  
 LODOVICO  
 He did not call; he's busy in the paper.  
 Is there division twixt my lord and Cassio?  
 DESDEMONA  
 S A most unhappy one. I would do much  
 H T'atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio. 234  
 A OTHELLO Fire and brimstone!  
 N DESDEMONA My lord?  
 OTHELLO Are you wise?  
 N DESDEMONA  
 O What, is he angry?  
 O LODOVICO Maybe the letter moved him;  
 O For, as I think, they do command him home,  
 O Deputing Cassio in his government. 240  
 N DESDEMONA By my troth, I am glad on't. 241  
 OTHELLO Indeed?  
 DESDEMONA My lord?  
 OTHELLO I am glad to see you mad. 244  
 DESDEMONA Why, sweet Othello—  
 OTHELLO [striking her] Devil!  
 DESDEMONA I have not deserved this.  
 LODOVICO  
 5 My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,  
 9 Though I should swear I saw't. 'Tis very much. 249  
 B Make her amends; she weeps.  
 U OTHELLO Oh, devil, devil!  
 If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
 Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile. 252  
 Out of my sight!  
 DESDEMONA I will not stay to offend you. [Going.]

172 Go to (An expression of remonstrance.) 189 your way i.e., the way you should think of her. 193 invention imagination. 196 gentle a condition wellborn and well-bred. 197 gentle generous, yielding (to other men). 200 fond foolish. patent license 202 messes portions of meat, i.e., bits. 207–8 unprovide weaken, disarm 212 be his undertaker undertake to dispatch him.

218 With all my heart i.e., I thank you most heartily 227 unkind unnatural, contrary to their natures; hurtful 234 T'atone to reconcile 240 government office. 241 on't of it. 244 I am . . . mad i.e., I am glad to see that you are insane enough to rejoice in Cassio's promotion. (? Othello bitterly plays on Desdemona's I am glad.) 249 very much too much, outrageous. 251 teem breed, be impregnated 252 falls lets fall. crocodile (Crocodiles were supposed to weep hypocritical tears for their victims.)

LODOVICO Truly, an obedient lady.  
I do beseech Your Lordship, call her back.

OTHELLO [*calling*] Mistress!

DESDEMONA [*returning*] My lord?

OTHELLO What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO Who, I, my lord?

OTHELLO  
Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.  
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on  
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;  
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,  
Very obedient.—Proceed you in your tears.—  
Concerning this, sir—Oh, well-painted passion!—  
I am commanded home.—Get you away;  
I'll send for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate  
And will return to Venice.—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!

LODOVICO  
Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate  
Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature  
Whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue  
The shot of accident nor dart of chance  
Could neither graze nor pierce?

IAGO He is much changed.

LODOVICO  
Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?

IAGO  
He's that he is. I may not breathe my censure  
What he might be. If what he might he is not,  
I would to heaven he were!

LODOVICO What, strike his wife?

IAGO  
Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew  
That stroke would prove the worst!

LODOVICO Is it his use?  
Or did the letters work upon his blood  
And new-create his fault?

IAGO Alas, alas!  
It is not honesty in me to speak  
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,  
And his own courses will denote him so  
That I may save my speech. Do but go after,  
And mark how he continues.

LODOVICO  
I am sorry that I am deceived in him. *Exeunt.*



**258 What . . . sir?** (Othello implies that Desdemona is pliant and will do a *turn* sexually with any man.) **263 obedient** (With much the same sexual connotation as *turn* in lines 260–2.) **265 passion** i.e., grief. **271 Goats and monkeys** (See 3.3.419.) **278–80 I may . . . were!** I dare not venture an opinion as to whether he's of unsound mind, as you suggest, but, if he isn't, then it might be better to wish he were in fact insane, since only that could excuse his wild behavior! **282 use** custom. **283 blood** passions **287 courses will denote** actions will reveal

## 4.2

*Enter Othello and Emilia.*

OTHELLO You have seen nothing, then? 258

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  
Each syllable that breath made up between them. 263

OTHELLO What, did they never whisper?

EMILIA Never, my lord. 265

OTHELLO Nor send you out o'th' way?

EMILIA Never.

OTHELLO  
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, 14  
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom. 15  
If any wretch have put this in your head,  
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!  
17  
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true,  
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives  
Is foul as slander.

OTHELLO Bid her come hither. Go. *Exit Emilia.*

EMILIA  
She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd 21  
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore, 22  
A closet lock and key of villainous secrets. 23  
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't.

*Enter Desdemona and Emilia.*

DESDEMONA My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO Pray you, chuck, come hither.

DESDEMONA  
What is your pleasure?

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

DESDEMONA What horrible fancy's this?

OTHELLO [*to Emilia*] Some of your function, mistress. 29  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;  
30  
Cough or cry "hem" if anybody come.  
Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch. 32  
*Exit Emilia.*

DESDEMONA [*kneeling*]  
Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?

### 4.2. Location: The citadel.

**14 at stake** as the wager. **15 abuse your bosom** deceive your breast, your heart. **17 the serpent's curse** the curse pronounced by God on the serpent for deceiving Eve, just as some man has done to Othello and Desdemona. (See Genesis 3:14.) **21–2 she's . . . much** i.e., any procuress or go-between who couldn't make up as plausible a story as Emilia's would have to be pretty stupid. **22 This** i.e., Desdemona **23 closet lock and key** i.e., concealer **29 Some . . . function** i.e., Practice your chosen profession, that of bawd (by guarding the door) **30 procreants** mating couples **32 mystery** trade, occupation

I understand a fury in your words,  
 But not the words.

OTHELLO  
 Why, what art thou?

DESDEMONA  
 Your wife, my lord, your true  
 And loyal wife.

