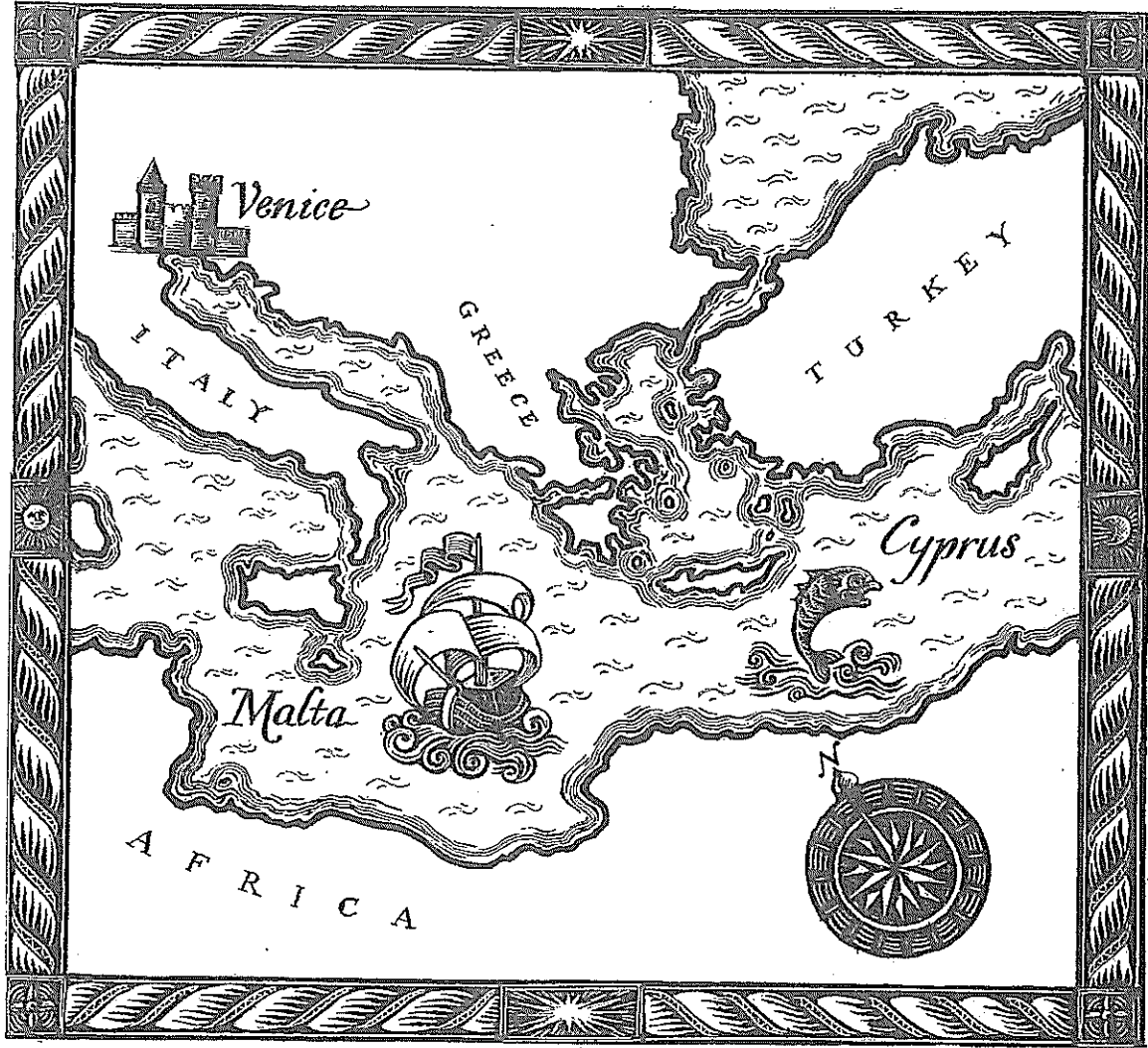


Oxford School *Shakespeare*

OTHELLO





Characters in the Play

The Duke of Venice

Brabantio	<i>A Venetian Senator, father of Desdemona</i>
Lodovico	<i>a noble Venetian, kinsman to Brabantio</i>
Gratiano	<i>a noble Venetian, brother to Brabantio</i>
Roderigo	<i>A Venetian gentleman</i>
Othello	<i>'the Moor', a general in the service of Venice</i>
Cassio	<i>Othello's lieutenant</i>
Iago	<i>ensign (standard-bearer) to Othello</i>
Clown	<i>servant of Othello</i>
Montano	<i>Governor of Cyprus</i>

Desdemona	<i>daughter of Brabantio and wife of Othello</i>
Emilia	<i>wife of Iago</i>
Bianca	<i>mistress of Cassio</i>

Herald

Messenger

Gentlemen of Venice and Cyprus, Sailors, Musicians

Officers, Attendants, Servants

SCENE: The first *Act* takes place in Venice; the remainder of the play is set in Cyprus

ACT 1

Act 1 Scene 1

Roderigo and Iago rouse Brabantio from his bed to tell him of Desdemona's rebellion.

SCENE 1

The street outside Brabantio's house: 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 will not hear me.
5 If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

Roderigo

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

Iago

Despise me if I do not: three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
10 Off-capp'd 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 stuff'd with epithets of war,
15 And in conclusion,
Non-suits my mediators. For 'Certes,' says he,
'I have already chosen my officer.'
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
20 One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife,
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the devison of a battle knows
More than a spinster, unless the bookish theoretic,
25 Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election,

- 1 *never tell me*: don't try to make me believe that; the play opens in the middle of an argument.
- 3 *this*: i.e. the elopement of Othello and Desdemona.
- 4 *'Sblood*: by Christ's blood; a strong oath, was omitted in F.
- 9 *In . . . suit*: with a personal request.
- 10 *Off-capp'd*: removed their hats (a sign of respect).
- 11 *my price*: what I'm worth.
- 13 *a bombast circumstance*: some fancy reason; 'bombast' was a cotton stuffing used for padding or lining garments.
- 14 *epithets of war*: military jargon.
- 16 *Non-suits*: confounds, rejects the petition of.
Certes: assuredly.
- 19 *arithmetician*: theorist; Iago scorns Cassio because he lacks practical experience of warfare.
- 20 *Florentine*: i.e. a foreigner, not a Venetian; Florence was a centre of commerce and banking.
- 21 *almost . . . wife*: 'Who has a fair wife needs more than two eyes' (proverbial); in the play it is obvious that Cassio is not married—perhaps Shakespeare changed his mind, or else forgot Iago's early comment.
- 22 *set . . . field*: position a small company (about 25 soldiers) on the battlefield for a formal battle.
- 23 *devison*: devising, strategic planning.
- 24 *spinster*: person (usually a woman) who spins wool.
bookish theoretic: textbook theory.
- 25 *toged*: togèd; wearing official gowns (like the Roman toga).
- 27 *had the election*: was selected.

28 *proof*: proven ability.

30 *be lee'd*: be delayed (like a sailing-ship) in calm water ('lee').

31 *debitor and creditor*: a mere book-keeper.
counter-caster: petty accountant (who reckons up with tokens or counters).

33 *God . . . mark*: God help us (an exclamation of impatience).
his Moorship's ancient: ensign (standard-bearer) to his Moorish lordship; Iago shows his obsession with Othello's race and colour.

And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
30 Christian and heathen, must be lee'd and calm'd
By debitor and creditor; this counter-caster,
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

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

Roderigo

I would not follow him then.

Iago

O sir, content you.
I follow him to serve my turn upon him.
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
45 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,
That doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time much like his master's ass
For nought but provender, and when he's old,
cashier'd.

35 *service*: military life.

36 *Preferment . . . affection*: promotion depends on personal recommendation and influence.

37 *old gradation*: old-fashioned steady advancement from rank to rank.

39 *term*: way, manner.
affin'd: bound.

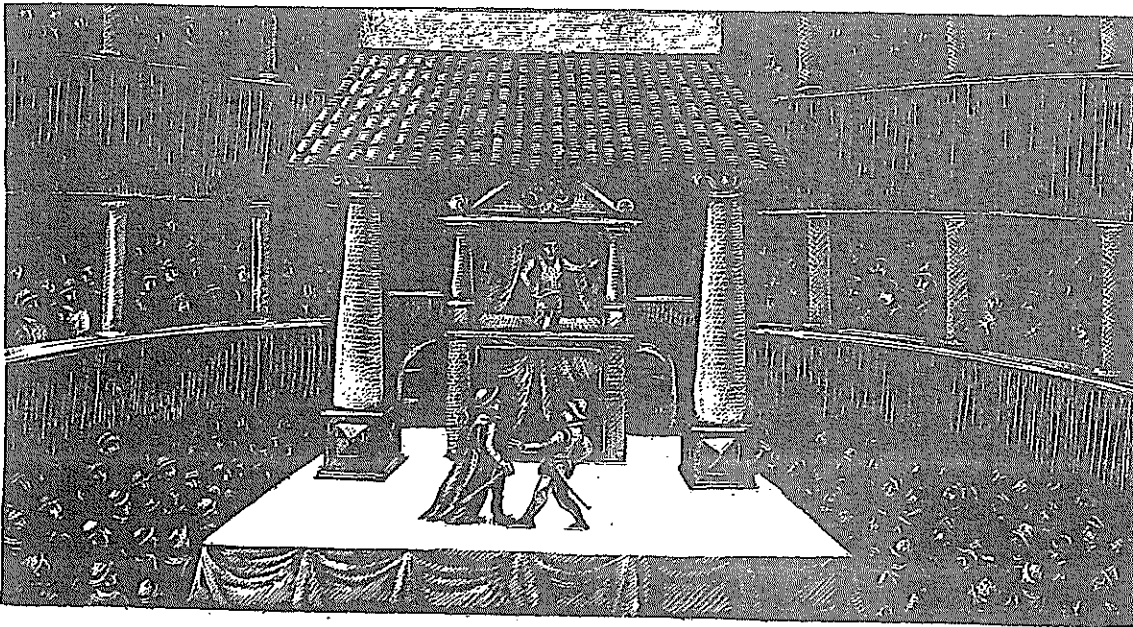
41 *content you*: don't you worry.

42 *serve . . . him*: use him for my own advantage.

45 *knee-crooking knave*: bowing and scraping servant.

46 *doting on*: enjoying.

48 *provender*: feeding,
cashier'd: dismissed, sacked.



82s.d. *above*: Some Elizabethan playhouses seem to have had a balcony at the back of the stage, which could be used here to represent the upper floor of Brabantio's house.

Brabantio appears above, at a window

Brabantio

What is the reason of this terrible summons?

What is the matter there?

Roderigo

85 Signior, is all your family within?

Iago

Are your doors lock'd?

Brabantio

Why, wherefore ask you this?

Iago

Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;

Your heart is burst; you have lost half your soul;

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

90 Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise;

Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,

Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.

Arise, I say!

Brabantio

What, have you lost your wits?

87 *Zounds*: Iago swears by God's wounds.

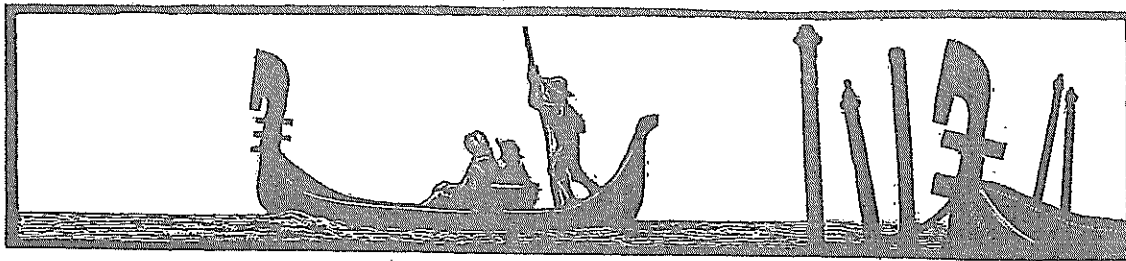
90 *tugging*: copulating with (Iago uses the language of sheep-farmers).

91 *snorting*: snoring.

92 *the devil*: In some traditions, the devil is depicted as black.

grandsire: grandfather.

- 94 *Most reverend signior*: Roderigo is extremely respectful.
know my voice: the figures cannot be recognized in the dark.
- 97 *charg'd*: ordered.
haunt: hang.
- 100 *distempering draughts*: intoxicating drink.
- 101 *malicious bravery*: mischievous impudence.
- 102 *start*: disturb.
- 104 *spirit . . . place*: character and position as a senator.
- 107 *grange*: isolated country house.
- 108 *In . . . soul*: with sincere and disinterested motivation.
- 109–10 *serve . . . you*: i.e. take good advice from someone you dislike.
- 112 *covered with*: mated with.
Barbary horse: African stallion; the north coast of Africa was famous for horse-breeding.
- 113 *coursers*: racehorses.
cousins: kinsfolk.
- 114 *jennets*: little Spanish horses.
germans: blood relations.
- 115 *profane*: foul-mouthed.
- 117 *making . . . backs*: having sexual intercourse.
- Roderigo
Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?
Brabantio
95 Not I; what are you?
Roderigo
My name is Roderigo.
Brabantio
The worser welcome;
I have charg'd thee not to haunt about my doors;
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee. And now in madness,
100 Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery dost thou come
To start my quiet,
Roderigo
Sir, sir, sir—
Brabantio
But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
105 To make this bitter to thee.
Roderigo
Patience, good sir.
Brabantio
What tell'st thou me of robbing? This is Venice;
My house is not a grange.
Roderigo
Most grave Brabantio,
In simple and pure soul I come to you.
Iago
110 Zounds, sir; you are one of those that will not serve God
if the devil bid you. Because we come to do you service
and you think we are ruffians, you'll have your daughter
covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews
neigh to you, you'll have coursers for cousins, and
jennets for germans.
Brabantio
115 What profane wretch art thou?
Iago
I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter and
the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.



Brabantio
Thou art a villain.

Iago

You are a senator.

Brabantio

This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

Roderigo

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

Brabantio

Strike on the tinder, ho!

Give me a taper; call up all my people.

This accident is not unlike my dream;

- 118 *senator*: The actor's tone must determine the sense of his insult.
- 119 *thou shalt answer*: you will have to pay for; Brabantio speaks (with the insultingly familiar 'thou') to Roderigo.
- 121 *wise*: informed.
- 122 *partly*: to some extent (because you seem so unconcerned).
- 123 *odd-even*: just after midnight.
dull watch: late time.
- 125 *common hire*: available for general hire.
gondolier: pronounced 'gòndolier'.
- 127 *allowance*: permission.
- 128 *saucy*: insolent.
- 129 *manners*: code of conduct.
- 130 *have . . . rebuke*: are wrongly rebuked by you.
- 132 *your reverence*: the respect due to you.
- 136 *extravagant . . . stranger*: wandering and free-ranging foreigner.
- 137 *Straight . . . yourself*: immediately find out for yourself.
- 140 *tinder*: tinder-box.
- 141 *taper*: candle.
- 142 *accident*: chance occurrence.

Belief of it oppresses me already.

Light, I say, light!

[Exit

Iago

Farewell, for I must leave you.

145 *meet*: fitting; Iago slides away from any risk of discovery.
wholesome . . . place: good for my job.

146 *produc'd*: called as witness.

148 *gall . . . check*: pull him up sharply (like a horse).

149 *cast*: discharge.
embark'd: engaged.

150 *loud*: good.

151 *stands in act*: are being fought.
for their souls: to save their lives.

152 *fathom*: ability.

155 *life*: livelihood.

156 *flag*: appearance; Iago's image is particularly appropriate for an ensign.

157 *That*: in order that.

158 *Sagittary*: Sagittarius; the name of the inn with the sign of the armed Centaur of the zodiac where Othello and Desdemona have taken lodgings.
raised search: raised; search-party he raises.



160s.d. *nightgown*: dressing-gown.

161 *despised time*: despised; wretched life (scorned by society for his disobedient daughter).

163 *thou*: Brabantio speaks with the affectionate familiar form.

171 *charms*: spells, love-potions.

172 *property*: nature.
maidhood: girlish immaturity.

145 It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place
To be produc'd, as if I stay I shall,

Against the Moor. For I do know the state,

However this may gall him with some check,

Cannot with safety cast him; for he's embark'd

150 With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stands in act, that, for their souls,

Another of his fathom they have none

To lead their business; in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell's pains,

155 Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find
him,

Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;

And there will I be with him. So farewell.

[Exit

Enter Brabantio in his nightgown, and Servants with torches

Brabantio

160 It is too true an evil. Gone she is,

And what's to come of my despised time

Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,

Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!

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

165 How didst thou know 'twas she? O she deceives me

Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers,

Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?

Roderigo

Truly I think they are.

Brabantio

O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!

170 Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds

By what you see them act. Is there not charms

By which the property of youth and maidhood

May be abus'd? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

Roderigo

Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Brabantio

175 Call up my brother. O that 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
To get good guard and go along with me.

Brabantio

180 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'll deserve your pains. [Exeunt

176 *Some . . . another*: Brabantio directs the searchers.

178 *discover him*: reveal where he is.

181 *command*: demand help from.

182 *special . . . night*: i.e. not the usual night watchmen.

183 *deserve*: reward.

Act 1 Scene 2

Cassio tells Othello of a new threat to Venice, but Brabantio demands Othello's arrest for stealing away his daughter.

1-5 *Though . . . ribs*: Iago has been giving Othello his own version of the conversation with Roderigo.

1 *trade of war*: as a professional soldier.

2 *very stuff*: essence.

3 *contriv'd*: premeditated.

iniquity: evil-mindedness.

4 *to . . . service*: for my own good.

5 *yerk'd*: thrust at.

6 *prated*: talked nonsense.

7 *scurvy*: insulting.

10 *full hard*: with difficulty.

11 *fast*: definitely.

12 *magnifico*: Brabantio (the Venetian nobleman).

13 *in his . . . potential*: powerful influence at his command.

14 *double*: influential (perhaps with two votes in the Senate).

15 *grievance*: hardship.

SCENE 2

Othello's lodgings at the Sagittary: enter Othello,
Iago, and Attendants with torches

Iago

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o'the conscience
To do no contriv'd murder. I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times
5 I had thought to have yerk'd 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 honour,
That, with the little godliness I have,
10 I did full hard forbear him. But I pray, sir,
Are you fast married? For be sure of this,
That the magnifico is much belov'd,
And hath in his effect a voice potential
As double as the duke's. He will divorce you,
15 Or put upon you what restraint and grievance

17 *cable*: scope.

18 *signiory*: Venetian ruling powers.

19 *out-tongue*: speak louder.
to know: unknown.

21 *provulgate*: make known.

22 *siege*: rank.
demerits: merits, deserts.

23 *unbonneted*: taking off my hat—i.e.
with all due respect.

26 *unhoused*: unhoused; unrestrained.

27 *into . . . confine*: under restriction and
restraint.

28 *yond*: yonder.

29 *raised*: raised; alarmed.

31 *parts*: natural qualities.
title: entitlement, rights (as
Desdemona's husband).
perfect soul: clear conscience.

33 *Janus*: Iago swears, appropriately, by
the two-faced Roman god.

The law, with all his might to enforce it on,
Will give him cable.

Othello

Let him do his spite;

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

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

Iago

Those are the raised father and his friends;

30 You were best go in.

Othello

Not I; I must be found.

My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

Iago

By Janus, I think no.

Enter Cassio, with Officers and torches

Othello

The servants of the duke and my lieutenant!

35 The goodness of the night upon you, friends.
What is the news?

Cassio

The duke does greet you, general,

And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance
Even on the instant.

Othello

What is the matter, think you?

Cassio

Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.

40 It is a business of some heat. The galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers

37 *haste-post-haste*: speediest possible.

39 *divine*: guess.

40 *heat*: urgency.

41 *sequent*: one after the other.

- 58 *You . . . for you:* Iago, to protect Roderigo, singles him out from the fighting.
- 59 *Keep up:* put away.
- 60 *with years:* because of your age.
- 62 *stow'd:* hidden.
- 63 *enchanted:* bewitched.
- 64 *refer me:* appeal.
all things of sense: any common sense.
- 67 *opposite:* opposed.
- 68 *curled:* curled; with curled hair— attractive.
darlings: favourites.
- 69 *a general mock:* everybody's scorn.
- 70 *guardage:* guardianship.
- 72 *Judge . . . world:* let the world be judge.
gross in sense: quite obvious.
- 73 *practis'd:* performed.
- 74 *minerals:* i.e. poisonous substances.
- 75 *motion:* will-power.
disputed on: formally (legally) discussed.
- 76 *probable:* can be proved.
palpable to thinking: may very easily be thought.
- 77 *apprehend:* seize.
attach: arrest.
- 78 *abuser:* corrupter.
the world: i.e. Venetian society.
- 79 *arts inhibited:* forbidden arts—i.e. black magic.
out of warrant: unlawful.
- 81 *at his peril:* at whatever risk to Othello.
- 82 *of my inclining:* on my side.
- 84 *will you:* do you wish?
- 86 *course:* procedure.
direct session: immediate trial.

Brabantio

Down with him, thief!

Iago

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

Othello

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

60 Good signior, you shall more command with years Than with your weapons.

Brabantio

O thou foul thief! Where hast thou stow'd my daughter?

Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her; For I'll refer me to all things of sense,

65 If she in chains of magic were not bound, Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy, So opposite to marriage that she shunn'd The wealthy curled darlings of our nation, Would ever have, t'incur a general mock,

70 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 practis'd on her with foul charms, Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs or minerals

75 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 practiser Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.

80 Lay hold upon him. If he do resist, Subdue him at his peril.

Othello

Hold your hands,

Both you of my inclining and the rest.

Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it Without a prompter. Where will you that I go

85 To answer this your charge?

Brabantio

To prison, till fit time

Of law and course of direct session

Call thee to answer.

Othello

What if I do obey?

How may the duke be therewith satisfied,
Whose messengers are here about my side

90 *present*: urgent, pressing.

90 Upon some present business of the state
To bring me to him?

Officer

'Tis true, most worthy signior;

The duke's in council, and your noble self
I am sure is sent for.

Brabantio

How? The duke in council?

In this time of the night? Bring him away;

95 *idle*: trivial.

95 Mine's not an idle cause. The duke himself,

Or any of my brothers of the state,

96 *brothers . . . state*: fellow senators.

Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;

For if such actions may have passage free,

Bondslaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

[*Exeunt*]

Act 1 Scene 3

Brabantio accuses Othello before the duke, but Othello defends himself and the duke gives his blessing to the marriage. Othello is commissioned with the leadership of the Venetian force to go to Cyprus, and Desdemona asks permission to accompany her husband. Iago reveals his own intentions.

1 *composition*: consistency.

2 *credit*: credibility.

disproportion'd: inconsistent.

5 *jump . . . accompt*: do not agree on the exact reckoning.

6 *aim*: estimate.

8 *bearing up*: sailing towards.

SCENE 3

The Duke's council chamber: enter Duke and Senators, set at a table with lights, and Attendants

Duke

There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.

First Senator

Indeed they are disproportion'd.

My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

Duke

And mine, a hundred and forty.

Second Senator

And mine, two hundred;

5 But though they jump not on a just accompt—

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.

- 9 *to judgement*: when carefully considered.
 10 *secure . . . error*: feel safe because of the inconsistency.
 11 *main article*: issue on which they are agreed.
approve: accept.
 12 *In fearful sense*: as a cause for alarm.

- 14 *preparation*: force.
makes for: is heading towards.
 16 *Signior Angelo*: presumably some naval commander; see 'Source, Date, and Text', p.xx.
 17 *by*: about.

- 18 *assay*: test.
pageant: show, pretence.
 19 *in false gaze*: looking the wrong way.

- 22 *more concerns*: is more important to.
 23 *facile question*: easy attack.
bear: overcome.
 24 *For that*: because.
brace: readiness.
 25 *abilities*: defensive equipment.
 26 *dress'd in*: equipped with.
 27 *unskilful*: lacking in judgement.
 29 *attempt . . . gain*: easy and profitable undertaking.
 30 *wake and wager*: stir up and risk.
 31 *in all confidence*: certainly.

Duke

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

Sailor

[*Within*] What ho! What ho! What ho!

Officer

A messenger from the galleys.

Enter a Sailor

Duke

Now, what's the business?

Sailor

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

Duke

How say you by this change?

First Senator

This cannot be,
 By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant
 To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
 20 The 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,
 25 But altogether lacks the abilities
 That Rhodes is dress'd in. If we make thought of this,
 We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
 To leave that latest which concerns him first,
 Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain
 30 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

33 *Ottomites*: Turks (from the Ottoman Empire).

35 Have there injointed with an after fleet.

35 *injointed*: linked up.
after: following.

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. Signior Montano,

37 *sail*: ships.

37-8 *restem . . . course*: steer back to their original course.

38 *frank*: undisguised.

39 *Signior Montano*: the Governor of Cyprus.

40 Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.

40 *servitor*: servant.

41 *free duty*: honourable respect.

Duke

'Tis certain then for Cyprus.

Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

44 *Marcus Luccicos*: This person (never mentioned again) may be some knowledgeable Cypriot resident in Venice.

First Senator

45 He's now in Florence.

Duke

Write from us to him

Post-post-haste dispatch.

First Senator

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter Brabantio, Othello, Cassio, Iago, Roderigo,
and Officers*

Duke

Valiant Othello we must straight employ you
Against the general enemy Ottoman.

48 *straight*: immediately.

49 *general*: universal (because anti-Christian).

50 [*To Brabantio*] I did not see you: welcome, gentle signior;

We lack'd your counsel and your help tonight.

Brabantio

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me:
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath rais'd me from my bed, nor doth the general care

53 *place*: public office.

55 *particular*: personal.

56 *flood-gate and o'erbearing*: torrential (bursting through the 'flood-gate') and overwhelming.

55 Take hold on me; for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature

57 *engluts*: engulfs.

That it engluts and swallows other sorrows
And yet is still itself.

Duke

Why, what's the matter?

Brabantio

My daughter! O, my daughter!

Senators

Dead?

Brabantio

Ay, to me.

61 *of mountebanks*: from quack doctors.



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

Duke

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

Brabantio

Humbly I thank your grace.

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

All

We are very sorry for't.

Duke

[To Othello] What in your own part can you say to
this?

Brabantio

75 Nothing, but this is so.

Othello

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approv'd good masters,
That I have tane away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true I have married her;

80 The very head and front of my offending

62 *preposterously*: unnaturally.
to err: to stray from itself.

63 *deficient*: morally defective.
lame of sense: lacking in intelligence.

64 *Sans*: without.

66 *beguil'd* . . . *herself*: cheated your
daughter out of her senses.

68-9 *read* . . . *sense*: interpret the cruel
sentence in your own way.

69 *proper*: own.

70 *Stood* . . . *action*: was named in your
accusation.

72 *mandate*: order.

74 *part*: defence.

76 *potent*: mighty.
reverend: respected.

77 *approv'd*: esteemed.

80 *head and front*: height and breadth
(i.e. the full extent).

- 81 *Rude*: plain.
 82 *soft phrase of peace*: elegant diction of civilians.
 83 *pith*: strength.
 84 *moons wasted*: months ago.
 85 *dearest action*: most important work.
tented field: camp and battlefield.
 87 *broil*: fighting.
- 90 *round*: plain.
unvarnish'd: without decoration.
- 92 *conjuraton*: incantations.
 93 *charg'd withal*: accused of.
- 95-6 *her motion . . . herself*: she was embarrassed by her own natural impulses.
 97 *credit*: reputation.
 99 *maim'd*: defective.
- 102 *find out*: suggest.
 103 *vouch*: assert.
- 105 *dram . . . effect*: magic potion concocted for this purpose.
 106 *wrought*: worked a spell.
vouch: assert.
- 107 *more wider*: fuller.
overt test: obvious evidence.
 108 *thin habits*: insubstantial appearances.
poor likelihoods: vague guesswork.
 109 *modern seeming*: commonplace assumptions.
prefer: object.
 111 *by indirect . . . courses*: by cunning and force; forc'd.
 113 *request*: consent.
fair question: honest discussion.

Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech
 And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace,
 For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
 Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
 85 Their dearest action in the tented field;
 And little of this great world can I speak
 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause
 In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
 90 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love: what drugs, what charms
 What conjuration and what mighty magic—
 For such proceedings I am charg'd withal—
 I won his daughter.
 Brabantio

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

Duke

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

First Senator

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

Othello

I do beseech you

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

Duke

Fetch Desdemona hither.

Othello

Ancient, conduct them: you best know the place.

[Exit Iago with two or three Attendants]

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

Duke

Say it, Othello.

Othello

- Her father lov'd me, oft invited me,
 Still question'd me the story of my life
 From year to year—the battles, sieges, fortunes
 130 That I have pass'd.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days
 To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
 Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,
 135 Of hair-breadth scapes i'th'imminent deadly breach,
 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
 And with it all my travels' history:
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 140 Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch
 heaven,
 It was my hint to speak—such was the process:
 And of the cannibals that each other eat,
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
 145 Would Desdemona seriously incline;

117 *foul*: wicked, culpable.128 *Still*: continually.134 *moving accidents*: exciting adventures.*by . . . field*: on sea and land.135 *hair-breadth scapes*: narrow escapes. *i'th'imminent . . . breach*: when a dangerous fortification gave way.137 *redemption*: ransom.139 *antres*: caves.*idle*: barren.140 *Rough quarries*: rugged precipices.141 *hint*: cue, opportunity.142–4 *cannibals . . . shoulders*: These were often described and pictured in popular travel books.143 *Anthropophagi*: cannibals, man-eaters.

146 *still*: always.

150 *pliant*: suitable, favourable.

152 *dilate*: recount in detail.

153 *by parcels*: piecemeal, in parts.

154 *intently*: listening continually.

155 *beguile . . . tears*: steal tears from her.

158 *pains*: sufferings.

159 *passing*: exceedingly.

162 *had . . . man*: she had been born a man like that.

165 *hint*: opportunity.

166 *pass'd*: endured.

167 *that*: because.

169 *witness*: give evidence.

171 *take . . . best*: make the best of a bad job.

175 *bad blame*: curse.

176 *Light*: fall.

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
150 Took once a pliant hour and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intently. I did consent,
155 And often did beguile her of her tears
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strang
160 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful;
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man. She thank'd
me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
165 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd.
Here comes the lady: let her witness it.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, and Attendants

Duke

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

Brabantio

I pray you hear her speak.
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
175 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:

180 *education*: upbringing.

180 To you I am bound for life and education;

181 *learn*: instruct me.

My life and education both do learn me

183 *hitherto*: so far.

How to respect you. You are lord of all my duty;

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

And so much duty as my mother show'd

186 *challenge*: claim.

185 To you, preferring you before her father,

So much I challenge that I may profess

Due to the Moor my lord.

Brabantio

God bu'y! I have done.

187 *God bu'y*: God be with you.

Please it your grace, on to the state affairs.

188 *on*: let us proceed with.

I had rather to adopt a child than get it.

189 *get*: beget.

190 Come hither, Moor:

I here do give thee that with all my heart

191 *that*: i.e. Desdemona.

Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart

192 *but thou hast already*: except that you have it already.

I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,

193 *For your sake*: on your account.

I am glad at soul I have no other child,

194 *at soul*: in my heart.

195 For thy escape would teach me tyranny

195 *escape*: elopement.

To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.

196 *clogs*: blocks of wood fastened to the legs of horses to prevent their escape.

Duke

Let me speak like yourself and lay a sentence

197 *like yourself*: on your behalf (and as you would speak if you were not so angry).

Which as a guise or step may help these lovers

lay a sentence: apply a maxim (wise sentence).

Into your favour.

198 *guise*: step.

200 When remedies are past the griefs are ended

200-1 *When . . . depended*: the troubles are over when there's no hope of cure and we see the worst that until recently we hoped to avoid.

By seeing the worst which late on hopes depended.

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone

202 *mischief*: misfortune.

Is the next way to draw new mischief on.

203 *next*: best.

What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,

204-5 *What . . . makes*: patient endurance makes a mockery of fortune's injuries when these cannot be prevented.

205 Patience her injury a mockery makes.

The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;

206 *The robb'd*: the man who has been robbed.

He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

Brabantio

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,

207 *bootless*: useless, unavailing.

We lose it not so long as we can smile;

208 *So*: in that case.

210 He bears the sentence well that nothing bears

beguile: cheat.

But the free comfort which from thence he hears;

210-11 *He . . . hears*: it's easy to bear this moralizing ('sentence') when a man has nothing else to suffer.

But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow

- 213 *to pay . . . borrow*: has to resort to mere patience in order to endure his sorrow.
- 214 *to . . . gall*: whether sweet or bitter.
- 217 *the bruise'd . . . ear*: the broken heart was relieved (by being 'pierced' or lanced like a boil) by words.
pierced: pierced.
- 219 *preparation*: armed force.
- 220 *fortitude*: defensive strength.
- 221 *substitute*: deputy, i.e. Montano.
- 222 *allowed sufficiency*: recognized efficiency.
opinion: public opinion.
- 222-3 *a more . . . effects*: which makes the final decision in these matters.
- 223 *throws . . . you*: votes for you as the safer choice.
- 224 *slubber*: tarnish.
- 225 *more stubborn*: tougher.
- 226 *boisterous*: violent.
expedition: assignment.
- 228 *flinty . . . war*: i.e. sleeping on the ground in full armour.
- 229 *thrice-driven bed of down*: softest (winnowed three times) feather bed.
agnize: acknowledge, confess to.
- 230 *prompt alacrity*: ready eagerness.
- 231 *hardness*: hardship.
- 233 *state*: authority.
- 234 *disposition*: arrangements.
- 235 *Due . . . exhibition*: appropriate assigning of residence and financial support.

That to pay grief must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar or to gall,

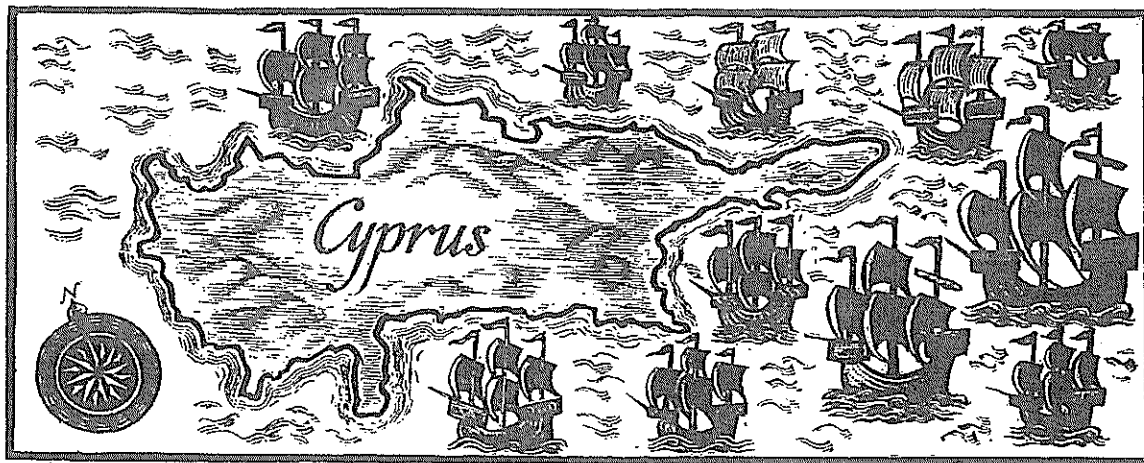
- 215 Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.
But words are words; I never yet did hear
That the bruise'd heart was pierced through the ear.
Beseech you now, to the affairs of state.

Duke

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

Othello

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



236 *besort*: companions, attendants.
 237 *levels . . . breeding*: is suitable for her social position.

With such accommodation and besort
 As levels with her breeding.

Duke

If you please,

Be't at her father's.

Brabantio

I'll not have it so.

Othello

Nor I.

Desdemona

Nor I; I would not there reside

240 To put my father in impatient thoughts
 By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,
 To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear
 And let me find a charter in your voice
 T'assist my simpleness.

Duke

What would you, Desdemona?

Desdemona

245 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
 250 And to his honours 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 which I love him are bereft me,
 255 And I a heavy interim shall support
 By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Othello

Let her have your voice.
 Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
 To please the palate of my appetite,
 260 Nor to comply with heat the young affects
 In my distinct 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
 265 For she is with me. No, when light-wing'd toys

241 *in his eye*: within his sight.

242 *unfolding*: proposal.
prosperous: favourable.

243 *charter*: public permission.

244 *simpleness*: innocence.

246 *downright violence*: violation of normal standards.

storm of fortunes: disruption of my own future.

248 *quality*: nature.

250 *valiant parts*: military virtues.

253 *moth*: drone, idler.

254 *rites*: rites of love.

bereft me: taken away from me.

255 *heavy interim*: sorrowful interval.
support: endure.

257 *voice*: consent.

259 *palate . . . appetite*: my sexual desires.

260-1 *comply . . . satisfaction*: fulfil with passion the youthful emotions of my own individual satisfaction; Othello believes that he is too mature to be obsessed by sexual passions.

262 *free*: generous.

263 *that you think*: if you should think.

264 *scant*: neglect.

265 *For*: because.

265-6 *light-wing'd . . . Cupid*: love's fleeting trivialities; the god of love is depicted as a winged, blindfolded boy.

- 266 *seel*: stitch up (like the eyes of a young hawk).
wanton dullness: frivolous blindness.
 267 *speculative . . . instruments*: powers of perception in my official role.
 268 *disports*: sexual pleasures.
taint: impair.
 269 *skillet*: cooking-pot.
helm: helmet.
 270 *indign*: unworthy.
 271 *make . . . estimation*: attack my reputation.
 272 *privately determine*: personally decide.
 273 *cries*: calls for.

Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
 My speculative and officed instruments,
 That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
 Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
 270 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. You must hence tonight.

Desdemona

275 Tonight, my lord?

Duke

This night.

Othello

With all my heart.

Duke

At nine i'the 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

- 279 *quality and respect*: importance and relevance.
 280 *import*: concern.

280 As doth import you.

Othello

So please your grace, my ancient:

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

- 281 *honesty and trust*: This is the first time in the play that Iago is verbally associated with the qualities for which he is most highly respected by the other characters.
 282 *conveyance*: escort.

Duke

Let it be so.

285 Good night to everyone. [*To Brabantio*] And noble signior,

If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
 Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

First Senator

Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.

Brabantio

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

290 She has deceiv'd her father and may thee.

Othello

My life upon her faith!

- 286 *virtue . . . lack*: virtue itself is not without delightful beauty; compare 'Handsome is as handsome does' (proverbial).

- 290 *she . . . thee*: 'He that once deceives is ever suspected' (proverbial).

[*Exeunt* Duke, Brabantio, Cassio, Senators,
and Attendants

Honest Iago

My Desdemona must I leave to thee;
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her,
And bring her after in the best advantage.

295 Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour
Of love, of worldly matters and direction
To spend with thee. We must obey the time.

[*Exeunt* Othello and Desdemona

Roderigo

Iago.

Iago

What say'st thou, noble heart?

Roderigo

300 What will I do, think'st thou?

Iago

Why, go to bed and sleep.

Roderigo

I will incontinently drown myself.

Iago

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

Roderigo

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

Iago

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

Roderigo

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

Iago

315 Virtue? A fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus.
Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are
gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce,
set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one

293 *prithee*: pray you.

294 *in the best advantage*: at the most
convenient time.

295 *but*: only.

296 *worldly matters*: business.
direction: instructions.

297 *obey the time*: do what the situation
demands.

298–376 The formal dignity of the ducal
court gives place to the colloquial
cynicism of Iago's conversation with
Roderigo.

300 *will*: shall.

302 *incontinently*: immediately.

303 *after*: afterwards.
silly: simple-minded.

306 *prescription*: doctor's order.

310 *Ere*: before.

311 *guinea-hen*: female, prostitute.

314 *fond*: infatuated, foolish.
virtue: power.

315 A *fig*: a contemptuous remark, usually
accompanied with an obscene
gesture.

318 *set*: plant.

319 *gender*: kind.
distract: vary.

321 *corrigible*: correcting.

322 *scale*: weighing-pan.

323 *poise*: counterpoise.

325 *preposterous*: unnatural.

326 *motions*: desires.
carnal stings: fleshly urges.
unbitted: unbridled.

327-8 *sect or scion*: cutting or graft.

333 *deserving*: deserts.

334 *perdurable*: everlasting.
stead: help.

335 *Put . . . purse*: prepare yourself
(financially) for success.

335-6 *Follow . . . wars*: Follow Othello to
the war in Cyprus.

336 *defeat . . . beard*: Hide your face with
a false beard (the implication is that
Roderigo is not man enough to grow
his own beard).

340-1 *answerable sequestration*:
corresponding separation.

341 *put but money*: just put money.

344 *locusts*: carobs (a sweet
Mediterranean fruit).
acerb: bitter.

345 *the coloquintida*: the bitter-apple
(colocynth), used as a purgative.
for youth: for a younger man.

349 *Make*: raise.
sanctimony: piety.

350 *a frail vow*: Iago is contemptuous of
the marriage vows.
erring: a) wandering; b) sinful
(because non-Christian).
super-subtle: over-sophisticated.

351-2 *the tribe of hell*: the devils; Iago
seems to place himself amongst the
devils.

352 *enjoy her*: i.e. sexually.

353 *clean out of the way*: quite the wrong
thing to do.
Seek: prefer.

354 *compassing*: achieving.

356 *fast*: true.

gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have
320 it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why
the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our
wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of
reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and
baseness of our natures would conduct us to most
325 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

330 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
335 than now. Put money in thy purse. Follow thou these
wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard. I say, put
money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona
should long continue her love to the Moor—put money
in thy purse—nor he his to her. It was a violent
340 commencement, 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 acerb as the
345 coloquintida. She must change for youth; when she is
sated with his body she will find the error of her choice.
Therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs
damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning.
Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony and a
350 frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a super-subtle
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
355 be drowned and go without her.

Roderigo

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

359 *hearted*: sincere, heart-felt.

359-60 *be conjunctive*: join together.

363 *delivered*: brought to birth.

Traverse: about turn (a military term).

367 *betimes*: early.

374-95 Iago's soliloquy now uses the intimacy of verse.

374 *ever*: always.

my fool my purse: make a profit out of a fool.

375 *gain'd knowledge*: experience.

profane: abuse.

376 *expend*: waste.

snipe: worthless bird (a long-billed marsh bird).

377 *But*: only.

378 *abroad*: generally.

'twixt my sheets: in my bed.

379 *He's . . . office*: i.e. he has slept with my wife.

380 *kind*: regard.

381 *surety*: certainty.

holds me well: esteems me.

382 *purpose*: plan.

384 *place*: position.

plume . . . will: put a feather in my cap.

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

360 conjunctive in our revenge against him. If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport.

There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse! Go, provide thy money. We will have more of this tomorrow. Adieu.

Roderigo

365 Where shall we meet i'the morning?

Iago

At my lodging.

Roderigo

I'll be with thee betimes.

Iago

Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

Roderigo

What say you?

Iago

370 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;

375 For I mine own gain'd 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

380 Yet 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

385 In double knavery. How? How? Let's see.

386 *abuse*: deceive.

387 *he*: i.e. Cassio.

388 *person*: agreeable appearance.

smooth dispose: charming manner.

389 *To be suspected*: to arouse suspicion.
fram'd: designed.

390 *free and open*: honest and trusting.

392-3 *as . . . are*: proverbial.

394 *engender'd*: conceived.

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, fram'd to make women false.
390 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 engender'd. Hell and night
395 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.
[Exit

ACT 2



Act 2 Scene 1

Storm at sea. Montano waits with two gentlemen of Cyprus, but news is brought to them. The Turkish fleet is scattered, but Cassio arrives safely in Cyprus, followed by Desdemona and Iago who wait anxiously for Othello. Soon husband and wife are reunited—but Iago seems determined to wreck their happiness.

2 *high-wrought flood*: tempestuous sea.

4 *Descry*: perceive, detect.

7 *ruffian'd*: raged.

8 *ribs of oak*: wooden ship's sides.
mountains: mountainous seas.

9 *hold the mortise*: keep their joints intact.

SCENE 1

Cyprus: enter Montano and two Gentlemen

Montano

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

First Gentleman

Nothing at all; it is a high-wrought flood.

I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main

Descry a sail.

Montano

5 Methinks the wind does speak aloud at land,

A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.

If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,

What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,

Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

10 *segregation*: scattering.

11 *banning*: forbidding (refusing entry to the waves).
shore: coast-line.

12 *The . . . clouds*: the wave, rebuked by the shore, seems to throw itself at the sky.

13 *monstrous mane*: mane like some wild monster (punning on 'main' = sea).

14 *Bear*: the constellation Ursa Minor.

15 *guards*: the two bright stars in this constellation were known as the 'Guardians'.

fixed: fixed.

Pole: pole star.

16 *like molestation*: similar upheaval.

17 *enchafed flood*: enshafed; enraged
-- sea --

18 *enshelter'd and embay'd*: sheltered in some bay.

19 *bear it out*: weather the storm.

22 *their . . . halts*: their enterprise is crippled.

23 *sufferance*: damage.

26 *Veronesa*: Perhaps this was a ship fitted out in Verona, or some light single-masted cutter (so-called from the Italian *verrinare* = to cut through).

32 *Touching*: about.
sadly: anxiously.

36 *full*: perfect.

Second Gentleman

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

Montano

If that the Turkish fleet
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd:
It is impossible they bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman

Third Gentleman

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

Montano

25 How? Is this true?

Third Gentleman

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

Montano

30 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;

35 For I have serv'd him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!

39-40 *the main . . . regard*: the sea and the blue of the sky indistinguishable.

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
40 An indistinct regard.

Third Gentleman

Come, let's do so;

For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

42 *arrivance*: arrivals.

Enter Cassio

Cassio

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

44 *approve*: speak well of.

Montano

Is he well shipp'd?

47 *Is . . . shipp'd*: does he have a good ship.

Cassio

His bark is stoutly timber'd, and his pilot
Of very expert and approv'd allowance;
50 Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.

48 *bark*: vessel.

49 *approv'd allowance*: tested experience.

50-1 *not . . . cure*: without being excessively optimistic, are nevertheless confident.

51s.d. *within*: offstage.

A shout within, 'A sail, a sail, a sail!'

Enter a Messenger

Cassio

What noise?

Messenger

The town is empty; on the brow o'the sea
Stand ranks of people and they cry, 'A sail!'

53 *brow o'the sea*: cliff edge.

Cassio

55 My hopes do shape him for the governor.

55 *My . . . for*: I hope it is.

A shot is heard within

Second Gentleman

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

56 *discharge . . . courtesy*: fire a friendly shot.

Cassio

58 *give us truth*: find out for certain.

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

Second Gentleman

I shall.

[Exit

Montano

60 *wiv'd*: married.

60 But, good lieutenant, is your general wiv'd?

Cassio

62 *paragons*: beats.*fame*: rumour.63 *quirks*: fantasies.*blazoning*: describing; the word is particularly used in heraldry.64 *essential* . . . *creation*: in the perfect beauty of her created being.65 *tire the ingener*: exhaust the creative artist, transcend the imagination.

Most fortunately: he hath achiev'd a maid
That paragons description and wild fame;
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens
And in th'essential vesture of creation

65 Does tire the ingener.

Enter Second Gentleman

How now? Who's put in?

Second Gentleman

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

Cassio

He's had most favourable and happy speed:
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The gutter'd rocks and congregated sands,

69 *gutter'd*: jagged.*congregated sands*: sandbanks.70 *enscarp'd*: ridged along.*guiltless keel*: unwary ship.71 *As having sense*: as though conscious.71-2 *omit* . . . *natures*: refrain from using their natural powers.

70 Traitors enscarp'd to clog the guiltless keel,
As having sense of beauty do omit
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by
The divine Desdemona.

Montano

What is she?

Cassio

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

76 *footing*: landing.76-7 *anticipates* . . . *speed*: is a week earlier than we expected.79 *tall ship*: galleon.81 *extincted*: extinguished, depressed.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, Emilia, and Roderigo

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

87 *Enwheel*: encircle.

Desdemona

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

88 *tidings*: news.

Cassio

He is not yet arriv'd; nor know I aught
90 But that he's well, and will be shortly here.

89 *aught*: anything.

Desdemona

O, but I fear—how lost you company?

Cassio

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

92 *contention*: battle.

A shout within, 'A sail, a sail!' A shot is heard

But hark, a sail!

Second Gentleman

They give their greeting to the citadel:

94 *give their greeting*: salute (by firing a salvo).

95 This likewise is a friend.

Cassio

See for the news.

[Exit Second Gentleman

Good ancient, you are welcome *[To Emilia]* Welcome,
mistress.

97 *gall*: annoy.

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

98 *extend*: give an elaborate greeting.
breeding: the way I was brought up.

99 *bold*: confident.

He kisses Emilia

Iago

100 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.

105 Marry, before your ladyship, I grant
She puts her tongue a little in her heart
And chides with thinking.

Emilia

You've little cause to say so.

Iago

Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors, bells
in your parlours, wild-cats in your kitchens, saints in
110 your injuries, devils being offended, players in your
housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

Desdemona

O fie upon thee, slanderer!

Iago

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

Emilia

115 You shall not write my praise.

Iago

No, let me not.

Desdemona

What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise
me?

Iago

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

Desdemona

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

Iago

120 Ay, madam.

Desdemona

[*Aside*] I am not merry, but I do beguile
The thing I am by seeming otherwise—
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

Iago

I am about it, but indeed my invention

125 Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze—

104 *still*: always.

list: a desire.

105 *before*: in the presence of.

106-7 *puts* . . . *thinking*: keeps her tongue
to herself and only thinks spiteful
thoughts.

108 *pictures*: silent images.

bells: i.e. noisy.

110 *injuries*: sufferings (real or imaginary).

players: deceivers.

111 *housewives*: (pronounced 'hussifs')
prostitutes.

113 *Turk*: infidel (whose word was not to
be believed).

119 *assay*: make an attempt.

one: somebody.

121 *beguile*: disguise.

125 *pate*: head.

birdlime: a sticky substance used to
trap birds.

frieze: a coarse woollen fabric.

126 *labours*: a) works hard; b) is giving birth.

130 *black*: with dark hair and skin.
witty: quick to understand.

132 *white*: a) fair lover; b) man ('wight').
fit: match, equal.

135 *folly*: a) foolishness; b) wantonness.

138 *foul*: plain, ugly.

139 *thereunto*: in addition.

144 *put on the vouch*: compel the approval.

145 *ever*: always.

146 *Had . . . will*: spoke easily.

147 *gay*: garish.

148 *Fled . . . may*: did not do as she wished, yet knew when she might do so.

149 *nigh*: possible.

150 *Bade . . . stay*: accepted her injury.

152 *change . . . tail*: accept a worthless object for something valuable (with sexual innuendo: 'cod's head' and 'tail' = male and female genitals).

155 *wight*: person.

It plucks out brains and all. But my muse labours,
And thus she is deliver'd:
'If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,
The one's for use, the other useth it.'

Desdemona

130 Well prais'd! How if she be black and witty?

Iago

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

Desdemona

Worse and worse.

Emilia

How if fair and foolish?

Iago

'She never yet was foolish that was fair,

135 For even her folly help'd her to an heir.'

Desdemona

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

Iago

'There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,

140 But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.'

Desdemona

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

Iago

145 'She that was ever fair, and never proud,

Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;

Never lack'd gold, and yet went never gay;

Fled from her wish, and yet said "Now I may";

She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,

150 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;

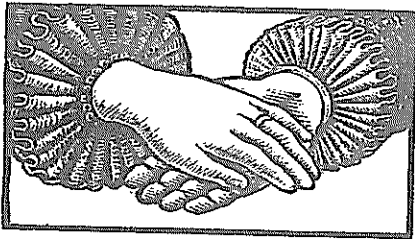
155 She was a wight, if ever such wight were—'

157 *chronicle . . . beer*: keep household accounts.

160 *profane and liberal*: coarse and licentious.

161 *home*: plainly, directly.
relish . . . in: appreciate him better as.

163 *well said*: well done.



165 *gyve*: fetter.

166 *courtship*: courtly behaviour.

169 *apt . . . in*: prone to behave like a fine gentleman.

171 *Would*: I wish.

172 *clyster-pipes*: enema syringes.

173 *his trumpet*: his personal trumpet-call.

Desdemona

To do what?

Iago

'To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.'

Desdemona

O, most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you,

160 Cassio, is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?

Cassio

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

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

165 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

170 good, well kissed, an excellent courtesy! 'Tis so indeed. Yet again your fingers to your lips? Would they were clyster-pipes for your sake!

Trumpets within

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

Cassio

'Tis truly so.

Desdemona

Let's meet him and receive him.

Cassio

Lo, where he comes!

Enter Othello and Attendants

Othello

175 O, 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 waken'd death,

- 180 *labouring bark*: struggling ship.
181 *Olympus-high*: As high as Mount Olympus, home of the classical gods.
duck: dive down.
182 *it were now to die*: I were to die now.
184 *content*: happiness.
absolute: perfect.
186 *Succeeds*: follows.
unknown fate: the life to come.

- 180 And let the labouring 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
185 That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

Desdemona

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

Othello

Amen to that, sweet powers!

I cannot speak enough of this content;

- 188 *as . . . grow*: as long as our lives last.
Amen: Othello responds to Desdemona's prayer.

- 190 It stops me here; it is too much of joy.

They kiss

And this, and this, the greatest discords be
That e'er our hearts shall make.

Iago

[*Aside*] O, you are well tun'd now!
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

- 191 *this*: i.e. the kiss.
be: may be.

- 192-3 *well . . . music*: Iago continues Othello's musical imagery.
193 *set down the pegs*: loosen the screws (of a musical instrument like the lute).

Othello

Come, let us to the castle.

- 195 News, friends; our wars are done; the Turks are
drown'd.

How does my old acquaintance of this isle?
Honey, you shall be well desir'd in Cyprus;
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion and I dote

- 197 *Honey*: A term of affection for Desdemona.
well desir'd: well received.
199 *I prattle . . . fashion*: I shouldn't be talking like this.
199-200 *I dote . . . comforts*: lose myself in my own happiness.
201 *disembark my coffers*: unload my luggage.
202 *master*: i.e. of the ship.

- 200 In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers;
Bring thou the master to the citadel;
He is a good one, and his worthiness

204 *challenge*: demand.

206 *presently*: shortly.

209 *is . . . them*: they are born with.

210 *list*: listen.

210–11 *watches . . . guard*: is on night-duty in the guard-house.

211 *directly*: certainly.

214 *thus*: i.e. on your lips.

215 *but*: only.

217 *still*: continually.

219 *blood*: passion.

220 *act of sport*: sexual intercourse.

221 *favour*: appearance.

222 *sympathy*: agreement.

223–4 *required conveniences*: essential conditions.

224 *tenderness*: sensitivity.

225 *abused*: disgusted.

heave the gorge: vomit.

226 *Very nature*: natural reactions themselves.

228 *pregnant . . . position*: obvious and natural assumption.

229 *in the degree*: next in line.

230 *voluble*: smooth-tongued.
conscionable: conscientious.

231 *humane*: polite.

232 *compassing*: achieving.

salt: lecherous.

233 *slipper*: slippery.

234 *occasions*: opportunities.

235 *stamp*: coin, forge.

238 *green*: unripe, immature.

239 *found*: recognized his intentions.

Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,
205 Once more well met at Cyprus!

[*Exeunt all except Iago and Roderigo*]

Iago

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

Roderigo

With him? Why, 'tis not possible!

Iago

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

241-2 *blest condition*: heavenly innocence.

243 *fig's end*: rubbish; the exclamation would be accompanied by an obscene gesture.

The wine . . . grapes: i.e. she's only human.

245 *pudding*: nonsense.

245-6 *paddle with*: caress.

248 *index*: indicator.
obscure: cryptic.

251- *mutualities*: reciprocal intimacies.

252 *marshal*: lead.

hard at hand: close behind.

253 *incorporate*: bodily.

254 *be . . . me*: do as I shall tell you.

255 *watch*: keep guard (as Cassio will be doing).

for . . . you: I'll give you your instructions.

258 *tainting*: disparaging.

260 *minister*: provide.

262 *sudden*: quick to act.
in choler: when he's angry.
haply: perhaps.

265-6 *whose . . . again*: who will not be pacified.

266 *displanting*: dismissal.

268 *prefer*: promote.

272 *warrant*: promise.

273 *his necessaries*: Othello's luggage.

Roderigo

I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blest condition.

Iago

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

Roderigo

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

Iago

Lechery, by this hand: an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together—villainous thoughts, Roderigo! When these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion. Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from Venice; watch you tonight; for the command, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not; I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud or tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

Roderigo

Well.

Iago

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

Roderigo

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

Iago

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

Roderigo

Adieu

[Exit

Iago

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

276 *apt* . . . *credit*: likely and most believable.

277 *howbeit*: although.

281 *absolute*: pure.

peradventure: perhaps.

282 *accountant*: accountable.

283 *diet*: feed.

284 *lusty*: lustful.

285 *leap'd* . . . *seat*: had sex with Emilia.

286 *mineral*: drug.

inwards: guts.

288 *am even'd*: get even.

292 *trash*: rubbish.

292–3 *trace* . . . *hunting*: follow after (like a hound) for his keen pursuit.

293 *stand* . . . *on*: continues to do what I want.

294 *on the hip*: at my mercy.

295 *Abuse*: slander.

rank garb: lascivious manner.

298 *egregiously*: extraordinarily.

299 *practising upon*: plotting against.

Act 2 Scene 2

The Herald reads Othello's proclamation of a public holiday until evening.

SCENE 2

A public place in the town: 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

2 *certain*: reliable.

3 *mere perdition*: total destruction.

4 *triumph*: public festivity.

6 *addiction*: inclination.

8 *offices*: catering places (providing food and drink).

10 *bell*: curfew bell.
told: struck, counted.

Act 2 Scene 3

Iago encourages Cassio to drink until, provoked by Roderigo, he becomes quarrelsome. Othello dismisses him from his office, but Iago advises him to seek Desdemona's assistance. Roderigo threatens to return to Venice.

1 *Michael*: Othello shows unusual familiarity in this use of Cassio's first name.

2 *stop*: restraint.

3 *out-sport discretion*: celebrate excessively.

6 *honest*: reliable; this word accumulates meanings as it is applied to Iago.

7 *with your earliest*: at your earliest convenience.

9-10 *The . . . you*: i.e. our marriage has yet to be consummated.

13 *Not this hour*: not for another hour.

14 *cast*: dismissed.

16 *sport for Jove*: The king of the gods was renowned for his sexual adventures.

5 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
10 five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of
Cyprus and our noble general Othello! [Exit

SCENE 3

*Outside the guard room: enter Othello, Desdemona,
Cassio, and Attendants*

Othello

Good Michael, look you to the guard tonight.
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,
Not to out-sport discretion.

Cassio

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

Othello

Iago is most honest.

Michael, good night; tomorrow with your earliest
Let me have speech with you—Come, my dear love,
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;
10 That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.
Good night.

[Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and Attendants

Enter Iago

Cassio

Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

Iago

Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'th'clock. Our
general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona;
15 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.

- 18 *full of game*: sexually very active.
- 20 *sounds a parley*: sends out a (military) summons.
- 23 *alarum*: call to arms.
- 26 *stoup*: jug.
here without: just outside.
brace: pair.
- 27 *gallants*: good chaps.
fain: like to.
have a measure: drink a toast.
- 29–30 *poor . . . brains*: a very poor head (i.e. he is quickly intoxicated).
- 32 *I'll . . . you*: I'll drink in your place.
- 33–4 *craftily qualified*: carefully diluted.
- 34 *innovation*: disturbance.
- 35 *here*: in my head.
- 40 *it dislikes me*: I don't like it.
- 41 *fasten . . . him*: get him to have just one more drink; Iago moves into verse for this moment of self-revelation.
- Iago
And I'll warrant her full of game.
- Cassio
Indeed she is a most fresh and delicate creature.
- Iago
20 What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley to provocation.
- Cassio
An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.
- Iago
And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?
- Cassio
She is indeed perfection.
- Iago
25 Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine, and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants, that would fain have a measure to the health of the black Othello.
- Cassio
Not tonight, good Iago; I have very poor and unhappy
30 brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.
- Iago
O, they are our friends—but one cup; I'll drink for you.
- Cassio
I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was craftily qualified too; and behold what innovation it makes
35 here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity and dare not task my weakness with any more.
- Iago
What, man! 'Tis a night of revels; the gallants desire it.
- Cassio
Where are they?
- Iago
Here at the door; I pray you call them in.
- Cassio
40 I'll do't, but it dislikes me. [Exit
- Iago
If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk tonight already,

43 *full . . . offence*: ready to take and give offence.

44 *my . . . dog*: any girl's pet dog.
sick: love-sick.

47 *Potations pottle-deep*: whole tankards full of drink.

48 *swelling*: arrogant.

49 *hold . . . distance*: are jealously protective of their honours.

50 *very elements*: characteristic types.

51 *fluster'd*: excited, made drunk.

52 *watch*: are awake.

53 *put . . . action*: incite Cassio to some quarrel.

55 *consequence*: what happens next.
approve: confirm.

56 *My . . . stream*: everything is going well.

57 *rouse*: large quantity of drink.

58 *past a pint*: more than a pint.

60 *cannikin*: small drinking-can.

63 *man's . . . span*: 'Thou hast made my days as it were a span long' (Psalm 39:6); 'span' = short extent.

68 *potent in potting*: heavy drinkers.

69 *swag-bellied*: having a sagging belly.

He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool

Roderigo,

45 Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath tonight carous'd

Potations pottle-deep, and he's to watch.

Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,

That hold their honours in a wary distance,

50 The very elements of this warlike isle,

Have I tonight fluster'd with flowing cups;

And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of

drunkards,

Am I to put our Cassio in some action

That may offend the isle. But here they come.

Enter Cassio, Montano, and Gentlemen

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

Cassio

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

Montano

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

Iago

Some wine, ho!

[Sings]

60 And let me the cannikin clink, clink,

And let me the cannikin clink;

A soldier's a man,

O, man's life's but a span,

Why then, let a soldier drink.

65 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

70 your English.

Cassio

Is your Englishman so exquisite in his drinking?

72 *with facility*: easily.

73 *sweats not*: finds it no effort.
Almain: German.

73-4 *gives . . . vomit*: makes a Dutchman sick.
pottle: tankard.

76 *do you justice*: match your pledge.

78 *and*: The extra syllable helps the metre.

79 *crown*: The coin was stamped with a crown.

80 *held*: thought.

81 *lown*: rascal, rogue.

84 *pride*: extravagance.

85 *auld*: old.

94 *quality*: rank.

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

75 To the health of our general!

Montano

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

Iago

O sweet England!

[Sings]

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

He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree;
'Tis pride that pulls the country down;

85 Then take thine 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
90 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 offence to the general, nor any
man of quality—I hope to be saved.

Iago

95 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

100 drunk; this is my ancient, this is my right hand, and this
is my left hand. I am not drunk now, I can stand well
enough, and I speak well enough.

All

Excellent well.

Cassio

Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am
105 drunk. [Exit

Montano

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

Iago

You see this fellow that is gone before,
He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar
And give direction. And do but see his vice—

110 'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as th'other. 'Tis pity of him.
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity,
Will shake this island.

Montano

But is he often thus?

Iago

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

Montano

It were well

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

Enter Roderigo

Iago

[*Aside to Roderigo*] How now, Roderigo?
I pray you after the lieutenant, go. [Exit Roderigo

Montano

And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor
125 Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an ingraft infirmity;

106 *platform*: gun rampart.
set the watch: mount the guard.

108 *stand by*: be the equal of.

110 *just equinox*: exact equivalent.

113 *odd time*: chance moment.

114 *shake*: destroy.

115 *'Tis . . . sleep*: he's always like this
before going to sleep.

116 *watch . . . set*: stay awake for a couple
of revolutions of the clock.

125 *hazard . . . second*: risk giving the
position of lieutenant.

126 *ingraft*: deeply rooted.

It were an honest action to say so
To the Moor.

Iago

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

A cry of 'Help, help!' within

But hark! what noise?

Enter Cassio, pursuing Roderigo

Cassio

Zounds, you rogue, you rascal!

Montano

What's the matter, lieutenant?

Cassio

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

Roderigo

135 Beat me?

Cassio

Dost thou prate, rogue?

He strikes Roderigo

Montano

Nay, good lieutenant, I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

Cassio

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

Montano

Come, come, you're drunk.

Cassio

140 Drunk?

They fight

Iago

[*Aside to Roderigo*] Away I say, go out and cry a
mutiny.

[*Exit Roderigo*]

134 *twiggen bottle*: bottle covered with wickerwork; perhaps Cassio threatens to slash Roderigo with his sword.

138 *mazzard*: head, skull.

141 *mutiny*: riot.

Nay, good lieutenant; God's will, gentlemen!
 Help ho! Lieutenant, sir! Montano, sir!
 Help, masters, here's a goodly watch indeed!

A bell rings

145 *Diabolo*: the devil (Spanish).
 146 *rise*: grow riotous.

145 Who's that which rings the bell? Diabolo, ho!
 The town will rise. God's will, lieutenant, hold!
 You will be sham'd forever.

Enter Othello, and Gentlemen with weapons

Othello

What is the matter here?

Montano

Zounds, I bleed still.

I am hurt to th'death.

Othello

Hold for your lives!

Iago

150 Hold ho, lieutenant, sir; Montano, gentlemen,
 Have you forgot all place of sense and duty?
 Hold! the general speaks to you; hold, for shame!

Othello

Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?
 Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that

155 Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
 For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.
 He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
 Holds his soul light: he dies upon his motion.
 Silence that dreadful bell: it frights the isle

160 From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?
 Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,
 Speak. Who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

Iago

I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,
 In quarter and in terms like bride and groom,

165 Divesting them for bed; and then but now—
 As if some planet had unwitted men—
 Swords out and tilting one at other's breasts
 In opposition bloody. I cannot speak

151 *place*: dignity.

154 *do that*: i.e. slaughter our own soldiers.

155 *forbid*: denied (by sending the storm).

157 *to carve . . . rage*: to stab someone in anger.

158 *Holds . . . light*: sets little value on his life.

160 *propriety*: normal peaceful state.

162 *love*: loyalty.

163 *even now*: only just now.

164 *quarter*: conduct.

165 *Divesting*: undressing.

166 *unwitted men*: driven men out of their minds; planets were thought to have powerful influence over the human mind.

167 *tilting*: striking.

168 *speak*: explain.

169 *peevish odds*: senseless quarrel.
 170 *would*: I would rather.
 171 *to*: to be.

172 *are . . . forgot*: have forgotten yourself like this.

174 *civil*: law-abiding.
 175 *stillness*: sober behaviour.

177 *censure*: judgement.
 178 *unlace*: loosen (like purse strings).

181 *hurt to danger*: seriously injured.