OTHELLO  
 Come, swear it, damn thyself,  
 Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves 38  
 Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double  
 damned:  
 Swear thou art honest.

DESDEMONA  
 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 [*weeping*]  
 Ah, Desdemon! Away, away, away!

DESDEMONA  
 Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?  
 Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?  
 If haply you my father do suspect 45  
 An instrument of this your calling back,  
 Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,  
 I have lost him too.

OTHELLO  
 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,  
 I should have found in some place of my soul  
 A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me  
 A fixèd figure for the time of scorn 56  
 To point his slow and moving finger at!  
 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.  
 But there where I have garnered up my heart,  
 Where either I must live or bear no life,  
 The fountain from the which my current runs  
 Or else dries up—to be discarded thence!  
 Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads  
 To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,  
 Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin—  
 Ay, there look grim as hell!

DESDEMONA  
 I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO  
 Oh, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,  
 That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,  
 Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet  
 That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er  
 been born!

38 being . . . heaven looking like an angel 45 motive cause 50 they the heavenly powers 56–7 A fixèd . . . finger at a figure of ridicule to be pointed at scornfully for all of eternity by the slowly moving finger of Time. 59 garnered stored 61 fountain spring 63 cistern cesspool 64 To . . . gender in to couple sexually and conceive in. 64–6 Turn . . . hell! Direct your gaze there, Patience, and your youthful and rosy cherubic countenance will turn grim and pale at this hellish spectacle! 67 honest chaste. 68 shambles slaughterhouse 69 That . . . blowing that come to life with the puffing up of the rotten meat on which the flies and their maggots are breeding.

DESDEMONA  
 Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed? 72

OTHELLO  
 Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
 Made to write “whore” upon? What committed?  
 Committed? Oh, thou public commoner! 75  
 I should make very forges of my cheeks,  
 That would to cinders burn up modesty,  
 Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?  
 Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks;  
 The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets, 79  
 Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth 80  
 And will not hear ’t. What committed? 81

M  
 Impudent strumpet!

DESDEMONA  
 By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTHELLO  
 Are not you a strumpet?

L  
 DESDEMONA No, as I am a Christian.

E  
 If to preserve this vessel for my lord 86  
 From any other foul unlawful touch

S  
 Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO  
 What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA  
 No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO  
 Is’t possible?

DESDEMONA  
 Oh, heaven forgive us!

S  
 OTHELLO I cry you mercy, then. 92

H  
 I took you for that cunning whore of Venice  
 That married with Othello. [*Calling out*] You, mistress,  
 That have the office opposite to Saint Peter  
 And keep the gate of hell!

A  
 N  
 Enter Emilia.

N  
 O  
 You, you, ay, you!  
 We have done our course. There’s money for your  
 pains. [*He gives money.*] 97

N  
 I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel. *Exit.*

EMILIA  
 Alas, what does this gentleman conceive? 99

8  
 DESDEMONA  
 How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?  
 Faith, half asleep. 101

EMILIA  
 Good madam, what’s the matter with my lord?

5  
 DESDEMONA  
 With who?

EMILIA  
 Why, with my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA  
 Who is thy lord?

68  
 EMILIA  
 He that is yours, sweet lady.

69  
 U  
 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 108

72 ignorant sin sin in ignorance 75 commoner prostitute. 79 winks closes her eyes. (The moon symbolizes chastity.) 80 bawdy kissing one and all 81 mine cave (where the winds were thought to dwell) 86 vessel body 92 cry you mercy beg your pardon. (Sarcastic.) 97 course business. (With an indecent suggestion of “trick,” turn at sex.) 99 conceive suppose, think. 101 half asleep i.e., dazed. 108 go by water be conveyed by tears.



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. 112  
 How have I been behaved, that he might stick 113  
 The small'st opinion on my least misuse? 114

*Enter Iago and Emilia.*

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,  
 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 Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO What name, fair lady?

DESDEMONA  
 Such as she said 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. 128

IAGO Why did he so?

DESDEMONA [*weeping*]  
 I do not know. I am sure I am none such.

IAGO Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

EMILIA  
 Hath she forsook so many noble matches,  
 Her father and her country and her friends,  
 To be called whore? Would it not make one weep?

DESDEMONA  
 It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO Beshrew him for't! 135  
 How comes this trick upon him?

DESDEMONA Nay, heaven doth know. 136

EMILIA  
 I will be hanged if some eternal villain, 137  
 Some busy and insinuating rogue, 138  
 Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office, 139  
 Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else.

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

DESDEMONA  
 If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMILIA  
 A halter pardon him! And hell gnaw his bones! 143

Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her  
 company?  
 What place? What time? What form? What  
 likelihood? 145

The Moor's abused by some most villainous knave,  
 Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.  
 Oh, heavens, that such companions thou'dst unfold, 148  
 And put in every honest hand a whip  
 To lash the rascals naked through the world  
 Even from the east to th' west!

IAGO Speak within door. 151

EMILIA  
 Oh, fie upon them! Some such squire he was 152  
 That turned your wit the seamy side without 153  
 And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

IAGO  
 You are a fool. Go to.

DESDEMONA Oh, God, Iago, 155  
 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. [*She kneels.*]  
 If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
 Either in discourse of thought or actual deed, 160  
 Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense 161  
 Delighted them in any other form; 162  
 Or that I do not yet, and ever did, 163  
 And ever will—though he do shake me off  
 To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,  
 Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much, 166  
 And his unkindness may defeat my life, 167  
 But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore."  
 It does abhor me now I speak the word; 169  
 To do the act that might the addition earn 170  
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me. 171  
 [*She rises.*]

IAGO  
 I pray you, be content. 'Tis but his humor. 172  
 The business of the state does him offense,  
 And he does chide with you.