183 *something . . . me*: is rather painful for me.

186 *self-charity*: self-protection.

189 *safer guides*: reason.
 190 *collied*: blackened.

194 *rout*: uproar.
 195 *approv'd*: found guilty.

197 *town of*: town garrisoned for.

199 *manage*: conduct.
 200 *court . . . safety*: in the very guardroom.

Any beginning to this peevish odds:
 170 And would in action glorious I had lost
 Those legs that brought me to a part of it.
Othello
 How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?
Cassio
 I pray you pardon me, I cannot speak.
Othello
 Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil:
 175 The gravity and stillness of your youth
 The world hath noted; and your name is great
 In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter
 That you unlace your reputation thus,
 And spend your rich opinion for the name
 180 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—
 Of all that I do know; nor know I aught
 185 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,
 190 And passion having my best judgement collied,
 Assays to lead the way. Zounds, if I stir,
 Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on,
 195 And he that is approv'd in this offence,
 Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me. What, in a town of war,
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestic quarrel,
 200 In night, and on the court and guard of safety?
 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began't?

Montano

If partially affin'd or leagued in office,
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,
Thou art no soldier.

Iago

Touch me not so near.

205 I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio.
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general:
Montano and myself being in speech,
210 There comes a fellow crying out for help,
And Cassio following him with determin'd sword
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
215 Lest by his clamour—as it so fell out—
The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose and I return'd the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords
And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight
220 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 can I not report;
225 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, receiv'd
From him that fled some strange indignity
230 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 never more be officer of mine.

Enter Desdemona attended

202 *partially affin'd*: leaning to any side.
leagued in office: showing loyalty to a
colleague.

211 *determin'd*: drawn.

212 *To . . . him*: to strike him.
this gentleman: i.e. Montano.

213 *Steps in*: goes up to.
entreats his pause: begs him to stop.

217 *Outran . . . purpose*: ran faster than I
thought.
the rather: all the sooner.

219 *high in oath*: swearing loudly.

221 *close*: fighting.

229 *indignity*: insult.

230 *pass*: ignore.

231 *mince*: tone down.

232 *Making . . . Cassio*: making light of
Cassio's part in the fight.

Look if my gentle love be not rais'd up!

235 I'll make thee an example.

Desdemona

What's the matter, dear?

Othello

All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.

Sir, for your hurts myself will be your surgeon.

[Montano *is led off*]

Iago, look with care about the town,

And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.

240 Come, Desdemona, 'tis the soldier's life

To have their balmy slumbers wak'd with strife.

[*Exeunt all but Iago and Cassio*]

Iago

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

Cassio

Ay, past all surgery.

Iago

Marry, God forbid!

Cassio

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

Iago

250 As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound: there is more of sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition, oft got without merit and lost without deserving. You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! There are ways to recover the general again. You are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice, even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again, and he's yours.

Cassio

260 I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so light, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk! And speak parrot! And squabble! Swagger! Swear! And discourse fustian with one's own

237 *myself . . . surgeon*: I'll pay your medical expenses.

243 *past all surgery*: beyond medical help; the change from verse to prose signals a change in the mood and pace of the scene.

250 *of sense*: of physical feeling.

251-4 *Reputation . . . loser*: Compare Iago's contrary opinion in 3, 3, 156-62.

254 *repute*: consider.

255 *recover the general*: win back Othello's friendship.

255-6 *You . . . mood*: you have only been dismissed because of his temper.

256 *in policy*: for political reasons.

malice: ill-will.

257-8 *beat . . . lion*: punish an innocent unimportant creature in order to deter a powerful and dangerous one.

258 *Sue*: appeal.

261 *speak parrot*: talk nonsense.

262 *fustian*: rubbish.

shadow! O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

Iago

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

Cassio

I know not.

Iago

Is't possible?

Cassio

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

Iago

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

Cassio

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

Iago

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

Cassio

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

270 *nothing wherefore*: not what it was about.

272 *pleasance*: pleasure.

273 *applause*: i.e. the desire for applause.

277 *unperfectness*: imperfection.

278 *frankly*: completely.

279 *moraler*: moralist.

281 *heartily*: with all my heart.
befallen: happened like this.

284 *Hydra*: In classical mythology, this was a snake with many heads; it was killed by Hercules.

285 *stop*: silence.
now: at one moment.
sensible: Here the word has its modern meaning.

286 *by and by*: very soon.
presently: now.

286-7 *Every inordinate cup*: every drink too many.

287 *unblessed*: cursed.
ingredience: contents.

289 *familiar creature*: friendly spirit (with perhaps a play on 'familiar' = a witch's personal devil-servant).

290 *exclaim . . . it*: stop grumbling at it.

292 *approved it*: put it to the test.

293 *at a time*: at some time.

297 *mark*: observation.
parts: qualities.

298–9 *put you . . . again*: get your job back.

299 *free*: generous.

303 *splinter*: mend (by putting on a splint).
lay: bet.

304–5 *this crack . . . before*: i.e. as a mended bone is said to be stronger than before it was broken.

308 *I think it freely*: I well believe it.
betimes: early.

309 *undertake*: take up the matter.

310 *check*: stop.

316 *Probal*: reasonable.

318 *inclining*: sympathetic.
subdue: persuade.

319 *fram'd as fruitful*: naturally as generous.

320 *free elements*: unrestrained natural forces.

321 *win*: persuade.

his baptism: i.e. his Christian faith.

322 *seals . . . sin*: Christian tokens (such as the sign of the cross) of redemption from sin.

redeem'd: redeem'd.

323 *enfetter'd to*: bound by.

324 *list*: wishes.

325 *her appetite*: his sexual desire for her.

326 *function*: will.

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
295 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
300 blest a disposition, that 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
305 it was before.

Cassio

You advise me well.

Iago

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

Cassio

I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will
beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me. I
310 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

Iago

And what's he then that says I play the villain,
315 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 fram'd as fruitful
320 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 enfetter'd to her love,
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
325 Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain

327 *parallel*: i.e. to Iago's plot.

328 *Divinity*: theology.

329 *put on*: encourage.

330 *suggest*: tempt.

332 *Plies*: pleads with.

335 *repeals*: wants to have him reinstated.

338 *pitch*: a black sticky substance defiling all it touches.

342 *fills . . . cry*: makes one of the pack.

346 *wit*: sense.

349 *wit*: cunning.

350 *dilatory*: dawdling.

352 *cashier'd Cassio*: got Cassio dismissed.

353–4 *Though . . . ripe*: Another of Iago's cryptic remarks: most things grow well in the sunshine, but the fruits that are the first to blossom are also the earliest to ripen. Cassio's dismissal is the first sign of success—the 'blossom'—for Roderigo.

355 *'tis morning*: The time has passed quickly; it was not ten o'clock at night when the scene started (line 13).

358 *hereafter*: later.

360 *move*: plead.

To counsel Cassio to this parallel course
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
330 They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:
335 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
340 That shall enmesh them all.

Enter Roderigo

How now, Roderigo?

Roderigo

I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that
hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost
spent; I have been tonight exceedingly well cudgelled;
and I think the issue will be, I shall have so much
345 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 no patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,
350 And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee,
And thou by that small hurt hath cashier'd Cassio.
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.
355 Content thyself awhile. By th'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.
360 My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress—

362 *the while*: meanwhile.

apart: aside.

363 *jump*: at the precise moment.

364 *Soliciting*: asking favours.

365 *device*: scheme.

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:

365 Dull not device by coldness and delay.

[*Exit*

ACT 3

Act 3 Scene 1

Cassio asks Emilia to help him gain access to Desdemona.

1 *Masters, play here:* It was customary to wake the newly married couple with music after their first night together. *content your pains:* pay you for your trouble.

3–4 *in Naples . . . nose:* The Neapolitan accent may have been rather nasal in sound; and the Clown is attempting some poor sexual joke based on the 'Neapolitan disease', which was a venereal condition.

5 *How . . . how:* what do you mean?

6 *wind instruments:* probably a form of bagpipe (see line 19).



7 *Ay, marry:* yes indeed.

8 *thereby . . . tail:* A proverbial phrase—but the Clown makes a pun on 'tail' (= penis) and 'wind instrument' (= anus).

15 *may not:* cannot.
to't again: play on.

SCENE 1

Outside Desdemona's bedchamber: enter Cassio, Musicians, and Clown

Cassio

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

They play

Clown

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

First Musician

5 How, sir, how?

Clown

Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

First Musician

Ay, marry are they, sir.

Clown

O, thereby hangs a tail.

First Musician

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

Clown

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

First Musician

Well, sir, we will not.

Clown

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

First Musician

We have none such, sir.

Clown

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

23 *quillets*: quibbles.

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

Clown

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

Cassio

Do, good my friend. [Exit Clown]

Enter Iago

29 *In happy time*: You have come at the
right time.

In happy time, Iago.

Iago

30 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

35 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]

35 *presently*: immediately.

36 *a mean*: a way.

39 *a Florentine*: i.e. one of my own
countrymen (Iago is a Venetian).

I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest.

Enter Emilia

41 *your displeasure*: that you have incurred Othello's displeasure.

43 *stoutly*: loyally.

44 *of great fame*: well known.

45 *great affinity*: with important connections.

wholesome wisdom: all commonsense.

46 *refuse*: dismiss.

48 *take . . . front*: take the first convenient opportunity; opportunity must be seized by the forelock, being (as depicted emblematically) bald behind.

49 *in again*: back in favour.

54 *bosom*: heart.

much bound: very grateful.

Act 3 Scene 2

Othello sends letters to Venice.

1 *pilot*: i.e. of the ship returning to Venice.

2 *do my duties*: pay my respects.

3 *works*: fortifications.

4 *Repair*: return.

Emilia
 40 Good morrow, good lieutenant; I am sorry
 For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.
 The general and his wife are talking of it,
 And she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies
 That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus
 45 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,

50 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.

Cassio

I am much bound to you.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE 2

Othello's headquarters: enter Othello, Iago, and
 Gentlemen

Othello

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

Iago

Well, my good lord, I'll do't. [*Exit*]

Othello

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

Gentlemen

We'll wait upon your lordship.

[*Exeunt*]

Act 3 Scene 3

Iago sows suspicion in Othello's mind until the Moor is convinced that his wife is no longer true to him. Emilia gives Desdemona's handkerchief to her husband.

SCENE 3

Othello's lodgings: enter Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia

Desdemona

Be thou assur'd, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Emilia

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

Desdemona

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

Cassio

Bounteous madam,

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

Desdemona

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

Cassio

Ay, but, lady,

That policy may either last so long

15 Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,
That I being absent and my place supplied,
My general will forget my love and service.

Desdemona

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here,

20 I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article. My lord shall never rest,
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;
25 I'll intermingle every thing he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio;

12 *strangeness*: estrangement.

13 *politic*: politically necessary.

15 *nice*: thin, meagre.

16 *breed . . . circumstance*: produce so few opportunities.

17 *supplied*: taken by someone else.

19 *doubt*: fear.

Before: in the presence of.

20 *warrant*: guarantee.

22 *article*: (legal) detail.

23 *watch him*: keep him awake (a technique for taming hawks).

24 *board . . . shrift*: mealtime table seem like a confessional.

27 *solicitor*: advocate.

28 *give . . . away*: abandon your case.

Thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

Enter Othello and Iago

Emilia

Madam, here comes my lord.

Cassio

30 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

35 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 guilty-like,

40 Seeing you coming.

Othello

I do believe 'twas he.

Desdemona

How now, my lord?

I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

Othello

Who is't you mean?

Desdemona

45 Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take.
For if he be not one that truly loves you,

47 *His . . . take*: make peace with him
now.

49 *in cunning*: deliberately.

That errs in ignorance, and not in cunning,
50 I have no judgement in an honest face.
I prithee call him back.

Othello

Went he hence now?

Desdemona

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

Othello

55 Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

Desdemona

But shall't be shortly?

Othello

The sooner, sweet, for you.

Desdemona

Shall't be tonight at supper?

Othello

No, not tonight.

Desdemona

Tomorrow dinner then?

Othello

I shall not dine at home.

I meet the captains at the citadel.

Desdemona

60 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;

And yet his trespass, in our common reason—

65 Save that, they say, the wars must make example
Out of their best—is not almost a fault

T'incur a private check. When shall he come?

Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul

What you would ask me that I should deny,

70 Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,

That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time

When I have spoke of you dispraisingly

Hath tane your part, to have so much to do

To bring him in? By'r Lady, I could do much—

64 *in . . . reason*: by normal standards.

65–6 *example . . . best*: even the highest officers must be made an example to the other soldiers; see 2, 3, 235.

66–7 *is not . . . check*: is hardly worth a private rebuke.

70 *mammering on*: hesitating.

74 *bring him in*: i.e. back in favour.
By'r Lady: by the Virgin Mary.

75 *will*: wishes.

76 *boon*: personal favour (for herself).

77 *as*: as if.

79 *peculiar*: personal.
profit: benefit.

81 *touch* . . . *indeed*: really put your love to the test.

82 *poise* . . . *weight*: weight and serious implications.

83 *fearful* . . . *granted*: not easy to be decided.

84 *Whereon*: at this point.

87 *straight*: immediately.

88 *fancies*: desires.

90 *wretch*: the term is used affectionately.

90-1 *Perdition* . . . *thee*: let me be damned if I do not love you.

92 *Chaos is come again*: i.e. it will be the end of the world; the Elizabethans believed that at the end of the world all things would return to the state of chaos that existed before creation.

96 *But* . . . *thought*: I just wondered.

Othello

75 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

80 To your own person. Nay, when I have a suit
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight,
And fearful to be granted.

Othello

I will deny thee nothing.

Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,

85 To leave me but a little to myself.

Desdemona

Shall I deny you? No; farewell, my lord.

Othello

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

Desdemona

Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;

Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia*]

Othello

90 Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul
But I do love thee; and when I love thee not,
Chaos is come again.

Iago

My noble lord—

Othello

What dost thou say, Iago?

Iago

Did Michael Cassio,

When you woo'd my lady, know of your love?

Othello

95 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?

Iago

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Othello

O yes, and went between us very oft.

Iago

100 Indeed?

Othello

Indeed? Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that?

Is he not honest?

Iago

Honest, my lord?

Othello

Honest? Ay, honest.

Iago

105 My lord, for aught I know.

Othello

What dost thou think?

Iago

Think, my lord?

Othello

Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something.

110 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

In my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st 'Indeed?'

And didst contract and purse thy brow together,

115 As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain

Some horrible conceit. If thou dost love me,

Show me thy thought.

Iago

My lord, you know I love you.

Othello

I think thou dost;

And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,

120 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

99 *went between us*: i.e. carrying messages.

100 *Indeed*: The actor playing Iago is directed how to react by Othello's description of his behaviour at line 114.

101 *Discern'st . . . that*: Can you see anything wrong in that.

108 *monster*: see line 168 below.

112 *of my counsel*: in my confidence.

113 *course of wooing*: courtship.

114 *purse*: knit.

115 *shut up in thy brain*: you were thinking in your head.

116 *conceit*: idea.

117 *Show*: tell.

120 *weigh'st*: consider.

giv'st them breath: speak them.

121 *stops*: hesitations.

- 123 *of custom*: customary.
just: trustworthy.
 124 *close dilations*: secret expressions of thought.
 125 *passion . . . rule*: emotion cannot control.

Are tricks of custom; but in a man that's just,
 They're close dilations, working from the heart,
 125 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!

Othello

Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago

130 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;

135 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

Sometimes intrude not? Who has a breast so pure,

140 But some uncleanly apprehensions

Keep leets and law-days, and in session sit

With meditations lawful?

Othello

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,

If thou but think'st him wrong'd, and mak'st his ear

145 A stranger to thy thoughts.

Iago

I do beseech you,

Though I perchance am vicious in my guess—

As I confess it is my nature's plague

To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy

Shapes faults that are not—that your wisdom then,

150 From one that so imperfectly conceits,

128 *would . . . none*: I wish they would not seem to be honest men.

132 *speak . . . thinkings*: tell me what you really think.

133 *As thou dost ruminate*: when you really think it over.

137 *they*: i.e. his thoughts.

138 *As where's*: where, for example, is.

139 *breast*: heart.

140 *apprehensions*: ideas.

141–2 *Keep . . . lawful*: hold their local courts and sessions, and sit in judgement along with respectable ideas.

143 *conspire*: plot.
against thy friend: i.e. against Othello himself.

144–5 *mak'st . . . thoughts*: don't tell him what you are thinking.

146 *perchance*: perhaps.
vicious in my guess: badly misinterpreting.

147 *my nature's plague*: a characteristic fault of mine.

148 *jealousy*: suspicion.

149 *Shapes*: imagines.

150 *conceits*: understands.

152 *scattering*: casual.
observance: observation.
 153 *quiet*: peace of mind.

Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble
 Out of his scattering and unsure observance.
 It were not for your quiet, nor your good,
 Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
 155 To let you know my thoughts.

Othello

What dost thou mean?

Iago

157 *immediate*: most precious, nearest the heart.

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
 Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
 Who steals my purse, steals trash; 'tis something,
 nothing,
 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:
 160 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,
 165 Nor shall not, while 'tis in my custody.

Othello

Ha!

Iago

167 *jealousy*: suspicion of sexual infidelity.

168 *green-eyed monster*: green is traditionally the colour of jealousy.

168-9 *doth . . . feeds on*: torments its victim.

169 *That*: any.
cuckold: man cheated (sexually) by his wife.

170 *certain of his fate*: sure that his wife has been false.

171 *damned*: damnèd.
tells: counts.

O beware, my lord, of jealousy:
 It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
 The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
 170 Who certain of his fate loves not his wronger;
 But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
 Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet fondly loves?

Othello

O misery!

Iago

175 *fineless*: infinite.

176 *ever*: always.

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

Othello

Why, why is this?

Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,

180-1 *To follow . . . suspicions*: To experience new doubts several times a month, as the moon waxes and wanes.
 181-2 *to be . . . resolv'd*: as soon as I have any doubt, I will settle the question.
 182 *a goat*: a creature reputedly lustful.
 183 *turn . . . soul*: give my mind to thinking.
 184 *exsufflicate*: exaggerated, inflated; the word is Othello's own coinage.
blown: fly-blown, rotten.
surmises: suspicions.
 185 *Matching thy inference*: equal to your interpretation.
'Tis not: It does not.
 189 *weak merits*: lack of (physical) attraction.
 190 *revolt*: infidelity.

197 *franker*: more open.
bound: in duty bound to speak.
 198 *Receive . . . me*: let me tell you.
 199 *Look to*: take care of.
 200 *secure*: over-confident.

202 *self-bounty*: innate generosity.
 203 *country disposition*: national (feminine) temperament.
 204 *pranks*: sexual tricks.
 205 *best conscience*: highest moral standard.

208 *She . . . you*: Iago echoes the words of Brabantio (1, 3, 289-90).

210 *go to*: there you are.
 211 *Seeming*: pretence.
 212 *seel*: blind (see 1, 3, 266 note).
oak: a hard, close-grained wood.

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

Iago

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

Othello

Dost thou say so?

Iago

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
 And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks
 210 She lov'd them most.

Othello

And so she did.

Iago

Why, go to then!

She that so young could give out such a seeming
 To seel her father's eyes up close as oak

- 214–15 Please forgive me for loving you too much.
- 215 *bound*: indebted.
- 217 *Not a jot*: not at all.
- 219 *mov'd*: distressed.
- 220 *I am to pray you*: I must beg you.
strain: force.
- 221 *issues*: conclusions.
- 221–2 *nor to . . . suspicion*: extend beyond suspicion.
- 224 *fall . . . success*: have such a dreadful result.
- 225 *aim'd not at*: did not intend.
- 227 *honest*: chaste.
- 229 *erring from itself*: straying from its true self.
- 230 *bold*: blunt.
- 231 *affect*: like.
proposed: proposèd.
- 232 *clime*: country.
- 235 *disproportion*: impropriety.
- 236 *in position*: positively.
- 237 *Distinctly*: specifically.
- He thought 'twas witchcraft—but I am much to blame,
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
215 For too much loving you.
Othello
I am bound to thee for ever.
- Iago**
I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.
Othello
Not a jot, not a jot.
Iago
I'faith, I fear it has.
I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But I do see you're mov'd.
220 I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.
Othello
I will not.
Iago
Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
225 As my thoughts aim'd not at. Cassio's my worthy
friend—
My lord, I see you're mov'd.
Othello
No, not much mov'd.—
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.
Iago
Long live she so, and long live you to think so!
Othello
And yet how nature erring from itself—
Iago
230 Ay, there's the point: as, to be bold with you,
Not to affect many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Whereto we see in all things nature tends—
Foh! one may smell, in such, a will most rank,
235 Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.
But pardon me: I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear

- 238 *recoiling*: returning.
 239 *fall to match*: come to compare.
her country forms: the appearances of
 her countrymen.
 240 *happily*: perhaps.

Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,
 May fall to match you with her country forms,
 240 And happily repent.
 Othello

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

[*Going*] My lord, I take my leave.
 Othello

Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless
 245 Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.
 Iago

[*Returning*] My lord, I would I might entreat your
 honour

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

Othello

Fear not my government.

Iago

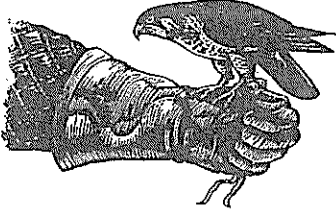
I once more take my leave.

Othello

260 This fellow's of exceeding honesty
 And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
 Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
 Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings,
 I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
 265 To prey at fortune. Haply for I am black,
 And have not those soft parts of conversation
 That chamberers have, or for I am declin'd
 Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
 She's gone, I am abus'd, and my relief

[*Exit*

- 245 *unfolds*: reveals.
 247 *scan*: consider.
 248 *place*: position (as lieutenant).
 251 *means*: methods.
 252 *strain . . . entertainment*: urges his
 reinstatement.
 253 *importunity*: pleading.
 255 *busy*: interfering.
 257 *hold her free*: think her innocent.
 258 *my government*: my self-control.
 261 *qualities*: different kinds of men.
with a learned spirit: learned; from
 experience.
 262 *haggard*: a wild, untrained hawk.
 263 *jesses*: the straps which secure the
 hawk's legs.



- 264 *whistle her off*: cast her off.
let . . . wind: release her (as
 untrainable).
 265 *prey at fortune*: take her own chances,
 look after herself.
Haply: perhaps.
for: because.
 266 *soft . . . conversation*: easy social
 manners.
 267 *chamberers*: gallants, ladies' men.
 269 *abus'd*: deceived.
relief: reaction.