DESDEMONA If 'twere no other—

IAGO It is but so, I warrant. [*Trumpets within.*]  
 Hark, how these instruments summon you to supper!  
 The messengers of Venice stays the meat. 178  
 Go in, and weep not. All things shall be well.  
*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia.*

*Enter Roderigo.*

How now, Roderigo?

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

IAGO What in the contrary?

112 'Tis . . . very meet i.e., It must be I somehow have deserved this.  
 113–14 How . . . misuse? What have I done that prompts Othello to  
 attach even the slightest censure to whatever little fault I may have  
 committed? 128 callet whore. 135 Beshrew May evil befall. (An  
 oath.) 136 trick strange behavior, delusion 137 eternal inveterate  
 138 insinuating ingratiating, fawning, wheedling 139 cogging, coz-  
 ening cheating, defrauding 143 halter hangman's noose

145 form manner, circumstance. 148 that . . . unfold would that you  
 would expose such fellows 151 within door i.e., not so loud.  
 152 squire fellow 153 seamy side without wrong side out 155 Go  
 to i.e., That's enough. 160 discourse of thought process of thinking  
 161 that if. (Also in line 163.) 162 Delighted them took delight  
 163 yet still 166 Comfort forswear may heavenly comfort forsake  
 167 defeat destroy 169 abhor (1) fill me with abhorrence (2) make  
 me whorelike 170 addition title 171 vanity showy splendor  
 172 humor mood. 178 stays the meat are waiting to dine.

RODERIGO Every day thou daff'st me with some device, 183  
Iago, and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st  
from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the 185  
least advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer  
endure it, nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace 187  
what already I have foolishly suffered.

IAGO Will you hear me, Roderigo?

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

IAGO You charge me most unjustly.

RODERIGO With naught but truth. I have wasted myself  
out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to  
deliver Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist. 195  
You have told me she hath received them and  
returned me expectations and comforts of sudden re- 196  
spect and acquaintance, but I find none. 197  
198

IAGO Well, go to, very well.

RODERIGO "Very well"! "Go to"! I cannot go to, man, 200  
nor 'tis not very well. By this hand, I think it is scurvy,  
and begin to find myself fopped in it. 202

IAGO Very well.

RODERIGO I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself 204  
known to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels,  
I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solici-  
tation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction 207  
of you.

IAGO You have said now? 209

RODERIGO Ay, and said nothing but what I protest 210  
intendment of doing. 211

IAGO Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even  
from this instant do build on thee a better opinion  
than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou  
hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet I  
protest I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

RODERIGO It hath not appeared.

IAGO I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your  
suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But,  
Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed which I have  
greater reason to believe now than ever—I mean  
purpose, courage, and valor—this night show it. If  
thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona,  
take me from this world with treachery and devise  
engines for my life. 225

RODERIGO Well, what is it? Is it within reason and  
compass?

IAGO Sir, there is especial commission come from  
Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

RODERIGO Is that true? Why, then Othello and Desde-  
mona return again to Venice.

183 thou daff'st me you put me off. device excuse, trick  
185 conveniency advantage, opportunity 186 advantage increase  
187 put up submit to, tolerate 195 deliver deliver to 195–6 votarist  
nun. 197–8 sudden respect immediate consideration 200 I cannot  
go to (Roderigo changes Iago's go to, an expression urging patience,  
to I cannot go to, "I have no opportunity for success in wooing.")  
202 fopped fooled, duped 204 not very well (Roderigo changes  
Iago's Very well, "All right, then," to not very well, "not at all good.")  
207 satisfaction repayment. (The term normally means settling of  
accounts in a duel.) 209 You . . . now? Have you finished?  
210–11 protest intendment avow my intention 225 engines plots,  
snares

IAGO Oh, no; he goes into Mauritania and takes 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. 235

RODERIGO How do you mean, removing of him?

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

RODERIGO And that you would have me to do?

IAGO Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right.  
He sups tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to 241  
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 244  
at your pleasure. I will be near to second your attempt,  
and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed  
at it, but go along with me. I will show you such a  
necessity in his death that you shall think yourself  
bound to put it on him. It is now high suppertime, 249  
and the night grows to waste. About it. 250

M  
I  
L  
E  
S  
S

RODERIGO I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO And you shall be satisfied. *Exeunt.*



### '4.3

*Enter Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and attendants.*

S  
H  
A  
N  
N  
O  
N  
8  
0

LODOVICO

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

O  
T  
H  
E  
L  
L  
O

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

LODOVICO

Madam, good night. I humbly thank Your Ladyship.

D  
E  
S  
D  
E  
M  
O  
N  
A

Your Honor is most welcome.

O  
T  
H  
E  
L  
L  
O

Will you walk, sir?

N  
O  
H  
O  
T  
H  
E  
L  
L  
O

Oh, Desdemona!

D  
E  
S  
D  
E  
M  
O  
N  
A

My lord?

O  
T  
H  
E  
L  
L  
O

Get you to bed on th' instant. I will be re-  
turned forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there. Look't  
be done.

D  
E  
S  
D  
E  
M  
O  
N  
A

I will, my lord.  
*Exit [Othello, with Lodovico and attendants].*

5  
E  
M  
I  
L  
I  
A

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

D  
E  
S  
D  
E  
M  
O  
N  
A

He says he will return incontinent, 12  
And hath commanded me to go to bed,  
And bid me to dismiss you.

U  
E  
M  
I  
L  
I  
A

Dismiss me?

D  
E  
S  
D  
E  
M  
O  
N  
A

It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.  
We must not now displease him.

E  
M  
I  
L  
I  
A

I would you had never seen him!