- 272 *appetites*: desires.
toad: traditionally a loathsome creature.
- 273 *vapour*: foul air; dungeons were often the sewers of a castle.
- 276 *Prerogativ'd . . . base*: with fewer opportunities than the humble (for privacy).
- 277 *destiny unshunnable*: inescapable fate.
- 278–9 *Even . . . quicken*: we are made cuckolds as soon as we are conceived.
- 278 *forked*: forkèd.

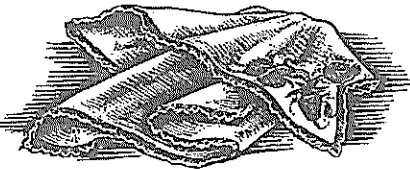
280 *mocks itself*: i.e. by the creation of something imperfect.

282 *generous*: noble.

286 *forehead*: i.e. where his cuckold's horns would grow.

287 *watching*: lack of sleep.

289 *napkin*: handkerchief.



- 270 Must be to loathe her. O 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 vapour of a dungeon
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones,
 Prerogativ'd are they less than the base;
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:
 Even then this forked plague is fated to us
 When we do quicken. Look where she comes.

Enter Desdemona and Emilia

- 280 If she be false, O then heaven mocks itself;
 I'll not believe it.

Desdemona

How now, my dear Othello?

Your dinner and the generous islanders
 By you invited, do attend your presence.

Othello

I am to blame.

Desdemona

Why do you speak so faintly?

- 285 Are you not well?

Othello

I have a pain upon my forehead here.

Desdemona

Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again.
 Let me but bind it hard, within this hour
 It will be well.

Othello

Your napkin is too little.

He puts the handkerchief from him, and she drops it

- 290 Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

Desdemona

I am very sorry that you are not well.

[Exeunt Othello and Desdemona]

Emilia

I am glad I have found this napkin:

294 *wayward*: unaccountable.

295 *Woo'd*: persuaded.

296 *conjur'd her*: made her swear.

297 *reserves*: keeps.

298 *work tane out*: embroidery copied.

301 *fantasy*: whim.

303 *a thing*: Emilia, flirting with Iago, uses the slang sense (= female sexual organ) of the word.

304 *common*: open to all.

314 *to th'advantage*: luckily.

317 *filch*: steal.

This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times
 295 Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,
 For he conjur'd her she should ever keep it,
 That she reserves it evermore about her
 To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work tane out
 And give't Iago.
 300 What he will do with it, heaven knows, not I:
 I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Enter Iago

Iago

How now? What do you here alone?

Emilia

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

Iago

You have a thing for me? It is a common thing—

Emilia

305 Ha!

Iago

To have a foolish wife.

Emilia

O, is that all? What will you give me now
 For that same handkerchief?

Iago

What handkerchief?

Emilia

What handkerchief!

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

Iago

Hast stolen it from her?

Emilia

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

315 Look, here it is.

Iago

A good wench! Give it me.

Emilia

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

Iago

[*Snatching it*] Why, what's that to you?

Emilia

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

320 When she shall lack it.

Iago

Be not acknown on't:

I have use for it. Go, leave me.

[*Exit Emilia*]

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin

And let him find it. Trifles light as air

Are to the jealous confirmations strong

325 As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.

The Moor already changes with my poison:

Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,

Which at the first are scarce found to distaste

But, with a little act upon the blood,

330 Burn like the mines of sulphur. I did say so.

Enter Othello

Look where he comes! Not poppy nor mandragora,

Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,

Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep

Which thou owed'st yesterday.

Othello

Ha, ha, false to me!

Iago

335 Why, how now, general! No more of that.

Othello

Avaunt, be gone! Thou hast set me on the rack.

I swear 'tis better to be much abus'd

Than but to know't a little.

Iago

How now, my lord!

Othello

What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust?

340 I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me.

I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and merry;

I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.

318 *import*: importance.

320 *lack it*: miss it.

Be . . . on't: say you know nothing about it.

322 *lose*: drop.

324 *confirmations*: evidence.

325 *proofs of holy writ*: words from the Bible.

327 *conceits*: imaginings.

328 *to distaste*: to be unpleasant.

329 *act*: action.

330 *mines of sulphur*: i.e. hell.

331 *poppy*: opium (derived from the poppy).

mandragora: a narcotic deriving from the mandrake plant.

332 *drowsy syrups*: soporific drugs.

333 *medicine*: drug.

334 *owed'st*: enjoyed.

336 *Avaunt*: get away.

rack: an instrument of torture that stretched and twisted the limbs.

338 *but . . . little*: know only a part.

339 *sense*: awareness.

341 *free*: untroubled.

- 346 *the . . . camp*: the whole army.
 347 *Pioners*: pioneers, considered the lowest form of soldier.
 348 *So*: if only.
 350 *plumed*: plumed.
 352 *trump*: trumpet.



- 354 *quality*: essential nature.
 355 *circumstance*: ceremony.
 356 *mortal engines*: deadly cannon.
rude throats: loud voices.
 357 *Jove . . . clamours*: i.e. thunder.
 358 *occupation*: i.e. reason for living.
 361 *give . . . proof*: let me see with my own eyes.
 364 *wak'd*: aroused.
 366 *probation*: proof.

He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stolen,
 Let him not know't and he's not robb'd at all.

Iago

345 I am sorry to hear this.

Othello

I had been happy if the general camp,
 Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body
 So I had nothing known. O, now for ever
 Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!
 350 Farewell the plumed troops, and the big wars
 That makes ambition virtue—O farewell!
 Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
 The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear-piercing fife,
 The royal banner, and all quality,
 355 Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
 And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
 Th'immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
 Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.

Iago

Is't possible, my lord?

Othello

360 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 wak'd wrath!

Iago

Is't come to this?

Othello

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

Iago

My noble lord—

Othello

If thou dost slander her and torture me,
 370 Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
 On horror's head horrors accumulate;
 Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amaz'd:
 For nothing canst thou to damnation add
 Greater than that.

Iago

O grace! O heaven forgive me!

375 Are you a man? Have you a soul? Or sense?
 God bu'y you; take mine office. O wretched fool,
 That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice!
 O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world!
 To be direct and honest is not safe.

380 I thank you for this profit, and from hence
 I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

Othello

Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.

Iago

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

Othello

By the world,

385 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. Her name, that was as fresh
 As Dian's visage, is now begrim'd and black
 As mine own face. If there be cords or knives,
 390 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, I will.

Iago

395 And may. But how? How satisfied, my lord?
 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
 Behold her topp'd?

Othello

Death and damnation! O!

Iago

It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
 To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then,
 400 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
 More than their own. What then? How then?

376 *God bu'y you*: God be with you.
take mine office: take away my
 appointment (as Othello's ensign or
 'ancient').

fool: Iago addresses himself.

377 *vice*: fault.

379 *direct*: outspoken.

380 *profit*: lesson I have learned.

381 *sith*: since.

breeds such offence: causes such
 distress.

384 *that it works for*: the love which it tries
 to earn.

385 *honest*: chaste.

386 *just*: truthful.

388 *Dian*: Diana, virgin goddess of
 classical mythology.

begrin'd: dirtied.

389-91 *If . . . endure it*: Othello would
 resolve his uncertainties by suicide.

391 *Would I were satisfied*: I wish I were
 certain.

393 *put it*: suggested it.

394 *would*: want to be.

395 *How satisfied*: What would make you
 certain.

396 *the supervisor*: as an eye-witness.
grossly: crudely.

397 *topp'd*: with a man on top of her.

399 *prospect*: situation.

400 *bolster*: share a bed.

401 *More*: other.

404 *prime*: lecherous.
hot: lustful.
 405 *salt* . . . *in pride*: keen as wolves on heat.
 405–6 *fools* . . . *drunk*: such stupid fools as drunken ignorance.
 407 *imputation* . . . *circumstances*: strong circumstantial evidence.
 408 *to the door of truth*: in the direction of truth.
 410 *living*: valid.
 411 *office*: task.
 412 *sith* . . . *far*: now that I have come so far with this business.
 413 *Prick'd*: spurred.
 414 *lay*: shared a bed.
 415 *raging*: aching.
 417 *loose*: indiscreet.
 421 *wary*: careful.
 422 *gripe*: grasp.
 427 *Cursed*: cursèd.
 429 *foregone conclusion*: previous consummation.
 430 *shrewd doubt*: good guess.
though . . . *dream*: although it was only a dream.
 431 *thicken*: strengthen.
 432 *do* . . . *thinly*: give weaker evidence.

What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
 It is impossible you should see this,
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
 405 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

410 Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

Iago

I do not like the office;
 But sith I am enter'd in this cause so far—
 Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love—
 I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately,
 415 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.
 420 In sleep I heard him say, 'Sweet Desdemona,
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves.'
 And then, sir, he would gripe and wring my hand,
 Cry, 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,
 As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
 425 That grew upon my lips; then laid his leg
 Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd, and then
 Cried, 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor.'

Othello

O monstrous, monstrous!

Iago

Nay, this was but his dream.

Othello

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

Iago

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

Othello

I'll tear her all to pieces!

434 *yet*: still.

Iago

Nay, yet be wise; yet we see nothing done,
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this:

435 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—

440 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

O that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak, for my revenge.

445 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 thy hollow cell!

Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne

450 To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspics' tongues.

He kneels

Iago

Yet be content.

Othello

O, blood, blood, blood!

Iago

Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

Othello

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea,

455 Whose icy current and compulsive course

Ne'er feels retiring ebb but keeps due on

To the Propontic and the Hellespont,

Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace

441 *any*: i.e. any handkerchief.

442 *speaks*: witnesses.

443 *the slave*: Othello refers to Cassio.

449 *hearted throne*: throne in my heart.

450 *fraught*: burden.

451 *aspics' tongues*: poisonous snakes
(asps).

be content: calm down.

454 *Pontic sea*: the Black Sea.

455 *compulsive course*: irresistible force.

456 *Ne'er . . . ebb*: never ebbs back.

457 *the Propontic*: the Sea of Marmora.
the Hellespont: the Dardanelles.

460 *capable and wide*: suitably great.
 461 *marble*: steadfast, unfeeling.
 463 *engage*: pledge.

Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
 460 Till that a capable and wide revenge
 Swallow them up. Now by yond marble heaven,
 In the due reverence of a sacred vow
 I here engage my words.

Iago

Do not rise yet.

He kneels

464 *ever-burning lights*: i.e. the stars.
 465 *elements . . . about*: the elements of
 fire, air, and water that enfold ('clip')
 the earth in the early cosmology.
 467 *execution*: activity.
wit: intellect.
 469 *remorse*: compassion (because he is
 doing it for 'the wrong'd Othello').
 470 *What . . . ever*: However murderous
 the task.
greet: welcome.

Witness you ever-burning lights above,
 465 You elements that clip us round about,
 Witness that here Iago doth give up
 The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
 To wrong'd Othello's service. Let him command,
 And to obey shall be in me remorse,
 470 What bloody business ever.

They rise

Othello

471 *vain*: empty.
acceptance bounteous: generous
 reward.
 472 *upon the instant*: immediately.
put thee to't: put you to the test.

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

Iago

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

Othello

477 *apart*: aside.
 478 *furnish me*: equip myself.
 479 *Now . . . lieutenant*: Iago has achieved
 the military position he desired.

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

Iago

480 I am your own for ever.

[*Exeunt*]

Act 3 Scene 4

Desdemona persists in the recommendation of Cassio, but Othello is obsessed with the handkerchief; Iago and Cassio pass along the street, and Cassio is met by his mistress Bianca—to whom he gives Othello's handkerchief.

SCENE 4

The street outside Othello's lodging: enter Desdemona, Emilia, and Clown

Desdemona

Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

Clown

I dare not say he lies anywhere.

Desdemona

Why, man?

Clown

He's a soldier, and for one to say a soldier lies is
5 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 devise a
10 lodging, and say he lies here, or he lies there, were to lie
in mine own throat.

Desdemona

Can you enquire him out, and be edified by report?

Clown

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

Desdemona

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

Clown

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

Desdemona

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

Emilia

20 I know not, madam.

1 *lies*: a) lodges; b) speaks falsely.

7 *lie*: deceive.

10–11 *lie . . . throat*: tell a deliberate lie.

12 *edified*: instructed (as by the question-and-answer teaching of the Christian catechism).

15 *moved*: persuaded.

17 *compass*: scope, range.

22 *crusadoes*: Portuguese gold coins stamped with a cross.
but: except.

Desdemona
Believe me, I had rather lose my purse
Full of crusadoes; and but my noble Moor
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness
As jealous creatures are, it were enough
25 To put him to ill thinking.

Emilia

Is he not jealous?

Desdemona

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

27 *humours*: bodily fluids influencing temperament (here black bile, causing melancholy).

Enter Othello

Emilia

Look where he comes.

Desdemona

I will not leave him now; let Cassio
Be call'd to him.—How is't with you, my lord?

Othello

30 Well, my good lady. [*Aside*] O hardness to dissemble!
How do you, Desdemona?

Desdemona

Well, my good lord.

Othello

Give me your 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.

35 Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires

A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,

Much castigation, exercise devout;

For here's a young and sweating devil here

That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,

40 A frank one.

Desdemona

You may indeed say so,

For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

32 *moist*: A moist palm was believed to indicate youthfulness and sexual ardour.

34 *argues*: is proof of.
liberal: a) generous; b) licentious.

36 *sequester*: restraint (a legal term).

37 *castigation*: corrective discipline.

40 *frank*: a) honest; b) revealing.

42-3 *The hearts . . . hearts*: Othello seems to refer to the modern orders of chivalry, suggesting a contrast between the sincere 'hearts' and the token 'hands'.

44 *Speak of*: understand.

45 *chuck*: a term of endearment.

47 *salt . . . rheum*: a) miserable running cold; b) lustful humour.

52 *Egyptian*: These were believed to be the ancestors of modern gypsies.

53 *charmer*: enchantress.

55 *amiable*: desirable, beloved.

58 *loathed*: loathed.
spirits: desires.

60 *my fate . . . wife*: it should be my fortune to marry.

63 *perdition*: disaster.

64 *match*: equal.

Othello

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

Desdemona

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

Othello

45 What promise, chuck?

Desdemona

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

Othello

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

Desdemona

Here, my lord.

Othello

That which I gave you.

Desdemona

I have it not about me.

Othello

50 Not?

Desdemona

No, faith, my lord.

Othello

That's a fault. That handkerchief

Did an Egyptian to my mother give:
She was a charmer and could almost read
The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it,
55 'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
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,

60 And bid me when my fate would have me wife,
To give it her. I did so, and take heed on't:
Make it a darling, like your precious eye.
To lose't or give't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

Desdemona

Is't possible?

65 *web*: weaving.

66 *sibyl*: prophetess.

66-7 *that had . . . compasses*: i.e. she was two hundred years old.

68 *prophetic fury*: frenzy of inspiration.

69 *hallow'd*: sacred.

70 *mummy*: mummia—a preparation made from mummified dead bodies.

71 *Conserv'd of*: prepared as a drug from.

72 *look to't well*: take good care of it.

73 *would*: I wish.

75 *startingly and rash*: abruptly and violently.

76 *out o'th'way*: missing.

78 *Say you*: What do you say?

79 *an if*: if perhaps.

83 *to put . . . suit*: make me forget what I wanted.

85 *misgives*: fears the worst.

87 *sufficient*: competent.

Othello

65 'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk,
70 And it was dyed in mummy, which the skilful
Conserv'd of maidens' hearts.

Desdemona

I'faith, is't true?

Othello

Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

Desdemona

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

Othello

Ha? Wherefore?

Desdemona

75 Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

Othello

Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak; is't out of th'way?

Desdemona

Heaven bless us!

Othello

Say you?

Desdemona

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

Othello

80 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 receiv'd again.

Othello

85 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
90 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

Emilia
Is not this man jealous?
Desdemona

I ne'er saw this before.

95 *wonder*: magic.

95 Sure there's some wonder in this handkerchief;
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

Emilia

97 *'Tis . . . man*: It doesn't take very long
for us to know what men are like.

98 *but stomachs*: only appetites.

99 *hungrily*: hungrily.

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;
They eat us hungrily, and when they are full,
100 They belch us.

Enter Iago and Cassio

Look you, Cassio and my husband.

Iago

There is no other way: 'tis she must do't.
And lo, the happiness! Go, and importune her.

102 *the happiness*: good luck.

Desdemona

How now, good Cassio! What's the news with you?

Cassio

Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you
105 That, by your virtuous means, I may again
Exist and be a member of his love,
Whom I, with all the office of my heart,

105 *virtuous*: efficacious.

106 *Exist*: be myself.

107 *office*: loyalty.

- 108 *I would not be delay'd*: I don't want to waste time.
 109 *mortal*: deadly.
 110 *nor . . . nor*: neither . . . nor.
 111 *purpos'd merit*: what I intend to deserve.
 in futurity: in times to come.
 112 *ransom*: buy my way back.
 113 *But*: merely.
 benefit: i.e. because he must know the worst.
 114 Then I shall have to be satisfied with that.
 115 *shut myself up*: confine.
 some other course: a different career.
 116 *To fortune's alms*: to accept whatever fortune can spare.
 117 *advocation*: advocacy.
 in tune: suitable.
 119 *favour*: appearance.
 humour: temper.
 120 *So . . . sanctified*: may all the angels witness.
 121 *As*: that.
 all my best: to the best of my ability.
 122 *within the blank*: at the centre of the target (in archery).
 123 *free speech*: outspokenness.

- 132 *of moment*: very important.
 133 *There's . . . indeed*: it's serious then.

- 134 *of state*: concerning state affairs.
 135 *unhatch'd practice*: undisclosed plot.
 136 *demonstrable*: obvious.
 137 *puddled*: disturbed.
 138 *wrangle with*: quarrel over.
 139 *object*: main concern.
 140–2 *let . . . pain*: if our finger aches, it makes the whole body hurt.

Entirely honour. I would not be delay'd.
 If my offence be of such mortal kind
 110 That nor my service past nor present sorrows,
 Nor purpos'd 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,
 115 And shut myself up in some other course
 To fortune's alms.

Desdemona

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

Iago

Is my lord angry?

Emilia

He went hence but now
 And certainly in strange unquietness.

Iago

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

Desdemona

I prithee do so.

[Exit Iago]

Something sure of state,
 135 Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practice
 Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
 Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;
 140 For let our finger ache, and it endues

- 143 *of them*: from them.
observancy: attentiveness.
 144 *the bridal*: the wedding-night.
Beshrew me: a mild oath.
 145 *unhandsome warrior*: unskilled soldier;
 Desdemona remembers how Othello
 called her his 'fair warrior' when he
 greeted her in Cyprus (2, 1, 175).
 146 *Arraigning*: accusing.
unkindness: unnatural behaviour.
 147 *suborn'd the witness*: caused the
 witness [i.e. herself] to give false
 evidence.
 148 *indicted*: accused.
 150 *conception*: fantasy.
toy: fancy.

- 154 *ever*: always.
for the cause: for some reason.
 155 *for*: because.
'Tis: Emilia echoes her husband's
 description of the monster which is
 the personification of jealousy.

Our other healthful members even to a sense
 Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,
 Nor of them look for such observancy
 As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 145 I was—unhandsome warrior as I am—
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;
 But now I find I had suborn'd the witness
 And he's indicted falsely.

Emilia

Pray heaven it be state matters, as you think,
 150 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 answer'd so.
 They are not ever jealous for the cause,
 155 But jealous for they're jealous. 'Tis 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 here about.
 160 If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit
 And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

Cassio

I humbly thank your ladyship.

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia*]

Enter Bianca

Bianca

'Save you, friend Cassio.

Cassio

What make you from home?

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?

165 I'faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

- 163 *'Save you*: may God save you.
What . . . home: What are you doing
 away from home?

- 164 *How . . . you*: How are you?

Bianca

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.
 What! Keep a week away? Seven days and nights?
 Eight score eight hours? And lovers' absent hours
 More tedious than the dial eight score times!

170 O weary reckoning!

Cassio

Pardon me, Bianca.

I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd
 But I shall in a more continue time
 Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,
 Take me this work out.

Bianca

O Cassio, whence came this?

175 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
 From whence you have them. You are jealous now
 180 That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.
 No, by my faith, Bianca.

Bianca

Why, whose is it?

Cassio

I know not neither; I found it in my chamber.
 I like the work well. Ere it be demanded—
 As like enough it will—I'd have it copied.
 185 Take it and do't, and leave me for this time.

Bianca

Leave you? Wherefore?

Cassio

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

Bianca

Why, I pray you?

Cassio

190 Not that I love you not.

167 *a week*: It would seem that a week has elapsed between this scene and the previous one.

168 *lovers' absent hours*: the hours when lovers are away from each other.

169 *dial*: clock.

171 *leaden . . . press'd*: tortured by heavy thoughts (as a traitor was pressed to death with heavy weights).

172 *continue*: uninterrupted.

173 *Strike . . . score*: pay off this debt.

174 *Take . . . out*: copy out this embroidery.

whence came this: where did you get this?

175 *token*: i.e. love-token.

friend: i.e. mistress.

188 *no addition*: no honourable title.

189 *woman'd*: with a woman.

Bianca

But that you do not love me.

191 *bring*: accompany.

I pray you, bring me on the way a little,
And say if I shall see you soon at night.

Cassio

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

Bianca

195 *circumstanc'd*: accept the situation.

195. 'Tis very good; I must be circumstanc'd.

[*Exeunt*



42 *Noses . . . lips:* Othello may be thinking that their noses and lips may have touched in kissing, and their ears have been close together for whispering.

instruction. It is not words that shakes me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips. Is't possible?—Confess? Handkerchief? O devil!

He falls in a trance

Iago

Work on,

45 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!

47 *reproach:* shame.

Enter Cassio

How now, Cassio!

Cassio

What's the matter?

Iago

50 My lord is fallen into an epilepsy.
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

Cassio

Rub him about the temples.

Iago

No, forbear.

53 *lethargy:* coma, unconsciousness.

The lethargy must have his quiet course.
If not, he foams at mouth and by and by
55 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 *on great occasion:* about a serious matter.

[*Exit Cassio*]

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

Othello

60 *Dost . . . me:* Othello thinks Iago refers to the cuckold's horns.

60 Dost thou mock me?

Iago

I mock you? No, by heaven!

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

Othello

61 *Would:* I wish.
your fortune: i.e. in having a faithless wife.

A horned man's a monster and a beast.