235 determinate conclusive, instrumental 241 harlotry slut  
244 fall out occur 249 high fully 250 grows to waste wastes away.  
4.3. Location: The citadel.  
12 incontinent immediately

DESDEMONA

So would not I. My love doth so approve him  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns— 21  
Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor in them.  
[*Emilia prepares Desdemona for bed.*]

EMILIA I have laid those sheets you bade me on the  
bed.

DESDEMONA

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me  
In one of these same sheets. 25

EMILIA Come, come, you talk. 27

DESDEMONA

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  
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 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,  
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;  
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the  
stones—"

Lay by these.

[*Singing*] "Sing willow, willow, willow—"  
Prithee, hie thee. He'll come anon.

[*Singing*] "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 [*singing*]

"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 'Tis neither here nor there.

21 **stubbornness** roughness. **checks** rebukes 25 **All's one** All right. It doesn't really matter. 27 **talk** i.e., prattle. 29 **mad** wild, lunatic 33-4 **I** . . . **hang** I can scarcely keep myself from hanging 36 **nightgown** dressing gown. 38 **proper** handsome 44 **willow** (A conventional emblem of disappointed love.) 52 **hie thee** hurry. **anon** right away.

DESDEMONA

I have heard it said so. Oh, these men, these men!  
Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—  
That there be women do abuse their husbands 64  
In such gross kind?

EMILIA There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA

Nor I neither by this heavenly light;  
I might do't as well i'th' dark.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

The world's a huge thing. It is a great price  
For a small vice. 33

DESDEMONA

Good troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

By my 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, 76  
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for 77  
all the whole world! Uds pity, who would not make 78  
her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I  
should venture Purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA

Beshrew me if I would do such a wrong  
For the whole world. 44

EMILIA

Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'th' world, and  
having the world for your labor, 'tis a wrong in your  
own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DESDEMONA

I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA

Yes, a dozen, and as many 87  
To th' vantage as would store the world they played  
for. 88

EMILIA

But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties 90  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies, 91

Throwing restraint upon us? Or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite? 93

Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know 95  
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and smell, 97

And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do 99

64 **abuse** deceive 76 **joint ring** a ring made in separate halves. **lawn** fine linen 77 **exhibition** gift. 78 **Uds** God's 87-8 **and . . . played for** and enough additionally to stock the world men have gambled and sported sexually for. 90 **they** our husbands. **duties** marital duties 91 **pour . . . laps** i.e., are unfaithful, give what is rightfully ours (semen) to other women 93 **Throwing . . . us** jealously restricting our freedom. 94 **Or . . . despite** or spitefully take away from us whatever we enjoyed before. 95 **have galls** i.e., are capable of resenting injury and insult. **grace** inclination to be merciful 97 **sense** sensory perception and appetite 99 **they** husbands

When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so, too. And have not we affections,  
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well; else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DESDEMONA

Good night, good night. God me such uses send  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

*Exeunt.*



### 5.1

*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,  
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.  
*[Iago stands aside, Roderigo conceals himself.]*

RODERIGO

I have no great devotion to the deed;  
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons.  
'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword! He dies.  
*[He draws.]*

IAGO

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,  
Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,  
He calls me to a restitution large  
Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him  
As gifts to Desdemona.  
It must not be. If Cassio do remain,  
He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor  
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril.  
No, he must die. Be't so. I hear him coming.

*Enter Cassio.*

RODERIGO *[coming forth]*

I know his gait, 'tis he.—Villain, thou diest!  
*[He attacks Cassio.]*

100 **change** exchange. **sport** sexual pastime. 101 **affection** passion  
107 **uses** habit, practice 108 **Not . . . mend** i.e., not to learn bad con-  
duct from others' badness (as Emilia has suggested women learn  
from men), but to mend my ways by perceiving what badness is,  
making spiritual benefit out of evil and adversity.

5.1. **Location:** A street in Cyprus.

1 **bulk** framework projecting from the front of a shop. 2 **bare**  
unsheathed. **home** all the way into the target. 11 **quat** pimple,  
pustule. **to the sense** to the quick 14 **Live Roderigo** If Roderigo  
lives 16 **bobbed** swindled 21 **unfold** expose

100 CASSIO

101 That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,  
But that my coat is better than thou know'st. 25  
I will make proof of thine.

*[He draws, and wounds Roderigo.]*

RODERIGO

Oh, I am slain! *[He falls. 26*  
*Iago, from behind, wounds Cassio*  
*in the leg, and exit.]*

107 CASSIO

108 I am maimed forever. Help, ho! Murder! Murder!

*Enter Othello.*

OTHELLO 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. O brave Iago, honest and just,  
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!  
Thou teachest me.—Minion, your dear lies dead, 34  
And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come. 35  
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted; 36  
Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be  
spotted. *Exit Othello.*

*Enter Lodovico and Gratiano.*

CASSIO

What ho! No watch? No passage? Murder! Murder! 38

GRATIANO

'Tis some mischance. The voice is very direful.

CASSIO Oh, help!

LODOVICO Hark!

RODERIGO Oh, wretched villain!

LODOVICO

Two or three groan. 'Tis heavy night; 43

These may be counterfeits. Let's think't unsafe

To come in to the cry without more help. 45

*[They remain near the entrance.]*

RODERIGO

Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.

*Enter Iago [in his shirtsleeves, with a light].*

LODOVICO Hark!

GRATIANO

Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

IAGO

Who's there? Whose noise is this that cries on murder? 49

LODOVICO

We do not know.

IAGO

Did not you hear a cry?

CASSIO

Here, here! For heaven's sake, help me!

IAGO

What's the matter?

*[He moves toward Cassio.]*

25 **coat** (Possibly a garment of mail under the outer clothing, or sim-  
ply a tougher coat than Roderigo expected.) 26 **proof** a test  
34 **Minion** Hussy (i.e., Desdemona) 35 **hies** hastens on. 36 **Forth**  
of From out 38 **passage** people passing by. 43 **heavy** thick, dark  
45 **come in** to approach 49 **cries** cries out

GRATIANO [*to Lodovico*]  
This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LODOVICO [*to Gratiano*]  
The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.

IAGO [*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  
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. [*They advance.*]

RODERIGO Oh, help me there!

CASSIO  
That's one of them.

IAGO Oh, murderous slave! Oh, villain!  
[*He stabs Roderigo.*]

RODERIGO  
Oh, damned Iago! Oh, inhuman dog!

IAGO  
Kill men i'th' dark?—Where be these bloody thieves?—  
How silent is this town!—Ho! Murder, murder!—  
[*To Lodovico and Gratiano*] What may you be? Are you  
of good or evil?

LODOVICO As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO Signor Lodovico?

LODOVICO He, sir.

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

GRATIANO Cassio?

IAGO How is't, brother?

CASSIO My leg is cut in two.

IAGO Marry, heaven forbid!  
Light, gentlemen! I'll bind it with my shirt.  
[*He hands them the light, and tends to Cassio's  
wound.*]

*Enter Bianca.*

BIANCA  
What is the matter, ho? Who is't that cried?

IAGO Who is't that cried?

BIANCA Oh, my dear Cassio!  
My sweet Cassio! Oh, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO  
Oh, 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. [*He applies a tourniquet.*] So.—Oh, for  
a chair, 83  
To bear him easily hence!

BIANCA  
Alas, he faints! Oh, 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. [*He shines the light on Roderigo.*] Know  
we this face or no?  
Alas, my friend and my dear countryman  
Roderigo! No.—Yes, sure.—Oh, heaven! Roderigo!

M I  
I GRATIANO What, of Venice?  
L IAGO Even he, sir. Did you know him?  
E GRATIANO Know him? Ay.  
S IAGO  
' Signor Gratiano? I cry your gentle pardon. 95  
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners 96  
That so neglected you.

GRATIANO I am glad to see you.

IAGO  
How do you, Cassio?—Oh, a chair, a chair!

GRATIANO Roderigo!

IAGO  
He, he, 'tis he. [*A litter is brought in.*] Oh, that's well  
said; the chair. 100  
Some good man bear him carefully from hence;  
I'll fetch the General's surgeon. [*To Bianca*] For you,  
mistress, 102  
Save you your labor.—He that lies slain here, Cassio, 103  
Was my dear friend. What malice was between you? 104

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

IAGO [*to Bianca*]  
What, look you pale?—Oh, bear him out o'th' air. 106  
[*Cassio and Roderigo are borne off.*]  
Stay you, good gentlemen.—Look you pale,  
mistress?— 107  
Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?— 108  
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.— 109  
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her.  
Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness  
Will speak, though tongues were out of use.  
[*Enter Emilia.*]

EMILIA  
'Las, what's the matter? What's the matter, husand?

IAGO  
Cassio hath here been set on in the dark  
By Roderigo and fellows that are scaped.  
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

54 What Who. (Also at lines 60 and 66.) 55 spoiled ruined, done for  
59 make get 67 prove us prove us to be. praise appraise 70 I cry  
you mercy I beg your pardon.

83 chair litter 95 gentle noble 96 accidents sudden events  
100 well said well done 102 For As for 103 Save . . . labor i.e.,  
never you mind tending Cassio. 104 malice enmity 106 bear . . .  
air (Fresh air was thought to be dangerous for a wound.) 107 Stay  
you (Lodovico and Gratiano are evidently about to leave.) 108 gast-  
ness terror 109 stare (Iago pretends to interpret Bianca's wild looks  
as an involuntary confession of guilt.)

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  
 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 As I? Faugh! Fie upon thee!  
 IAGO  
 Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.—  
 Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.—  
 Emilia, run you to the citadel  
 And tell my lord and lady what hath happed.—  
 Will you go on afore? [Aside] This is the night  
 That either makes me or fordoes me quite. *Exeunt.*



5.2

*Enter Othello [with a light], and Desdemona in her bed.*

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,  
 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,  
 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;  
 It needs must wither. I'll smell thee on the tree.  
 [He kisses her.]  
 Oh, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.

119 know learn 124 honest chaste 127 Cassio dressed Cassio's wounds dressed. 132 fordoes undoes, ruins  
 5.2. Location: A bedchamber in the citadel.  
 0.1–2 in her bed (Either the curtains are drawn back to reveal the bed in a recessed area backstage, or the bed is "thrust out" onstage as the scene begins.) 1 cause i.e., cause of justice, the offense itself, which must be corrected in the name of justice 5 monumental i.e., used in making tombs and funeral monuments 7 the light . . . light the torch or lamp . . . Desdemona's life. 8 minister servant 10 repent me change my mind 11 Thou . . . pattern you skillfully wrought perfect example 12 Promethean heat (Alludes to two myths: that of Prometheus stealing fire from heaven for humanity, and that of his creating humankind.) 13 relume rekindle.

Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
 And love thee after. One more, and that's the last.  
 [He kisses her.]  
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
 But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly; 21  
 It strikes where it doth love. She wakes. 22  
 DESDEMONA Who's there? Othello?  
 OTHELLO 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 28  
 Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,  
 Solicit for it straight. 30  
 DESDEMONA  
 Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that?  
 OTHELLO  
 Well, do it, and be brief. I will walk by.  
 I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.  
 No, heaven forbid! I would not kill thy soul. 34  
 DESDEMONA  
 Talk you of killing?  
 OTHELLO Ay, I do.  
 DESDEMONA Then heaven  
 Have mercy on me!  
 OTHELLO Amen, with all my heart!  
 DESDEMONA  
 If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.  
 OTHELLO Humh! 1  
 DESDEMONA  
 And yet I fear you; for you're fatal then  
 When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,  
 Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear. 5  
 OTHELLO  
 Think on thy sins. 7  
 DESDEMONA They are loves I bear to you. 42  
 OTHELLO Ay, and for that thou diest.  
 DESDEMONA  
 That death's unnatural that kills for loving.  
 Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?  
 Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.  
 These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,  
 They do not point on me.  
 OTHELLO Peace, and be still!  
 DESDEMONA 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!  
 Send for the man and ask him.  
 OTHELLO  
 Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury.  
 Thou art on thy deathbed.

21 they are cruel tears these tears betoken a sorrowful cruelty, regrettable but just. 22 It . . . love (Compare Hebrews 12:6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.") 28 crime sin 30 Solicit petition, pray, straight immediately. 34 forbend forbid. 42 They . . . you i.e., My only sins are my idolatry of loving you too much.

DESDEMONA  
Ay, but not yet to die.

OTHELLO Yes, presently.  
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;  
For to deny each article with oath  
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception  
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DESDEMONA  
Then Lord have mercy on me!

OTHELLO I say, amen.

DESDEMONA  
And have you mercy too! I never did  
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love. I never gave him token.

OTHELLO  
By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.  
Oh, perjured woman! Thou dost stone my heart,  
And makes me call what I intend to do  
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice.  
I saw the handkerchief.

DESDEMONA He found it, then.  
I never gave it him. Send for him hither;  
Let him confess a truth.

OTHELLO He hath confessed.

DESDEMONA What, my lord?

OTHELLO  
That he hath used thee.

DESDEMONA How? Unlawfully?

OTHELLO Ay.

DESDEMONA  
He will not say so.

OTHELLO No, his mouth is stopped;  
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.

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! [She weeps.]

OTHELLO  
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  
But half an hour!

OTHELLO Being done, there is no pause.

DESDEMONA  
But while I say one prayer!

56 OTHELLO It is too late. *Smothers her.*

EMILIA (*at the door*)  
59 My lord, my lord! What, ho! My lord, my lord!

60 OTHELLO  
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. [*He dispatches her.*]

So, so.

EMILIA (*within*) What, ho! My lord, my lord!

64 OTHELLO Who's there?

EMILIA [*within*]  
Oh, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

OTHELLO  
67 Yes, 'tis Emilia.—By and by.—She's dead.  
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.— 95  
The noise was here. Ha! No more moving? 96  
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!  
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 104  
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.— 107  
[*He closes the bedcurtains and opens the door.*]  
Where art thou?  
*Enter Emilia.*

What's the matter with thee now?

EMILIA  
8 Oh, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

OTHELLO What, now?

EMILIA But now, my lord.

OTHELLO  
5 It is the very error of the moon; 112  
9 She comes more nearer earth than she was wont, 113  
9 And makes men mad. 114

EMILIA  
B Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian  
U Called Roderigo.

OTHELLO Roderigo killed?  
86

56 **presently** immediately. 59 **conception** (1) belief in your guilt (2) plan in my mind 60 **groan withal** (1) groan at in sorrow (2) groan as in giving birth. 64 **warranty** sanction 67 **stone** turn to stone, harden 76 **ta'en order** taken measures 86 **Being done** i.e., Since justice has begun its relentless course

95 **like** likely that 96 **here** (The Folio's "high" is possible, suggesting that the commotion of the attack on Cassio was loud.) 104 **Should** . . . **alteration** should gape wide in an earthquake, as if expressing amazement at an eclipse. (According to Pliny, earthquakes often happen during eclipses. The cataclismic event here is especially terrifying in that it imagines the impossible concurrence of a solar and lunar eclipse—an apocalyptic scenario befitting the horror of Desdemona's death.) 107 **Soft** Wait a minute 112 **error** aberration, irregularity 113 **She** Luna, the moon goddess 114 **mad** i.e., "lunatic."

And Cassio killed?  
 EMILIA No, Cassio is not killed.  
 OTHHELLO  
 Not Cassio killed? Then murder's out of tune,  
 And sweet revenge grows harsh.  
 DESDEMONA Oh, falsely, falsely murdered!  
 EMILIA Oh, Lord, what cry is that?  
 OTHHELLO That? What?  
 EMILIA  
 Out and alas, that was my lady's voice. 123  
 [She opens the bedcurtains.]  
 Help, help, ho, help! O lady, speak again!  
 Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!  
 DESDEMONA A guiltless death I die.  
 EMILIA Oh, who hath done this deed?  
 DESDEMONA Nobody; I myself. Farewell.  
 Commend me to my kind lord. Oh, farewell! [She dies.]  
 OTHHELLO  
 Why, how should she be murdered?  
 EMILIA Alas, who knows?  
 OTHHELLO  
 You heard her say herself it was not I.  
 EMILIA  
 She said so. I must needs report the truth.  
 OTHHELLO  
 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!  
 OTHHELLO  
 She turned to folly, and she was a whore. 136  
 EMILIA  
 Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.  
 OTHHELLO She was false as water.  
 EMILIA Thou art rash as fire to say  
 That she was false. Oh, she was heavenly true!  
 OTHHELLO  
 Cassio did top her. Ask thy husband else. 141  
 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?  
 OTHHELLO Thy husband.  
 EMILIA That she was false to wedlock?  
 OTHHELLO  
 Ay, with Cassio. Nay, 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?  
 OTHHELLO  
 Ay, 'twas he that told me on her first.  
 An honest man he is, and hates the slime  
 That sticks on filthy deeds.  
 EMILIA My husband?