62 *horned man:* hornèd; i.e. a cuckold.

64 *civil*: civilized.

66 *yok'd*: a) married; b) burdened.

67 *draw*: a) pull (the plough); b) share.

68 *unproper*: not solely their own (because shared by wife's lovers).

69 *peculiar*: their own.
better: i.e. because he knows he is cheated.

70 *arch-mock*: supreme mockery.

71 *lip*: kiss.
wanton: faithless woman.
secure: free from suspicion.

73 *what I am*: i.e. a cuckold.

75 *in . . . list*: within the bounds of self-control ('list' = barrier).

76 *o'erwhelmed*: o'erwhelmèd.

78 *shifted him away*: got rid of him by stratagem.

79 *laid good scuse*: made a good excuse of.
ecstasy: fit, trance.

80 *anon*: immediately.

81 *encave*: conceal.

82 *fleers*: mocks.

notable: obvious.

86 *cope*: encounter, copulate with.

87 *gesture*: behaviour.

88 *all . . . spleen*: consumed with passion (thought to reside in the spleen).

90 *cunning*: crafty.

92 *keep time*: be controlled (a musical term).

Iago

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

Othello

65 Did he confess it?

Iago

Good sir, be a man:

Think every bearded fellow that's but yok'd
May draw with you. There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.

70 O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,
To lip a wanton in a secure couch
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

Othello

O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

Iago

Stand you awhile apart,

75 Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here, o'erwhelmed with your grief—

A passion most unsuited such a man—

Cassio came hither. I shifted him away

And laid good scuse upon your ecstasy;

80 Bade him anon return and here speak with me,
The which he promis'd. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns
That dwell in every region of his face;

For I will make him tell the tale anew,

85 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when

He hath and is again to cope your wife.

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?

90 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 *withdraws*

93 *of*: about; Iago explains his tactics to the audience.

94 *housewife*: hussy (pronounced 'huswif').
desires: sexual desires.

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

Enter Cassio

101 *unbookish*: ignorant (compared with Iago's worldly wisdom).
construe: interpret.

102 *light*: cheerful.

104 *addition*: title.

105 *Whose want*: the lack of which.

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

Cassio

The worser that you give me the addition

105 Whose want even kills me.

Iago

Ply Desdemona well and you are sure on't.

Now if this suit lay in Bianca's power,

How quickly should you speed!

Cassio

Alas, poor caitiff!

Othello

[*Aside*] Look how he laughs already!

Iago

110 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

115 She gives it out that you shall marry her.

Do you intend it?

112 *faintly*: lightly.

114 *said*: done.

115 *gives it out*: tells people.

- 118 *Roman*: conqueror.
- 119 *customer*: whore.
 119-20 *bear . . . wit*: think better of my judgement.
- 120 *unwholesome*: unhealthy, feeble.
- 122 *So, so, so*: The call of a huntsman encouraging his hounds.
- 123 *cry*: rumour (and the call of hounds picking up the scent).
- 125 *very*: true.
- 126 *scored*: wounded, marked.
- 128 *out . . . flattery*: by her own flattering self-love.
- 131 *even now*: just now.
- 133 *bauble*: plaything.
- 134 *falls . . . neck*: throws her arms round my neck.
- 136 *imports*: suggests.
- 137 *hales*: tugs.
- 139 *plucked*: drew.
- 142 *leave her company*: stop seeing her.

Cassio
 Ha, ha, ha!

Othello
 [Aside] Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

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

Othello
 [Aside] So, so, so, so: they laugh that wins.

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

Cassio
 Prithee, say true.

Iago
 125 I am a very villain else.

Othello
 [Aside] Have you scored me? Well.

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

Othello
 130 [Aside] Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.

Cassio
 She was here even now. She haunts me in every place. I
 was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain
 Venetians, and thither comes this bauble and, by this
 hand, falls me thus about my neck.

Othello
 135 [Aside] Crying 'O dear Cassio!' as it were. His gesture
 imports it.

Cassio
 So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so hales and
 pulls me. Ha, ha, ha!

Othello
 [Aside] Now he tells how she plucked him to my
 140 chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I
 shall throw it to!

Cassio
 Well, I must leave her company.

Iago

Before me, look where she comes!

Cassio

'Tis such another fitchew! Marry, a perfumed one.

Enter Bianca

145 What do you mean by this haunting of me?

Bianca

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

Cassio

How now, my sweet Bianca! How now, how now!

Othello

155 [*Aside*] By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

Bianca

If you'll come to supper tonight, you may. If you will not, come when you are next prepared for. [*Exit*

Iago

After her, after her!

Cassio

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

Iago

160 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.

Cassio

Prithee, come; will you?

Iago

165 Go to; say no more. [*Exit Cassio*

Othello

[*Coming forward*] How shall I murder him, Iago?143 *Before me*: An exclamation of surprise (= Upon my soul!).

144 *such another*: no other than.
fitchew: polecat, a creature noted for its smell when sexually aroused.
perfumed: prostitutes were often highly scented.

146 *dam*: mother (a proverbial expression).148 *take out*: copy.149 *piece of work*: story.152 *hobby-horse*: whore.155 *should*: must.

157 *when . . . for*: when you are next expected (i.e. never).

159 *rail*: shout.
else: otherwise.

162 *very fain*: very much like to.166 *Go to*: you bet.

Iago

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

Othello

O, Iago!

Iago

And did you see the handkerchief?

Othello

170 Was that mine?

Iago

Yours, by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife: she gave it to him, and he hath given it his whore.

Othello

I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman, a
175 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. O, the world hath not a
180 sweeter creature! She might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

Iago

Nay, that's not your way.

Othello

Hang her, I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle, an admirable musician—O, she will sing the
185 savageness out of a bear—of so high and plenteous wit and invention—

Iago

She's the worse for all this.

Othello

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

Iago

190 Ay, too gentle.

Othello

Nay, that's certain; but yet the pity of it, Iago! O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

171 *by this hand*: The common oath (= I swear it) is also the literal truth.

174 *a-killing*: being killed.

182 *your way*: your proper course of action.

186 *invention*: imagination.

188–9 *gentle a condition*: a) well-bred; b) mild a temperament.

190 *too gentle*: i.e. too yielding.

- 193 *fond over*: foolish about.
patent: licence.
 194 *if . . . nobody*: if it doesn't hurt you, it
 won't affect anyone else.
 195 *messes*: little bits of meat.

- 200 *expostulate*: argue.
 201 *unprovide*: weaken.

- 205 *be his undertaker*: deal with him.

Iago

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

Othello

195 I will chop her into messes. Cuckold me!

Iago

O, 'tis foul in her.

Othello

With mine officer!

Iago

That's fouler.

Othello

200 Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not
 205 expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty
 unprovide my mind again—this night, Iago.

Iago

Do it not with poison; strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

Othello

Good, good! The justice of it pleases; very good!

Iago

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

Othello

Excellent good!

A trumpet sounds within

What trumpet is that same?

Iago

I warrant something from Venice.

Enter Lodovico, Desdemona, and Attendants

210 '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.

Lodovico

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

He gives Othello a letter

Othello

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

He opens the letter and reads

Desdemona

215 And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

Iago

I am very glad to see you, signior;
Welcome to Cyprus.

Lodovico

I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

Iago

Lives, sir.

Desdemona

220 Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord
An unkind breach; but you shall make all well.

Othello

Are you sure of that?

Desdemona

My lord?

Othello

'This fail you not to do, as you will—'

Lodovico

225 He did not call; he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

Desdemona

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

Othello

Fire and brimstone!

Desdemona

230 My lord?

Othello

Are you wise?

Desdemona

What, is he angry?

214 *I . . . pleasures*: Othello demonstrates his respect for the state of Venice.

221 *unkind breach*: unnatural separation.

225 *in the paper*: reading the letter.

226 *division*: difference of opinion.

228 *atone*: bring them together.

Lodovico

Maybe the letter mov'd him;
For as I think they do command him home,
Deputing Cassio in his government.

Desdemona

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

Othello

Indeed!

Desdemona

My lord?

Othello

I am glad to see you mad.

Desdemona

Why, sweet Othello?

Othello

Devil!

He strikes her

Desdemona

I have not deserv'd this.

Lodovico

My lord, this would not be believ'd in Venice,
240 Though I should swear I saw't. 'Tis very much.
Make her amends; she weeps.

Othello

O devil, devill!

If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
Out of my sight!

Desdemona

I will not stay to offend you.

Lodovico

245 Truly, an obedient lady.
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

Othello

Mistress!

Desdemona

My lord?

Othello

What would you with her, sir?

240 *very much*: outrageous.

242 *teem*: be impregnated.

243 *falls*: lets fall.

prove: a) turn into; b) be like those of a crocodile (notorious for shedding false tears to deceive its prey).

247 *Mistress!*: Othello calls to Desdemona as though she were a prostitute in a brothel.

Lodovico

Who? I, my lord?

Othello

250 *turn*: a) turn back; b) change
allegiance (or brothel customer).

253 *obedient*: yielding (with sexual
innuendo).

254 *proceed . . . tears*: carry on crying.

255 *well-painted passion*: a good show of
grief.

257 *mandate*: command.

258 *avaunt*: get out of my sight.

259 *place*: position.

260 *sup*: eat supper.

261 *Goats and monkeys*: lecherous beasts;
Othello's passion breaks through his
self-control.

262 *full*: wise.

263 *all-in-all sufficient*: totally competent.

264 *solid*: steady.

265 *shot of accident*: cannon shot of
fortune.
dart of chance: arrow of fate.

267 *his wits safe*: in his right mind.
light of brain: going insane.

268 *that*: what.
breathe my censure: give my opinion.

269-70 *If . . . were*: if he is not out of his
mind, I wish to God he were (because
nothing else could excuse his
actions).

272 *use*: custom.

273 *work . . . blood*: anger him.

250 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—

255 Concerning this, sir,—O, 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

260 I do entreat that we may sup together.

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

[Exit]

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

265 The shot of accident nor dart of chance

Could neither graze nor pierce?

Iago

He is much chang'd.

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,

270 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 this fault?

277 *courses*: actions.
denote: reveal.

Act 4 Scene 2

Othello questions Emilia, but refuses to believe what he is told and confronts Desdemona with his suspicions. Desdemona turns to Iago for reassurance, and Roderigo returns to reproach him for unfair dealing; Iago promises them both that all will be well.

Iago

Alas, alas!

275 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

280 I am sorry that I am deceiv'd in him.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE 2

Othello's lodgings: enter Othello and Emilia

Othello

You have seen nothing then?

Emilia

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

Othello

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

Emilia

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard

5 Each syllable that breath made up between them.

Othello

What! Did they never whisper?

Emilia

Never, my lord.

Othello

Nor send you out o'th'way?

Emilia

Never.

Othello

To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

Emilia

Never, my lord.

Othello

10 That's strange.

Emilia

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,

Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other,

Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.

- 15 *the serpent's curse*: 'Then the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this [betrayed Adam and Eve], thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field' (Genesis 3:14).
 17 *happy*: fortunate.

- 19 *she's . . . bawd*: it would be a foolish brothel-keeper.
 20 *This*: i.e. Desdemona.
 21 *closet . . . key*: keeper of secrets.

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

Othello

Bid her come hither; go!

[Exit Emilia

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

Enter Desdemona and Emilia

Desdemona

My lord, what is your will?

Othello

Pray, chuck, come hither.

Desdemona

What is your pleasure?

Othello

Let me see your eyes.

25 Look in my face.
 Desdemona

What horrible fancy's this?

Othello

[To Emilia] Some of your function, mistress:
 Leave procreants alone and shut the door;
 Cough or cry 'hem' if anybody come.
 Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch!

[Exit Emilia

Desdemona

30 Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
 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.

- 26 *of your function*: with your job (i.e. as brothel-keeper).
 27 *procreants*: those engaged in procreation.
 29 *mystery*: trade.
dispatch: get on with it.

35 *like one of heaven*: like an angel.

41 *heavy*: sorrowful.

42 *motive*: cause.

43 *haply*: by chance.

45 *him*: his favour.

46 *Had it*: if it had.

47 *try*: test.

49 *Steep'd*: submerged.

50 *utmost*: all.

53 *fixed*: fixed.

53-4 *The . . . at*: an eternal object of derision pointed at like the numbers on a clock-face.

56 *garner'd*: stored.

58 *fountain*: source.
current: stream.

60 *cistern*: water-tank.

61 *knot and gender*: copulate and engender.

62 *cherubin*: angel.

64 *esteems*: considers.
honest: chaste.

Othello

Come, swear it; damn thyself;

35 Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double-damn'd:
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

40 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

An instrument of this your calling back,

45 Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,
I have lost him too.

Othello

Had it pleas'd heaven

To try me with affliction, had they rain'd

All kind of sores and shames on my bare head,

Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,

50 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

The fixed figure for the time of scorn

To point his slow unmoving finger at!

55 Yet could I bear that too, well, very well;

But there where I have garner'd 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

60 Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads

To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin;

Ay, there look grim as hell!

Desdemona

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

Othello

65 O 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!

Desdemona

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

Othello

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

80 Impudent strumpet!

Desdemona

By heaven, you do me wrong.

Othello

Are not you a strumpet?

Desdemona

No, as I am a Christian.

If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

Othello

85 What, not a whore?

Desdemona

No, as I shall be sav'd.

Othello

Is't possible?

Desdemona

O, heaven forgive us!

Othello

I cry you mercy then:

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice

65 *shambles*: slaughterhouses.

66 *quicken . . . blowing*: hatch as soon as
the eggs are laid.

72 *commoner*: common whore.

73 *forges*: furnaces.

76 *it*: the smell.

winks: closes its eye.

78 *hollow mine*: depths, bowels.

82 *vessel*: i.e. her body; the expression is
biblical.

87 *cry you mercy*: beg your pardon.

88 *took you for*: mistook you for.

90-1 *have . . . hell*: 'Her [the harlot's] house is the way to hell, going down unto the chambers of death.' (Proverbs 7:27).

90 *Saint Peter*: The saint who guards the gates of heaven.

92 *done our course*: finished our business (with sexual overtones).

93 *turn the key*: unlock the door (Emilia was told to close the door at line 27). *keep our counsel*: keep quiet about what we have been doing.

94 *conceive*: imagine.

96 *half-asleep*: Desdemona is dazed by Othello's words.

103 *go by water*: be conveyed by tears.

106 *meet*: fitting; Desdemona is perhaps bitterly ironical, rather than meekly submissive.

107 *How . . . behav'd*: What have I done?

107-8 *that . . . misuse*: to give him any reason for misinterpreting my smallest fault.

That married with Othello. You, mistress,
90 That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,
And keeps the gate of hell! You, you, ay, you!

Enter Emilia

We have done our course; there's money for your pains.

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

Emilia

Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

95 How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

Desdemona

Faith, half-asleep.

Emilia

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

Desdemona

With who?

Emilia

Why, with my lord, madam.

Desdemona

100 Who is thy lord?

Emilia

He that is yours, sweet lady.

Desdemona

I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.

I cannot weep, nor answers have I none

But what should go by water. Prithce tonight

Lay on my bed my wedding sheets, remember;

105 And call thy husband hither.

Emilia

Here's a change indeed!

[Exit

Desdemona

'Tis meet I should be us'd so, very meet!

How have I been behav'd that he might stick

The smallest opinion on my least misuse?

Enter Iago and Emilia

Iago

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

Desdemona

110 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.

113 *a child to chiding*: unaccustomed to being scolded.

Iago

What is the matter, lady?

Emilia

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhor'd her,

114 *bewhor'd her*: called her a whore.

115 Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her
As true hearts cannot bear.

115 *despite and heavy terms*: contempt and insults.

Desdemona

Am I that name, Iago?

Iago

What name, fair lady?

Desdemona

Such as she said my lord did say I was.

Emilia

He call'd her whore. A beggar in his drink

119 *in his drink*: drunken.

120 Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

120 *laid such terms*: used such language.
callet: slut.

Iago

Why did he so?

Desdemona

I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

Iago

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

Emilia

Hath she forsook so many noble matches,

124 *forsook*: given up.

125 Her father, and her country, and her friends,
To be call'd whore? Would it not make one weep?

Desdemona

It is my wretched fortune.

Iago

Beshrew him for't!

127 *Beshrew*: curse.

How comes this trick upon him?

128 *trick*: delusion.

Desdemona

Nay, heaven doth know.

- 129 *eternal*: damned (eternally); without knowing, Emilia describes her husband.
 130 *busy*: interfering.
 131 *cogging*: lying.
cozening: cheating.
to get some office: for some reason, or to get some job out of it; Emilia is very close to the truth.
 133 *impossible*: Iago listens to the descriptions of his villainy while denying its possibility.
 135 *A halter pardon him*: may he be hanged.
 136 *keeps her company*: is her lover.
 137 *form*: appearance.
what likelihood?: what grounds for such an inference?
 139 *scurvy*: miserable.
 140 *companions*: villains.
thou'dst: thou wouldst; i.e. I wish you would.
unfold: reveal.

143 *within door*: quietly.

144 *squire*: fellow.

145 *seamy side without*: wrong side out.

146 *suspect me*: i.e. of adultery.

151-8 Desdemona prays that she may lose all peace of body and soul if she ever sinned or sins against Othello.

151 *will*: wishes.
trespass: offend.

152 *discourse of thought*: process of thinking.

154 *Delighted them*: enjoyed.

158 *Comfort forswear me*: May all happiness forsake me.

Emilia

I will be hang'd if some eternal villain,
 130 Some busy and insinuating rogue,
 Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
 Have not devis'd this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

Iago

Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

Desdemona

If any such there be, heaven pardon him.

Emilia

135 A halter pardon him and hell gnaw his bones!
 Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her
 company?
 What place, what time, what form, what likelihood?
 The Moor's abus'd by some most villainous knave,
 Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.
 140 O heaven, that such companions thou'dst unfold,
 And put in every honest hand a whip
 To lash the rascals naked through the world,
 Even from the east to th'west!

Iago

Speak within door.

Emilia

O fie upon them! Some such squire he was
 145 That turn'd your wit the seamy side without
 And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

Iago

You are a fool, go to.

Desdemona

O good Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?
 Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
 150 I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
 If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love
 Either in discourse of thought or actual deed;
 Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense
 Delighted them in any other form;
 155 Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
 And ever will—though he do shake me off
 To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,
 Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,

159 *defeat*: destroy.

161 *abhor*: a) disgust; b) make me a whore.

162 *addition*: title.

163 *vanity*: (useless) finery.

164 *but his humour*: only his mood.

165 *does him offence*: annoys him.

166 *chide with you*: quarrel with you.

167 *no other*: nothing else.

And his unkindness may defeat my life,
 160 But never taint my love. I cannot say 'whore':
 It does abhor me now I speak the word;
 To do the act that might the addition earn
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Iago

I pray you be content; 'tis but his humour.
 165 The business of the state does him offence,
 And he does chide with you.

Desdemona

If 'twere no other—

Iago

It is but so, I warrant.

Trumpets sound within

169 *stay the meat*: await the meal.

Hark how these instruments summon to supper!
 The messengers of Venice stay the meat.
 170 Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[*Exeunt Desdemona and Emilia*]

Enter Roderigo

How now, Roderigo?

Roderigo

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

Iago

What in the contrary?

Roderigo

174 *daff'st . . . device*: put me off with some excuse.

176 *conveniency*: opportunity.

178 *put up*: endure.

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

Iago

180 Will you hear me, Roderigo?

Roderigo

182 *no kin together*: bear no relation to each other.

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

183 *charge*: accuse.

184–5 *wasted . . . means*: ruined myself financially.

186 *half*: easily.
votarist: nun.

188 *comforts*: encouragement.
sudden respect: immediate attention.

193 *fopped*: fooled.

197 *solicitation*: courtship.

198 *seek satisfaction*: demand repayment.

199 *You . . . now?*: have you spoken your mind?

200 *protest intendment*: declare an intention.

202 *mettle*: spirit.

203 *build . . . opinion*: think better of you.

204–5 *taken . . . exception*: made a very reasonable objection.

205 *protest*: declare.

206 *directly . . . affair*: honestly in your interests.

207 It doesn't look that way.

Iago

You charge me most unjustly.

Roderigo

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

Iago

190 Well, go to; very well.

Roderigo

Very well, go to! I cannot go to, man, nor 'tis not very
well. By this hand, I say 'tis very scurvy and begin to
find myself fopped in it.

Iago

Very well.

Roderigo

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

Iago

You have said now?

Roderigo

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

Iago

Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even from this
instant do build on thee a better opinion than ever
before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. Thou hast taken
205 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 judgement. But, Roderigo, if
210 thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater
reason to believe now than ever—I mean purpose,

214-15 *engines for my life*: plots against my life.

216 *compass*: possibility.

221 *Mauritania*: part of Western Africa (but perhaps a ruse to make Roderigo think that he will lose Desdemona).

222 *abode*: stay (in Cyprus).
lingered: delayed.

223 *determinate*: certain.

230 *harlotry*: little whore.

231 *his honourable fortune*: i.e. that he has been made Othello's deputy in Cyprus.

232 *going thence*: leaving there.
fashion: organize.
fall out: take place.

234 *second*: support.

236 *necessity in*: need for.

237-8 *put it on him*: bring about his death.

238 *high*: fully.

238-9 *grows to waste*: is getting late.

239 *About it*: get on with it.

courage, and valour—this night show it. If thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery, and devise engines for
215 my life.

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 Desdemona return
220 again to Venice.

Iago

O 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.

Roderigo

225 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
230 tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him. He knows not yet of his honourable fortune. If you will watch his going thence—which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one—you may take him at your pleasure. I will be near to second your attempt, and he
235 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 supper-time and the night grows to waste. About it!

Roderigo

240 I will hear further reason for this.

Iago

And you shall be satisfied.

[*Exeunt*]

Act 4 Scene 3

Desdemona prepares for bed as her husband walks home with his guests.

SCENE 3

Desdemona's bedchamber; enter Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and Attendants

Lodovico

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

Othello

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

Lodovico

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

Desdemona

Your honour is most welcome.

Othello

5 Will you walk, sir? O, Desdemona.

Desdemona

My lord?

Othello

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

Desdemona

10 I will, my lord.

[Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and Attendants]

Emilia

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

Desdemona

He says he will return incontinent;
He hath commanded me to go to bed
And bade me to dismiss you.

Emilia

Dismiss me?

Desdemona

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

Emilia

I would you had never seen him.

Desdemona

So would not I: my love doth so approve him

20 That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—

7 *on th' instant*: at once.

8 *forthwith*: immediately.