OTHHELLO  
 What needs this iterance, woman? I say thy husband. 157  
 EMILIA  
 Oh, mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love! 158  
 My husband say she was false?  
 OTHHELLO 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.  
 OTHHELLO Ha? [He draws.]  
 EMILIA Do thy worst!  
 This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
 Than thou wast worthy her.  
 OTHHELLO Peace, you were best. 168  
 EMILIA  
 Thou hast not half that power to do me harm  
 As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt! 170  
 As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed—  
 I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,  
 Though I lost twenty lives.—Help! Help, ho, help!  
 The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder!

*Enter Montano, Gratiano, and Iago.*

MONTANO  
 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. 177  
 GRATIANO What is the matter?  
 EMILIA [to Iago] 137  
 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. 181  
 Speak, for my heart is full.  
 IAGO 141  
 I told him what I thought, and told no more  
 Than what he found himself was apt and true. 184  
 EMILIA  
 But did you ever tell him she was false?  
 IAGO I did.  
 EMILIA  
 You told a lie, an odious, damnèd lie!  
 Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.  
 She false with Cassio? Did you say with Cassio?  
 IAGO 150  
 With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue. 190  
 EMILIA  
 I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak.  
 My mistress here lies murdered in her bed—  
 ALL Oh, heavens forfend!  
 EMILIA  
 And your reports have set the murder on.

123 **Out** (A cry of dismay, intensifying *alas*.) 136 **folly** i.e., wantonness, fleshly sin 137 **belie** slander 141 **else** i.e., if you don't believe me. 150 **chrysolite** precious topaz

157 **iterance** iteration, repetition 158 **made mocks with** made a mockery of 168 **Peace . . . best** You'd better be quiet. 170 **to be hurt** i.e., to endure hurt. **gull** dupe. 177 **on your neck** to your charge. 181 **such a villain** such a villain as all that. 184 **apt** plausible 190 **charm** control



OTHELLO  
Nay, stare not, masters. It is true indeed.

GRATIANO 'Tis a strange truth.

MONTANO  
Oh, monstrous act!

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

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

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

OTHELLO  
[*Othello falls on the bed.*]

EMILIA Nay, lay thee down and roar,  
For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent  
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO [*rising*] Oh, she was foul!  
I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,  
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly  
stopped.  
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRATIANO  
Poor Desdemon! I am glad thy father's dead.  
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief  
Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,  
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,  
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,  
And fall to reprobance.

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  
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, God! Oh, heavenly God!

IAGO  
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  
Be wise, and get you home.

EMILIA I will not.  
[*Iago threatens Emilia.*]  
Fie,

GRATIANO

199 then (Perhaps at 3.3.331–2 and 4.2.137–54.) 205 s.d. *Othello* . . . *bed* (This direction is from the quarto, as also *He kisses her* at line 19 and *She dies* at line 129.) 207 *lift up eye* i.e., lift her eyes to heaven. 210 *shows* looks 213 *Shore* . . . *thread* sheared the thread of his old age (as Atropos, one of the three Fates, was thought to do) 214 *turn deed* 216 *reprobance* damnation, i.e., suicide. 220 *gratify* reward 221 *recognizance* token 227 *liberal as the north* freely as the north wind (blows).

Your sword upon a woman?

EMILIA  
Oh, thou dull Moor! That handkerchief thou speak'st of  
I found by fortune and did give my husband;  
For often, with a solemn earnestness,  
More than indeed belonged to such a trifle, 235  
He begged of me to steal't.

199 IAGO Villainous whore!

EMILIA  
She give it Cassio? No, alas! I found it,  
And I did give't my husband.

IAGO Filth, thou liest!

EMILIA  
By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.  
Oh, murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool 240  
Do with so good a wife?

OTHELLO Are there no stones in heaven 242  
But what serves for the thunder?—Precious villain! 243  
[*He runs at Iago; Montano disarms Othello. Iago, from behind, stabs Emilia.*]

207 GRATIANO  
The woman falls! Sure he hath killed his wife.

EMILIA  
Ay, ay. Oh, lay me by my mistress' side. [Exit Iago.]

210 GRATIANO He's gone, but his wife's killed.

MONTANO  
'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,  
Which I have here recovered from the Moor, 213  
Come, guard the door without. Let him not pass, 214  
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,  
For 'tis a damnèd slave. 216  
*Exit [with all but Othello and Emilia, who has been laid by Desdemona's side].*

OTHELLO I am not valiant neither,  
But every puny whipster gets my sword. 253  
But why should honor outlive honesty? 254  
Let it go all.

EMILIA What did thy song bode, lady?  
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan, 256  
And die in music. [*She sings*] "Willow, willow, willow."  
Moor, she was chaste. She loved thee, cruel Moor.  
So come my soul to bliss as I speak true.  
So speaking as I think, alas, I die. [*She dies.*]

OTHELLO  
I have another weapon in this chamber;  
It was a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper— 262  
Oh, here it is. [*He finds a sword.*] Uncle, I must come  
forth.

GRATIANO [*within*]  
If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear.

235 *belonged* was appropriate 240 *coxcomb* fool. (Addressed to Othello.) 242 *stones* bolts, such as those used for thunderbolts 243 *Precious* i.e., Arrant, utter 243.1–2 *He* . . . *Emilia* (The quarto text reads, "*The Moore runnes at Iago. Iago kills his wife.*") The quarto also specifies the exit of Iago at line 245 and the death of Emilia at line 260.) 253 *every* . . . *sword* every whipper-snapper can get the better of me and my sword. 254 *why* . . . *honesty?* why should a soldier's reputation for bravery outlive true integrity? 256 *play the swan* (The swan was fabled to sing only at its death.) 262 *the icebrook's temper* tempered in ice-cold water

Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.  
 OTHHELLO  
 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?  
 OTHHELLO Behold, I have a weapon;  
 A better never did itself sustain  
 Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day  
 That, with this little arm and this good sword,  
 I have made my way through more impediments  
 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 seamark of my utmost sail.  
 [Gratiano steps back.]  
 Do you go back dismayed? 'Tis a lost fear;  
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast  
 And he retires. Where should Othello go?  
 [He turns to Desdemona.]  
 Now, how dost thou look now? Oh, ill-starred wench!  
 Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt,  
 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,  
 And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl?  
 Even like thy chastity. Oh, cursèd, cursèd slave!  
 Whip me, ye devils,  
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
 Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulfur!  
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!  
 Oh, Desdemon! Dead, Desdemon! Dead! Oh! Oh!  
 Enter Lodovico, Cassio [carried in a litter],  
 Montano, and Iago [prisoner], with officers.  
 LODOVICO  
 Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?  
 OTHHELLO  
 That's he that was Othello. Here I am.  
 LODOVICO  
 Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.  
 [Iago is led forward.]  
 OTHHELLO  
 I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.  
 If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.  
 [He wounds Iago.]  
 LODOVICO  
 Wrench his sword from him. [Othello is disarmed.]  
 IAGO I bleed, sir, but not killed.  
 OTHHELLO  
 I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live,

For in my sense 'tis happiness to die. 298  
 LODOVICO  
 O thou Othello, that was once so good,  
 Fall'n in the practice of a cursèd slave,  
 What shall be said to thee? 300  
 OTHHELLO 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? 305  
 OTHHELLO Ay.  
 CASSIO  
 Dear General, I never gave you cause.  
 OTHHELLO  
 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  
 Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.  
 S From this time forth I never will speak word.  
 LODOVICO What, not to pray?  
 GRATIANO Torments will ope your lips. 314  
 OTHHELLO Well, thou dost best. 315  
 LODOVICO  
 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. [He produces letters.] The one of them  
 imports  
 The death of Cassio, to be undertook  
 By Roderigo.  
 OTHHELLO  
 Oh, villain!  
 CASSIO Most heathenish and most gross! 322  
 LODOVICO [showing another paper]  
 N Now here's another discontented paper  
 Found in his pocket too. And this, it seems,  
 Roderigo meant t'have sent this damnèd villain;  
 But that belike Iago in the interim  
 Came in and satisfied him. 326  
 OTHHELLO [to Iago] Oh, thou pernicious caitiff!—  
 How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief  
 That was my wife's? 327  
 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.  
 OTHHELLO Oh, fool, fool, fool! 333  
 CASSIO  
 There is besides in Roderigo's letter  
 How he upbraids Iago, that he made him

267 naked unarmed 273 your stop the obstruction you present.  
 276 butt goal, limit. (An archery term.) 277 seamark beacon (mark-  
 ing his destination or limit) 278 lost groundless 279 Man . . . rush  
 wield no more than a reed 282 compt account, judgment day  
 285 slave i.e., Othello himself. 290.1 in a litter (The quarto specifies  
 that Cassio is "in a Chaire.") 294 towards his feet i.e., to see if they  
 are cloven, as the devil's are fabled to be

298 in my sense to one who feels as I do 300 in the practice through  
 the plotting, into the snare. slave villain 305 consent agree  
 314 Torments Torture 315 thou dost best you (Iago) do best not to  
 talk. 322 gross monstrous. 323 discontented full of discontent  
 326 belike most likely 327 Came . . . him interposed and gave him  
 satisfactory explanation. 333 wrought . . . desire worked out as he  
 wished, fitted in with his plan.

Brave me upon the watch, whereon it came  
That I was cast; and even but now he spake,  
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,  
Iago set him on.

LODOVICO [to Othello]

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

OTHELLO

Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,  
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees

336 **Brave** defy. **whereon it came** whereof it came about 337 **cast** dismissed 341 **taken off** taken away 344 **hold him long** keep him alive a long time (during his torture) 345 **rest** remain 348 **Soft you** One moment 351 **unlucky** unfortunate 355 **wrought** worked upon, worked into a frenzy 356 **Perplexed** distraught 357 **Indian** (This reading from the quarto pictures an ignorant savage who cannot recognize the value of a precious jewel. The Folio reading, "Iudean," i.e., infidel or disbeliever, may refer to Herod, who slew Miriamne in a fit of jealousy, or to Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ.) 358 **subdued** i.e., overcome by grief

336 Their medicinale gum. Set you down this; 361  
337 And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by th' throat the circumcisèd dog  
And smote him, thus. [He stabs himself.] 366

341 LODOVICO Oh, bloody period! 367

GRATIANO All that is spoke is marred.

OTHELLO

344 I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,  
345 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.  
[He kisses Desdemona and] dies.

CASSIO

This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;  
For he was great of heart.

LODOVICO [to Iago] O Spartan dog, 372

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea! 373

Look on the tragic loading of this bed.

This is thy work. The object poisons sight;  
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house, 376

[The bedcurtains are drawn.]

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor, 377

For they succeed on you. [To Cassio] To you, Lord

Governor, 378

Remains the censure of this hellish villain, 379

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.*

361 **gum** i.e., myrrh. 366 **s.d.** *He stabs himself* (This direction is in the quarto text.) 367 **period** termination, conclusion. 372 **Spartan dog** (Spartan dogs were noted for their savagery and silence.)

373 **fell** cruel 376 **Let it be hid** i.e., draw the bedcurtains. (No stage direction specifies that the dead are to be carried offstage at the end of the play.)

**keep guard** 377 **seize upon** take legal possession of 378 **succeed on** pass as though by inheritance to

379 **censure** sentencing

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