Dismiss: Usually the maid would stay with her mistress until the husband was ready for bed.

12 *incontinent*: straight away.

16 *nightly wearing*: night clothes.

19 *So . . . I*: that is not my wish.
approve: value; Desdemona's love has not changed, despite Othello's harsh words.

20 *checks*: rebukes.

Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favour in them.

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

25 In one of those same sheets.

Emilia

Come, come, you talk.

Desdemona

My mother had a maid called Barbary:

She was in love, and he she lov'd prov'd mad

And did forsake her. She had a song of willow;

An old thing 'twas but it expressed her fortune,

30 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.

35 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

[Sings] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,

40 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 murmur'd

her moans;

Sing willow, willow, willow.

45 Her salt tears fell from her and soften'd the

stones—

22 *those sheets*: i.e. the wedding sheets.

23 *All's one*: it doesn't matter; Desdemona seems to have forgotten the romantic hope that she could reconcile Othello.

24 *shroud me*: It was customary to save one of the best sheets to wrap the dead body before burial.

25 *you talk*: you're talking nonsense.

26 *Barbary*: an old form of 'Barbara'.

28 *of willow*: the willow tree was the emblem of forsaken lovers.

31 *I have much to do*: I find it hard to stop myself.

33 *dispatch*: hurry up.

34 *nightgown*: dressing-gown.

35 *proper*: good-looking; the two women discuss the departed guest.

36 *speaks well*: talks interestingly.

38 *touch . . . lip*: a kiss.

39 *sycamore*: willow (emblem of rejected love).

46 *Lay by these*: put away these (i.e. her jewels).

48 *hie thee*: go away.
anon: at once.

55 *moe*: an obsolete (poetic) form of 'more'.
couch: sleep.

57 *bode*: foretell.

59 *in conscience*: honestly.

60 *abuse*: deceive.

61 *such gross kind*: i.e. by committing adultery.

63 *by . . . light*: by daylight.

68 *small vice*: Emilia dismisses the sin that is causing so much anguish to Othello and Desdemona.

Lay by these.

Sing willow, willow, willow—

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon.

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

50 Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve—

Nay that's not next. Hark, who is't that knocks?

Emilia

It's the wind.

Desdemona

[Sings] I call'd my love false love, but what said he then?

Sing willow, willow, willow;

55 If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men—

So get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch—
Does that bode weeping?

Emilia

'Tis neither here nor there.

Desdemona

I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!

Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—

60 That there be women do abuse their husbands

In such gross kind?

Emilia

There be some such, no question.

Desdemona

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emilia

Why, would not you?

Desdemona

No, by this heavenly light.

Emilia

Nor I neither by this heavenly light;

65 I might do't as well i'th'dark.

Desdemona

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

Emilia

The world's a huge thing; it is a great price

For a small vice.

Desdemona

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

Emilia

In troth, I think I should, and undo't when I had done:
70 it. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring,
nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor
caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for all the whole
world! Ud's pity, who would not make her husband a
75 cuckold, to make him a monarch? I should venture
purgatory for't.

Desdemona

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong for the whole
world.

Emilia

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

Desdemona

I do not think there is any such woman.

Emilia

Yes, a dozen; and as many to th'advantage as would
store the world they played for.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults
85 If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite—
90 Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them: they see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour
As husbands have. What is it that they do
95 When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

69 *undo't*: make it right.

70 *joint-ring*: a ring made in two separate parts.

71 *measures of lawn*: lengths of fabric.

72 *exhibition*: allowance of money.

73 *'Ud's*: God's (a censored form).

74-5 *venture purgatory*: risk being condemned to purgatory.

82 *to th'vantage*: in addition.

83 *store*: populate.

84 *But I do think*: This is the first time in the play that Emilia has been allowed to speak her real mind; Desdemona seems not to hear, being absorbed in her own troubled thoughts.

85 *fall*: sin.

slack their duties: fail to perform their sexual obligations.

86 *pour . . . laps*: give what should be ours to strange women.

88 *Throwing . . . us*: Restricting our freedom.

89 *scant*: reduce.

former having: what we used to have.
in despite: out of spite.

90 *galls*: spirits capable of resentment.

grace: i.e. to forgive them.

92 *sense*: feelings.

95 *sport*: for amusement.

96 *affection*: desire.

- 100 *use us well*: treat us kindly.
101 *ills*: wrongs.
instruct us so: teach us to do the same.
102 *Good night*: Throughout Emilia's worldly-wise soliloquy, Desdemona has been silent; now she articulates a quite different philosophy.
103 *pick*: learn.
by bad mend: amend myself by learning from bad examples, or from my own suffering.

100 Then let them use us well; else let them know
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

Desdemona

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

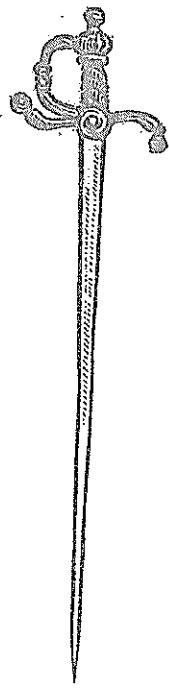


ACT 5

Act 5 Scene 1

Roderigo and Iago lie in wait for Cassio; there is a struggle in which both Roderigo and Cassio are injured; Iago kills Roderigo after Othello, apparently approving his actions, has gone home to Desdemona.

- 1 *bulk*: projecting wall—which on the stage would have been represented by a pillar.
straight: immediately.
- 2 *bare*: unsheathed.
- put it home*: thrust it in deeply.
- 3 *at thy elbow*: near at hand, ready to help.
- 4 *makes . . . us*: Makes our fortunes, or else ruins us—a proverbial expression.
- 5 *resolution*: determination.
- 6 *miscarry*: make a mistake.



- 11 *young quat*: contemptible youngster (literally, a spot or pimple).
sense: quick—where it most hurts.
- 14 *makes my gain*: I win.
Live Roderigo: if Roderigo lives.
- 15 *calls me to*: demands from me.
large: full.
- 16 *bobb'd from him*: cheated him out of.
- 21 *unfold*: expose.
- 22 *soft*: hush.

SCENE 1

Outside Bianca's house: enter Iago and Roderigo

Iago

Here, stand behind this bulk, straight will he come.
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.
Quick, quick, fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow.
It makes us or it mars us; think on that,
5 And fix most firm thy resolution.

Roderigo

Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

Iago

Here, at thy hand; be bold, and take thy stand.

He retires

Roderigo

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

Iago

[*Aside*] I have rubb'd 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,
15 He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him
As gifts to Desdemona.
It must not be. If Cassio do remain,
He hath a daily beauty in his life
20 That makes me ugly; and besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him—there stand I in much peril.
No, he must die. But soft, I hear him coming.

Enter Cassio

Roderigo

23 *gait*: footsteps.

I know his gait; 'tis he. Villain, thou diest!

He lunges at Cassio

Cassio

25 *coat*: probably Cassio is wearing a leather jerkin.
26 *make proof of*: test.

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

He wounds Roderigo

Roderigo

O, I am slain!

Iago wounds Cassio in the leg and exit

Cassio

I am maim'd forever. Help, ho! Murder, murder!

27s.d. *above*: i.e. from the balcony above the stage.

Enter Othello above

Othello

[*Aside*] The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.

Roderigo

O villain that I am!

Othello

29 *even so*: Othello seems to mistake Roderigo's voice for Cassio's.

[*Aside*] It is even so.

Cassio

30 O help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

Othello

[*Aside*] '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,
And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come!

33 *Minion*: A term of abuse (or affection).
dear: beloved.

34 *unblest fate*: cursed end.
hies: is coming fast.

35 *blotted*: wiped out.

35 Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;
Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted.

[*Exit Othello*]

36s.d. *Gratiano*: He has just arrived from Venice with the news of Brabantio's death (see 5, 2, 203).

37 *watch*: night-watchman.
passage: passers-by.

38 *mischance*: accident.
direful: in great distress.

42 *heavy*: dark.

43 *counterfeits*: imposters.

44 *in to the cry*: to the rescue; Lodovico and Gratiano are strangers in a foreign town, and their hesitation is understandable.

47 *one*: someone; *Iago* appears as though he has been roused from bed.

Enter Lodovico and Gratiano

Cassio

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

Gratiano

'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

Cassio

O, help!

Lodovico

40 Hark!

Roderigo

O, wretched villain!

Lodovico

Two or three groan. It is a heavy night.

These may be counterfeits: let's think't unsafe

To come in to the cry without more help.

Roderigo

45 Nobody come? Then I shall bleed to death.

Lodovico

Hark!

Enter Iago, with a light

Gratiano

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

Iago

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

Lodovico

We do not know.

Iago

Did you not hear a cry?

Cassio

50 Here, here; for heaven's sake, help me!

Iago

What's the matter?

Gratiano

This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

Lodovico

The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.

Iago

What are you here that cry so grievously?

54 *spoil'd*: wounded.
undone: injured.

Cassio

Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!

55 Give me some help.

Iago

O me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?

Cassio

I think that one of them is hereabout

And cannot make away.

58 *make away*: escape.

Iago

O, treacherous villains!

[*To Lodovico and Gratiano*] What are you there?

Come in, and give some help.

Roderigo

60 O, help me here!

Cassio

That's one of them.

Iago

O murderous slave! O villain!

He stabs Roderigo

Roderigo

O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

He faints

Iago

Kill men i'th'dark? Where be these bloody thieves?

How silent is this town! Ho, murder, murder!

Lodovico and Gratiano come forward

65 What may you be? Are you of good or evil?

Lodovico

As you shall prove us, praise us.

Iago

Signior Lodovico?

Lodovico

He, sir.

Iago

66 Judge us (to be good or evil) when you
know who we are.

69 *cry you mercy*: beg your pardon.

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

Gratiano

70 Cassio?

Iago

How is't, brother?

Cassio

My leg is cut in two.

Iago

Marry, heaven forbid!

Light, gentlemen. I'll bind it with my shirt.

Enter Bianca

Bianca

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

Iago

75 Who is't that cried?

Bianca

O, my dear Cassio, my sweet Cassio!

O, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

Iago

O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be that have thus mangl'd you?

Cassio

80 No.

Gratiano

I am sorry to find you thus; I have been to seek you.

Iago

Lend me a garter: so. O for a chair

To bear him easily hence!

Bianca

Alas, he faints!

O, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

Iago

85 Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash

To be a party in this injury.

Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come,

Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?

Alas, my friend and my dear countryman!

90 Roderigo? No—yes, sure—O, heaven, Roderigo!

Gratiano

What, of Venice?

78 *may you suspect*: can you guess?

79 *mangl'd*: wounded.

82 *garter*: Either a man or a woman could supply this—to fix the bandage made with Iago's shirt.

85 *trash*: Iago insults Bianca.

86 *be a party*: have a share in.

Iago

Even he, sir; did you know him?

Gratiano

Know him? Ay.

Iago

Signior Gratiano! I cry your gentle pardon.

These bloody accidents must excuse my manners

95 That so neglected you.

Gratiano

I am glad to see you.

Iago

How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!

Gratiano

Roderigo?

Iago

He, he, 'tis he.

Enter Attendants with a chair

O, that's well said, the chair!

Some good men bear him carefully from hence.

100 I'll fetch the general's surgeon. [*To Bianca*] For you, mistress,

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

Cassio

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

Iago

[*To Bianca*] What, look you pale?—O, bear him out
o'th'air.

Cassio is carried off; Roderigo's body is removed

105 Stay you, good gentleman. Look you pale, mistress?

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?

[*To Bianca*] Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her.

Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness

110 Will speak, though tongues were out of use.

98 *said*: done.

101 *Save you your labour*: Stop interfering.

106 *gastness*: look of terror.

Enter Emilia

Emilia

'Las, what's the matter? What's the matter, husband?

Iago

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

Emilia

115 Alas, good gentleman! Alas, good Cassio!

Iago

This is the fruits of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd tonight.
[To Bianca] What, do you shake at that?

Bianca

He supp'd at my house, but I therefore shake not.

Iago

120 O, did he so? I charge you go with me.

Emilia

O, fie upon thee, strumpet!

Bianca

I am no strumpet, but of life as honest
As you that thus abuse me.

Emilia

As I? Foh! Fie upon thee!

Iago

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd.

125 Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.

Emilia, run you to the citadel

And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd.

Will you go on afore? [Aside] This is the night

That either makes me, or fordoes me quite. [Exeunt

113 'scap'd: escaped.

117 know of: find out from.

119 I therefore shake not: I'm not afraid to say so.

120 charge: order.

124 dress'd: have his wound attended to.

127 happ'd: chanced.

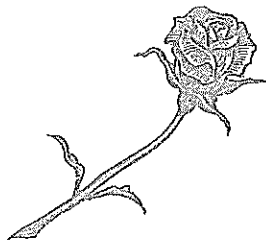
129 fordoes, ruins, quite: utterly.

Act 5 Scene 2

Othello hurries home from the scene of the fight to find Desdemona asleep in bed. Although she asserts her innocence, he kills her—and the murder is discovered by Emilia, who denounces her husband for slander. The wounded Cassio is brought to the scene, and Othello asks for his pardon. Finally Othello is arrested by Lodovico—but, before he can be taken away, he has his own final act to perform. This long scene is beautifully constructed, intermingling speeches of powerful eloquence with simple straightforward dialogue.

Os.d. *Desdemona in bed*: Desdemona's bed would probably be pushed forward from the curtained 'inner acting area' under the balcony.

- 1 *the cause*: adultery—Othello tries to justify his intended course of action.
 2 *it*: adultery.
 4 *whiter . . . snow*: whiter than snow.
 5 *monumental alabaster*: a translucent stone used in making monuments.
 6 *betray*: deceive.
 7 *the light*: a) the torch he carries; b) Desdemona's life.
 8 *flaming minister*: i.e. the lamp in his hand.
 10 *Should*: if.
 11 *cunning'st*: most artful.
pattern of: model to be copied by.
 12 *Promethean heat*: Some Greek legends tell how Prometheus stole fire from the gods to animate the clay figures he had modelled, thus creating the first human beings.
 13 *relume*: rekindle.



SCENE 2

Desdemona's bedchamber: enter Othello, with a light, and Desdemona in 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
 5 And smooth as monumental alabaster—
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light:
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore,
 10 Should I repent me; but once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd thy
 rose,
 I cannot give it vital growth again;
 15 It needs must wither. I'll smell it on the tree.

He kisses her



17 *sword*: the weapon for the execution of justice.

21-2 *this sorrow's . . . love*: 'For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth' (Hebrews 12:6).

26 *bethink*: remember.

27 *Unreconcil'd . . . grace*: not forgiven by God.

28 *Solicit*: ask pardon.
straight: immediately.

30 *I will walk by*: i.e. he will allow Desdemona privacy for her confession.

31 *unprepared spirit*: unprepared; not prepared for heaven.

32 *forfend*: forbid.

34 *Amen*: I wish it may be so; the usual ending for a Christian prayer.

O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more!
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee
And love thee after. One more, and this the last.

20 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep.
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly—
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

Desdemona

Who's there? Othello?

Othello

Ay, Desdemona.

Desdemona

Will you come to bed, my lord?

Othello

25 Have you pray'd tonight, Desdemon?

Desdemona

Ay, my lord.

Othello

If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.

Desdemona

Alack, my lord, what may you mean by that?

Othello

30 Well, do it, and be brief: I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No—heaven forfend!—I would not kill thy soul.

Desdemona

Talk you of killing?

Othello

Ay, I do.

Desdemona

Then heaven

Have mercy on me!

Othello

Amen, with all my heart!

Desdemona

35 If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

Othello

Hum!

37 *fatal*: terrible.

Desdemona
And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not, but yet I feel I fear.

Othello

40 Think on thy sins.

Desdemona

They are loves I bear to you.

Othello

Ay, and for that thou diest.

Desdemona

That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:

42 It is unnatural to kill someone for loving.

43 *nether*: bottom.

44 *very frame*: whole body.

45 *portents*: portents; bad signs.

46 *do not point on*: are not directed at.

45 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 lov'd and gave thee,
Thou gav'st to Cassio.

Desdemona

No, by my life and soul!

50 Send for the man and ask him.

Othello

Sweet soul, take heed.

Take heed of perjury: thou art on thy death-bed.

Desdemona

Ay, but not yet to die.

Othello

Yes, presently.

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath

52 *presently*: at once.

53 *freely*: fully.

54 *article*: item of which she is accused.

55 *choke*: kill by strangling.
conception: suspicion; the imagery is confirmed in the next line.

56 *groan withal*: labour with; Othello's suspicions of Desdemona are causing pain like birth pangs.

55 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 lov'd Cassio

60 *general warranty*: ordinary permission.

60 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.
O perjur'd woman! Thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call what I intend to do

63 *stone my heart*: turn my heart to stone.

64-5 *And . . . sacrifice*: Desdemona's refusal to accept her guilt makes a murder of what Othello intended to be a sacrificial gesture.

65 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.

67 *Send . . . hither*: order him to come here.

Othello

He hath confess'd.

Desdemona

What, my lord?

Othello

70 That he hath us'd thee.

70 *us'd thee*: i.e. sexually.

Desdemona

How? Unlawfully?

Othello

Ay.

Desdemona

He will not say so.

Othello

No, his mouth is stopp'd:

72 *his mouth is stopp'd*: he has been silenced.

73 *tane order for't*: seen to it.

Honest Iago hath tane order for't.

Desdemona

O, my fear interprets! What, is he dead?

74 *my fear interprets*: I am afraid I understand.

Othello

75 Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.

75 *Had . . . lives*: If he had had as many lives as the hairs on his head.

76 *stomach*: appetite.

Desdemona

Alas, he is betray'd, and I undone.

77 *undone*: ruined—but Othello understands this as an admission of guilt.

Othello

Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

Desdemona

O banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

Othello

80 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.

83 *Being . . . pause:* Now I have started,
I must go on.

Desdemona

But while I say one prayer!

84 *But:* only.

Othello

It is too late.

Desdemona

85 O, Lord, Lord, Lord!

He smothers her

Emilia

[*Within*] My lord, my lord! What, ho! My lord, my
lord!

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.

90 So, so.

Emilia

[*Within*] What, ho! My lord, my lord!

Othello

Who's there?

Emilia

[*Within*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with
you.

Othello

Yes—'tis Emilia—by and by.—She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death:

93 *like:* likely.

94 *high*: loud.

99 *insupportable*: I can't bear it; Othello has begun to regret his deed.

101 *globe*: the whole world.

102 *yawn*: tear itself apart (in an earthquake). Othello is looking for the sort of confusion that might be associated with the end of the world.
alteration: the change brought about by Desdemona's death.

110-12 *It is . . . mad*: It was believed that the influence of the moon could turn people insane.

110 *error*: straying off course.

111 *was wont*: used to do.

The noise was high. Ha! No more moving?
95 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.
O insupportable! O heavy hour!
100 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

That I may speak with you. O, good my lord!

Othello

I had forgot thee. O, come in, Emilia.

105 Soft, by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou?

He unlocks the door

What's the matter with thee now?

Enter Emilia

Emilia

O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done.

Othello

What? Now?

Emilia

But now, my lord.

Othello

110 It is the very error of the moon:
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
And makes men mad.

Emilia

Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian
Called Roderigo.

Othello

Roderigo kill'd?

115 And Cassio kill'd?

Emilia

No, Cassio is not kill'd.

116 *out of tune*: gone wrong.

Othello
Not Cassio kill'd! Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

118 *O falsely . . . murder'd*: Desdemona
revives momentarily.

Desdemona
O, falsely, falsely murder'd!
Emilia

O Lord! What cry is that?

Othello
That? What?

Emilia
120 Out and alas, that was my lady's voice!

She draws the bed-curtains

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

Desdemona
A guiltless death I die.

Emilia
O, who hath done this deed?

Desdemona
125 Nobody; I myself. Farewell.
Commend me to my kind lord. O farewell!

She dies

Othello
Why, how should she be murder'd?

Emilia
Alas, who knows?

Othello
You heard her say herself it was not I.

Emilia
She said so; I must needs report the truth.

130 *like a liar*: like the liar that she is.

Othello
130 She's like a liar gone to burning hell:
'Twas I that kill'd her.

Emilia
O, the more angel she,
And you the blacker devil!

133 *folly*: sin.

134 *belie*: lie about.

137 *top*: Othello picks up Iago's word (3, 3, 397).

139 *But*: except.

140 *extremity*: final act.

144 *entire*: pure.
chrysolite: topaz (a semi-precious stone); but the word may have been chosen not for its meaning but because of its sound.

149 *iterance*: repetition.

150 *made mocks with*: made a fool of.

Othello

She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

Emilia

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

Othello

135 She was false as water.

Emilia

Thou art rash as fire to say

That she was false. O, she was heavenly true!

Othello

Cassio did top her: ask thy husband else.

O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell

But that I did proceed upon just grounds

140 To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

Emilia

My husband?

Othello

Thy husband.

Emilia

That she was false to wedlock

Othello

Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,

If heaven would make me such another world

Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,

145 I'd not have sold her for it.

Emilia

My husband?

Othello

Ay, 'twas he that told me on her first;

An honest man he is, and hates the slime

That sticks on filthy deeds.

Emilia

My husband?

Othello

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

Emilia

150 O mistress, villainy hath made mocks with love!

My husband say that she was false?

Othello

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
155 Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th'heart.
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

- 155 *half a grain a day*: very, very slowly.
lies to th'heart: completely.
156 *too fond of*: infatuated with.
most filthy bargain: i.e. the husband
for whom she paid such a high price.

Othello

Ha!

Emilia

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

- 159 *no more worthy heaven*: presumably
Emilia means that the deed is
damnable.

Othello

Peace, you were best.

- 160 *Peace . . . best*: you had better shut
up.

Emilia

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt. Thou hast done a deed—
I care not for thy sword—I'll make thee known,
165 Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help! ho, help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress. Murder, murder!

- 162 *to be hurt*: a) to endure anything you
have the power to inflict; b) a capacity
to feel pain on behalf of my mistress.
gull: fool.
dolt: idiot.
164 *I care . . . sword*: i.e. don't threaten
me.

Enter Montano, Gratiano, and Iago

Montano

What is the matter? How now, general?

Emilia

O, are you come, Iago? You have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

- 169 *lay . . . neck*: blame you for their
murders.

Gratiano

170 What is the matter?

Emilia

Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false.
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

Iago

175 I told him what I thought, and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

- 176 *apt*: reasonable.

Emilia

But did you ever tell him she was false?

Iago

I did.

Emilia

You told a lie, an odious damned lie:

179 *damned*: damnèd.

180 Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie!

She false with Cassio? Did you say with Cassio?

Iago

With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

182 *charm*: hold.

Emilia

I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak:

My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed.

All

185 O, heavens forfend!

Emilia

And your reports have set the murder on.

186 *set . . . on*: caused the murder.

Othello

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

Gratiano

'Tis a strange truth.

Montano

O monstrous act!

Emilia

Villainy, villainy, villainy!

190 I think upon't, I think—I smell't—O villainy!

I thought so then; I'll kill myself for grief.

O villainy, villainy!

Iago

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

Emilia

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.

195 *'Tis proper*: it is right; Elizabethans believed that wives should always obey their husbands.

195 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

Othello

O! O! O!

Othello falls on the bed

197 *roar*: howl.

200 *scarce did know you, uncle*: hardly recognized you; Othello speaks to Gratiano, Desdemona's uncle and therefore (by marriage) his own.

204 *match*: marriage.
mortal: fatal.

205 *Shore . . . twain*: cut the thread of his life in two.

Did he live now: if he were alive now.

206 *turn*: deed.

207 He would drive away his guardian angel.

208 *reprobance*: a state of damnation.

210 *the act of shame*: adultery.

211 *a thousand times*: the expression is purely rhetorical, intended for emphasis not accuracy.

212 *gratify*: reward.
amorous works: love-making.

213 *recognizance*: token.

215 *antique*: ancient.

216 Shakespeare seems to have forgotten that in Act 3, Scene 4 Othello told Desdemona that the handkerchief was given to his mother by an Egyptian (lines 51–2).

O heavenly God: In the Folio text Emilia calls on the 'heavenly Powers'.

217 *'Twill out*: it [the truth] must come out.

I peace: must I keep quiet.

218 *liberal as the north*: as unrestrained as the north wind—a particularly violent and bitterly cold wind.

Emilia

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

Othello

[*Standing up*] O, she was foul!
200 I scarce did know you, uncle; there lies your niece,
Whose breath indeed these hands have newly stopp'd.
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
205 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
210 That she with Cassio hath the act of shame
A thousand times committed. Cassio confess'd 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:
215 It was a handkerchief, an antique token
My father gave my mother.

Emilia

O God! O 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,
220 All, all cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

Iago

Be wise and get you home.

Emilia

I will not.

Iago *draws his sword and threatens* Emilia

Gratiano

Fie,

Your sword upon a woman!

Emilia

O thou dull Moor, that handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune and did give my husband,

224 *by fortune*: by chance.

225 For often, with a solemn earnestness—
More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle—
He begg'd of me to steal it.

Iago

Villainous whore!

Emilia

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

Iago

Filth, thou liest!

Emilia

230 By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.
O murderous coxcomb, what should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

231 *coxcomb*: idiot.

Othello

Are there no stones in heaven

But what serves for the thunder? Precious villain!

232 *stones*: thunderbolts (to hurl at such
villains).

233 *Precious*: A term used to intensify
abuse.

*Othello runs at Iago; Montano disarms him; Iago
stabs Emilia from behind and exit*

Gratiano

The woman falls; sure he hath kill'd his wife.

Emilia

235 Ay, ay; O, lay me by my mistress' side.

Gratiano

He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

Montano

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor.
Come guard the door without; let him not pass,

237 *notorious*: absolute.

238 *recover'd from*: taken away from.

239 *without*: from the outside.
pass: get away.

240 But kill him rather. I'll after the same villain,
For 'tis a damned slave.

241 *damned*: damnèd.

[*Exeunt Montano and Gratiano*]

Othello

- 241 *I . . . neither*: Othello has lost the courage even to attack Iago.
 242 *every . . . sword*: any novice fighter can defeat me.
 243 *honour outlive honesty*: reputation last any longer than desert.
 244 *bode*: foretell.
 245–6 *play the swan . . . music*: Swans, which are mute, were fancied to sing only when they died.
 248 *So . . . bliss*: may my soul be saved.

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

Emilia

- What did thy song bode, lady?
 245 Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan
 And die in music: [*Sings*] 'Willow, willow, willow.'
 Moor, she was chaste; she lov'd thee, cruel Moor;
 So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;
 So speaking as I think, I die, I die.

She dies

Othello

- 251 *a sword of Spain*: Toledo, in southern Spain, was famous for the manufacture of swords.
the ice-brook's temper: the steel was 'tempered' (= given its toughness) by being plunged into an icy stream.
 254 *suffer*: get hurt.
 256 *naked*: unarmed.

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

Gratiano

[*Within*] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear;
 Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

Othello

- 255 Look in upon me then, and speak with me,
 Or naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Enter Gratiano

Gratiano

What is the matter?

Othello

- 258 *sustain*: support.
 262 *stop*: arrest.
 264 *weapon'd*: armed.
 265 *butt*: aim, goal.

- Behold, I have a weapon:
 A better never did itself sustain
 Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day
 260 That with this little arm and this good sword
 I have made my way through more impediments
 Than twenty times your stop. But, O vain boast!
 Who can control his fate? 'Tis not so now.
 Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd:
 265 Here is my journey's end, here is my butt

- 266 *sea-mark*: beacon.
utmost sail: last voyage.
 267 *'Tis a lost fear*: There's nothing to be afraid of.
 268 *Man*: aim.
rush: reed.

And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
 Do you go back dismay'd? 'Tis a lost fear:
 Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
 And he retires. Where should Othello go?

He goes to the bed

- 270 *ill-starr'd*: ill-fated.
 271 *smock*: a woman's under-garment.
at compt: on the Day of Judgement.
 274 *thy chastity*: Othello finally admits the truth.
 275 *cursed*: cursèd.
slave: Othello means himself.
 275-8 *Whip . . . fire*: Othello visualizes some of the traditional medieval torturers in hell.
 278 *steep-down*: precipitous.

- 270 Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd 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.
 275 O cursed, cursed slave! Whip me, ye devils,
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!
 Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur!
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!
 O Desdemon! Dead Desdemon! Dead! O! O!

Enter Lodovico, Montano, Cassio in a chair, Iago in the charge of Officers

Lodovico

- 280 Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

Othello

That's he that was Othello: here I am.

Lodovico

Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

Othello

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.
 If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

- 283 *fable*: i.e. that a devil has cloven feet.

He wounds Iago

Lodovico

- 285 Wrench his sword from him.

Iago

I bleed, sir, but not kill'd.

Othello

I am not sorry neither; I'd have thee live,
 For in my sense 'tis happiness to die.

- 287 *in my sense*: as I feel now.

289 *practice*: trap.
damned: damnèd.

Lodovico

O, thou Othello, that wert once so good,
Fallen in the practice of a damned slave,
290 What shall be said to thee?

Othello

Why, anything:
An honourable murderer, if you will;
For naught did I in hate, but all in honour.

Lodovico

This wretch hath part confess'd his villainy.
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

Othello

295 Ay.

Cassio

Dear general, I never gave you cause.

Othello

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?

Iago

300 Demand me nothing; what you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word.

Lodovico

What! Not to pray?

Gratiano

Torments will ope your lips.

Othello

Well, thou dost best.

Lodovico

Sir, you shall understand what hath befallen,
305 Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another: the one of them imports
The death of Cassio, to be undertook
By Roderigo.

Othello

O villain!

Cassio

Most heathenish and most gro

303 *Torments*: torture.
thou dost best: you know best.

307 *imports*: concerns.

310 *discontented paper*: letter expressing dissatisfaction.

312 *damned*: damnèd.

313 *belike*: probably.
in the nick: just in time (a colloquial expression).

314 *Came in*: interposed.
satisfied him: gave him a satisfactory answer (by killing him).

315 *came you . . . by*: did you acquire?

317 *but even now*: only just now.

319 *wrought . . . desire*: worked in accordance with his wishes.

321 *upbraids*: reproaches.

322 *Brave*: challenge.
upon the watch: when I was on guard.
whereon it came: as a result of which.

323 *cast*: dismissed.
he: i.e. Roderigo.

325 *set him on*: incited him.

326 *forsake*: leave.

330 *hold him long*: make him suffer for a long time.

331 *close*: confined.

334 *Soft you*: wait a minute.

337 *unlucky*: unfortunate.

338 *nothing extenuate*: do not make excuses.

Lodovico

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

Othello

O the pernicious caitiff!

315 How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

Cassio

I found it in my chamber;

And he himself confess'd but even now
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose
Which wrought to his desire.

Othello

O fool, fool, fool!

Cassio

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

Lodovico

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

330 That can torment him much and hold him long
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest
Till that the nature of your fault be known
To the Venetian state. Come, bring him away.

Othello

Soft you; a word or two before you go.

335 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,

- 339 *set down*: write.
 340 *wisely*: i.e. moderately.
 341 *wrought*: provoked.
 342 *Perplex'd in the extreme*: completely bewildered.
 343 *base*: low in rank, servile.
Indian: Many stories were told about the ignorance of Asian peoples and their non comprehension of Western values.
 344 *subdued*: overcome (by grief).
 345 *unused*: unused.
melting mood: weeping.
 347 *medicinal gum*: myrrh (which oozed from certain Arabian trees, and was used in medical treatment and religious ceremonies).
 350 *traded*: betrayed.
 351 *circumcised*: circumcised; i.e. Muhammedan.

353 *period*: conclusion.

- 357 *Spartan dog*: These were said to be always eager for prey.
 358 *fell*: cruel.
 359 *loading*: burden.
 360 *object*: spectacle.
 361 *Let it be hid*: The bed would now be drawn back into the recess under the balcony, and the curtains drawn.
keep: stay in.
 362 *seize upon*: take legal possession of.
 363 *succeed*: legally descend.
lord governor: i.e. Cassio.
 364 *censure*: sentencing.

Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
 340 Of one that lov'd not wisely, but too well;
 Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
 Perplex'd 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,
 345 Albeit unused to the melting mood,
 Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
 And say besides that in Aleppo once
 Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
 350 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
 I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
 And smote him thus.

He stabs himself

Lodovico

O bloody period!

Gratiano

All that's spoke is marr'd!

Othello

I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this,
 355 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

He falls on the bed 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,

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea,
 Look on the tragic loading of this bed:

360 This is thy work. The object poisons sight;
 Let it be hid. [*The bed-curtains are drawn*] Gratiano,
 keep the house

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
 For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor,
 Remains the censure of this hellish villain:

366-7 *Myself . . . relate*: The slow formality of the rhymed couplet with its sighing alliteration brings the play to a solemn conclusion.

365 The time, the place, the torture, O, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate. [Exit]



Othello: the Source

This passage is taken from *Gli Hecatommithi* by Giovanni Battista Cinthio translated by Geoffrey Bullough (*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, Vol. VII, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

There was once in Venice a Moor, a very gallant man, who, because he was personally valiant and had given proof in warfare of great prudence and skilful energy, was very dear to the Signoria, who in rewarding virtuous actions ever advanced the interests of the Republic. It happened that a virtuous Lady of wondrous beauty called Disdemona, impelled not by female appetite but by the Moor's good qualities, fell in love with him, and he, vanquished by the Lady's beauty and noble mind, likewise was enamoured of her. So propitious was their mutual love that, although the Lady's relatives did all they could to make her take another husband, they were united in marriage and lived together in such concord and tranquillity while they remained in Venice, that never a word passed between them that was not loving.

It happened that the Venetian lords made a change in the forces that they used to maintain in Cyprus; and they chose the Moor as Commandant of the soldiers whom they sent there. Although he was pleased by the honour offered him . . . yet his happiness was lessened when he considered the length and dangers of the voyage, thinking that Disdemona would be much troubled by it. The Lady, who had no other happiness on earth but the Moor . . . could hardly wait for the hour when he would set off with his men, and she would accompany him to that honourable post . . . Shortly afterwards, having donned his armour and made all ready for the journey, he embarked in the galley with his lady, and with a sea of the utmost tranquillity arrived safely in Cyprus.

The Moor had in his company an Ensign of handsome presence but the most scoundrelly nature in the world. He was in high favour with the Moor, who had no suspicion of his wickedness; for although he had the basest of minds, he so cloaked the vileness hidden in his heart with high sounding and noble words, and by his manner, that he showed himself in the likeness of a Hector or an Achilles. This false man had likewise taken to Cyprus his wife, a fair and honest young woman. Being an Italian she was much loved by the Moor's wife, and spent the greater part of the day with her.

In the same company there was also a Corporal who was very dear to the Moor. This man went frequently to the Moor's house and often dined with him and his wife. The Lady, knowing him so well liked by her husband, gave him proofs of the greatest kindness, and this was much appreciated by the Moor.

The wicked Ensign, taking no account of the faith he had pledged to his wife, and of the friendship, loyalty and obligations he owed the Moor, fell ardently in love with Desdemona . . . He sought therefore in various ways, as deviously as he could, to make the Lady aware that he desired her. But she, whose every thought was for the Moor, never gave a thought to the Ensign . . . And all the things he did to arouse her feelings for him had no more effect than if he had not tried them. Whereupon he imagined that this was because she was in love with the Corporal, and he wondered how he might remove the latter from her sight. Not only did he turn his mind to this, but the love which he had felt for the Lady now changed to the bitterest hate, and he gave himself up to studying how to bring it about that, once the Corporal were killed, if he himself could not enjoy the Lady, then the Moor should not have her either. Turning over in his mind divers schemes, all wicked and treacherous, in the end he decided to accuse her of adultery, and to make her husband believe that the Corporal was the adulterer . . . Wherefore he set himself to wait until time and place opened a way for him to start his wicked enterprise.

Not long afterwards the Moor deprived the Corporal of his rank for having drawn his sword and wounded a soldier while on guard-duty. Desdemona was grieved by this and tried many times to reconcile the Moor with him. Whereupon the Moor told the rascally Ensign that his wife importuned him so much for the Corporal that he feared he would be obliged to reinstate him. The evil man saw in this a hint for setting in train the deceits he had planned, and said: 'Perhaps Desdemona has good cause to look on him so favourably!' 'Why is that?' asked the Moor. 'I do not wish,' said the Ensign, 'to come between man and wife, but if you keep your eyes open you will see for yourself.' Nor for all the Moor's inquiries would the Ensign go beyond this: nonetheless his words left such a sharp thorn in the Moor's mind, that he gave himself up to pondering intensely what they could mean. He became quite melancholy, and one day, when his wife was trying to soften his anger towards the Corporal, begging him not to condemn to oblivion the loyal service and friendship of many years just for one small fault, especially since the Corporal had been reconciled to the man he had struck, the Moor burst out in anger and said to her 'there must be a very

powerful reason why you take such trouble for this fellow, for he is not your brother, nor even a kinsman, yet you have him so much at heart.

The Lady, all courtesy and modesty, replied: 'I should not like you to be angry with me . . . Only a very good purpose made me speak to you about this, but rather than have you angry with me I shall never say another word on the subject.'

The Moor, however, seeing the earnestness with which his wife had again pleaded for the Corporal, guessed that the Ensign's words had been intended to suggest that Desdemona was in love with the Corporal, and he went in deep depression to the scoundrel and urged him to speak more openly. The Ensign, intent on injuring the unfortunate Lady, after pretending not to wish to say anything that might displease the Moor, appeared to be overcome by his entreaties and said: 'I must confess that it grieves me greatly to have to tell you something that must be in the highest degree painful to you; but since you wish me to tell you, and the regard that I must have of your honour as my master spurs me on, I shall not fail in my duty to answer your request. You must know therefore that it is hard for your Lady to see the Corporal in disgrace for the simple reason that she takes her pleasure with him whenever he comes to your house. The woman has come to dislike your blackness.'

These words struck the Moor's heart to its core; but in order to learn more (although he believed what the Ensign had said to be true, through the suspicion already sown in his mind) he said, with a fierce look: 'I do not know what holds me back from cutting out that outrageous tongue of yours which has dared to speak such insults against my Lady!' Then the Ensign: 'Captain,' he said, 'I did not expect any other reward for my loving service; but since my duty and my care for your honour have carried me so far, I repeat that the matter stands exactly as you have just heard it, and if your Lady with a false show of love for you, has so blinded your eyes that you have not seen what you ought to have seen, that does not mean that I am not speaking the truth. For this Corporal has told me all, like one whose happiness does not seem complete until he has made someone else acquainted with it.' And he added: 'If I had not feared your wrath, I should, when he told me, have given him the punishment he deserved by killing him. But since letting you know what concerns you more than anyone else brings me so undeserved a reward, I wish that I had kept silent, for by doing so I should not have fallen into your displeasure.'

Then the Moor, in the utmost anguish, said, 'If you do not make me see with my own eyes what you have told me, be assured, I shall make

you realize that it would have been better for you had you been born dumb.'

[For some time the Ensign wondered what to do next, because 'his knowledge of the Lady's chastity' made it seem impossible that he should ever be able to make the Moor believe him; and then, 'his thoughts twisting and turning in all directions, the scoundrel thought of a new piece of mischief.')

The Moor's wife often went . . . to the house of the Ensign's wife, and stayed with her a good part of the day; wherefore seeing that she sometimes carried with her a handkerchief embroidered most delicately in the Moorish fashion, which the Moor had given her and which was treasured by the Lady and her husband too, the Ensign planned to take it from her secretly, and thereby prepare her final ruin. [One day, whilst Disdemona was playing with his child, the Ensign stole the handkerchief; he dropped it in the Corporal's room.]



[The Ensign] spoke to the Corporal one day while the Moor was standing where he could see them as they talked; and chatting of quite other matters than the Lady, he laughed heartily and, displaying great surprise, he moved his head about and gestured with his hands, acting as if he were listening to marvels. As soon as the Moor saw them separate he went to the Ensign to learn what the other had told him; and the Ensign, after making him entreat for a long time, finally declared: 'He has hidden nothing from me. He tells me that he has enjoyed your wife every time you have given them the chance by your absence, and on the last occasion she gave him the handkerchief which you gave her as a present when you married her.' The Moor thanked the Ensign and it seemed obvious to him that if he found that the Lady no longer had the handkerchief, then all must be as the Ensign claimed.

Wherefore one day after dinner . . . he asked her for this handkerchief. The unhappy woman, who had greatly feared this, grew red in the face at the request . . . 'I do not know,' she said, 'why I cannot find it.' . . .

Leaving her, the Moor began to think how he might kill his wife, and the Corporal too, in such a way that he would not be blamed for it. And since he was obsessed with this, day and night, the Lady inevitably noticed that he was not the same towards her as he was formerly. Many times she said to him, 'What is the matter with you? What is troubling you? Whereas you used to be the gayest of men, you are now the most melancholy man alive.'

The Moor invented various excuses, but she was not at all satisfied . . . Sometimes she would say to the Ensign's wife, 'I do not know what

to make of the Moor. He used to be all love towards me, but in the last few days he has become quite another man; and I fear greatly that I shall be a warning to young girls not to marry against their parents' wishes; and Italian ladies will learn by my example not to tie themselves to a man whom Nature, Heaven, and the manner of life separate from us. But because I know that he is very friendly with your husband, and confides in him, I beg you, if you have learned anything from him which you can tell me, that you will not fail to help me.' She wept bitterly as she spoke . . .

The Corporal [who had recognized the handkerchief and tried, without success, to return it] had a woman at home who worked the most wonderful embroidery on lawn, and seeing the handkerchief and learning that it belonged to the Moor's wife, and that it was to be returned to her, she began to make a similar one before it went back. While she was doing so, the Ensign noticed that she was working near a window where she could be seen by whoever passed by on the street. So he brought the Moor and made him see her, and the latter now regarded it as certain that the most virtuous Lady was indeed an adulteress.

He arranged with the Ensign to kill her and the Corporal, and they discussed how it might be done. The Moor begged the Ensign to kill the Corporal, promising to remain eternally grateful to him. The Ensign refused to undertake such a thing, as being too difficult and dangerous, for the Corporal was as skilful as he was courageous; but after much entreaty, and being given a large sum of money, he was persuaded to say that he would tempt Fortune.

Soon after they had resolved on this, the Corporal, issuing one dark night from the house of a courtesan with whom he used to amuse himself, was accosted by the Ensign, sword in hand, who directed a blow at his legs to make him fall down; and he cut the right leg entirely through, so that the wretched man fell. The Ensign was immediately on him to finish him off, but the Corporal, who was valiant and used to blood and death, had drawn his sword, and wounded as he was he set about defending himself, while shouting in a loud voice: 'I am being murdered.'

At that the Ensign, hearing people come running . . . began to flee, so as not to be caught there; then, turning back he pretended to have run up on hearing the noise. Mingling with the others, and seeing the leg cut off, he judged that if the Corporal were not already dead, he soon would die of the wound, and although he rejoiced inwardly, he outwardly grieved for the Corporal as if he had been his own brother.

[Hearing of the Corporal's death, Desdemona grieved for him; but the Moor 'put the worst possible construction' on her grief. He plotted with the Ensign to murder her; they decided to use neither poison nor dagger, but to beat her to death with a stocking filled with sand and then pull down the ceiling to give the appearance of an accident. The Ensign hit her on the head, and Desdemona cried to the Moor for help, but he said]

'You wicked woman, you are having the reward of your infidelity. This is how women are treated who, pretending to love their husbands, put horns on their heads.'

The wretched Lady, hearing this and feeling herself near to death (for the Ensign had given her another blow), called on Divine Justice to witness her fidelity, since earthly justice failed, and she lay still, slain by the impious Ensign . . .

Next day Desdemona was buried, amid the universal mourning of the people. But God, the just observer of men's hearts, did not intend such vile wickedness to go without proper punishment. He ordained that the Moor, who had loved the Lady more than his life, on finding himself deprived of her should feel such longing that he went about like one beside himself, searching for her in every part of the house. Realizing now that the Ensign was the cause of his losing his Lady and all joy in life, he held the villain in such abhorrence that he could not bear even to see him; and if he had not been afraid of the inviolable justice of the Venetian lords, he would have slain him openly . . .

[The Ensign betrayed the plot, accusing the Moor of the murder, to the Captain, who told the Venetian authorities; the Moor was arrested, tortured and condemned to exile. Eventually he was murdered by Desdemona's relatives. The Ensign was later arrested, and 'tortured so fiercely that his inner organs were ruptured'; then he was sent home, 'where he died miserably'.]

It appeared marvellous to everybody that such malignity could have been discovered in a human heart; and the fate of the unhappy Lady was lamented, with some blame for her father . . . No less was the Moor blamed, who had believed too foolishly.