

UPDATED EDITION

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Othello

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH DETAILED NOTES FROM THE WORLD'S
LEADING CENTER FOR SHAKESPEARE STUDIES

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT
AND PAUL WERSTINE

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Barbara A. Mowat is Director of Research *emerita* at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Consulting Editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and author of *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* and of essays on Shakespeare's plays and their editing.

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The Folger Shakespeare Library

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Folger SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

The Tragedy of
Othello

The Moor of Venice

By
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

AN UPDATED EDITION

EDITED BY BARBARA A. MOWAT
AND PAUL WERSTINE

Simon & Schuster Paperbacks
NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY NEW DELHI

From the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library

It is hard to imagine a world without Shakespeare. Since their composition more than four hundred years ago, Shakespeare's plays and poems have traveled the globe, inviting those who see and read his works to make them their own.

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The New Folger Editions of Shakespeare's plays, which are the basis for the texts realized here in digital form, are special because of their origin. The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., is the single greatest documentary source of Shakespeare's works. An

unparalleled collection of early modern books, manuscripts, and artwork connected to Shakespeare, the Folger's holdings have been consulted extensively in the preparation of these texts. The Editions also reflect the expertise gained through the regular performance of Shakespeare's works in the Folger's Elizabethan Theater.

I want to express my deep thanks to editors Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine for creating these indispensable editions of Shakespeare's works, which incorporate the best of textual scholarship with a richness of commentary that is both inspired and engaging. Readers who want to know more about Shakespeare and his plays can follow the paths these distinguished scholars have tread by visiting the Folger either in person or online, where a range of physical and digital resources exists to supplement the material in these texts. I commend to you these words, and hope that they inspire.

Michael Witmore
Director, Folger Shakespeare Library

Contents

Editors' Preface

Shakespeare's *Othello*

Reading Shakespeare's Language: *Othello*

Shakespeare's Life

Shakespeare's Theater

The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays

An Introduction to This Text

Characters in the Play

The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice

Text of the Play with Commentary

Act 1

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 2

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 3

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Scene 4

Act 4

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 5

Scene 1

Scene 2

Longer Notes

Textual Notes

Othello: A Modern Perspective

by Susan Snyder

Further Reading

Key to Famous Lines and Phrases

Commentary

Act 1

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 2

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 3

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Scene 4

Act 4

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Act 5

Scene 1

Scene 2

Editors' Preface

In recent years, ways of dealing with Shakespeare's texts and with the interpretation of his plays have been undergoing significant change. This edition, while retaining many of the features that have always made the Folger Shakespeare so attractive to the general reader, at the same time reflects these current ways of thinking about Shakespeare. For example, modern readers, actors, and teachers have become interested in the differences between, on the one hand, the early forms in which Shakespeare's plays were first published and, on the other hand, the forms in which editors through the centuries have presented them. In response to this interest, we have based our edition on what we consider the best early printed version of a particular play (explaining our rationale in a section called "An Introduction to This Text") and have marked our changes in the text—unobtrusively, we hope, but in such a way that the curious reader can be aware that a change has been made and can consult the "Textual Notes" to discover what appeared in the early printed version.

Current ways of looking at the plays are reflected in our brief introductions, in many of the commentary notes, in the annotated lists of "Further Reading," and especially in each play's "Modern Perspective," an essay written by an outstanding scholar who brings to the reader his or her fresh assessment of the play in the light of today's interests and concerns.

As in the Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare, which this edition replaces, we include explanatory notes

designed to help make Shakespeare's language clearer to a modern reader, and we hyperlink notes to the lines that they explain. We also follow the earlier edition in including illustrations—of objects, of clothing, of mythological figures—from books and manuscripts in the Folger Shakespeare Library collection. We provide fresh accounts of the life of Shakespeare, of the publishing of his plays, and of the theaters in which his plays were performed, as well as an introduction to the text itself. We also include a section called "Reading Shakespeare's Language," in which we try to help readers learn to "break the code" of Elizabethan poetic language.

For each section of each volume, we are indebted to a host of generous experts and fellow scholars. The "Reading Shakespeare's Language" sections, for example, could not have been written had not Arthur King, of Brigham Young University, and Randal Robinson, author of *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language*, led the way in untangling Shakespearean language puzzles and shared their insights and methodologies generously with us. "Shakespeare's Life" profited by the careful reading given it by S. Schoenbaum; "Shakespeare's Theater" was read and strengthened by Andrew Gurr, John Astington, and William Ingram; and "The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays" is indebted to the comments of Peter W. M. Blayney. We, as editors, take sole responsibility for any errors in our editions.

We are grateful to the authors of the "Modern Perspectives," to Leeds Barroll and David Bevington for their generous encouragement; to the Huntington and Newberry Libraries for fellowship support; to King's University College for the grants it has provided to Paul Werstine; to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which provided him with Research Time Stipends; and to

the Folger Institute's Center for Shakespeare Studies for its fortuitous sponsorship of a workshop on "Shakespeare's Texts for Students and Teachers" (funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and led by Richard Knowles of the University of Wisconsin), a workshop from which we learned an enormous amount about what is wanted by college and high-school teachers of Shakespeare today.

In preparing this preface for the publication of *Othello* in 1993, we wrote: "Our biggest debt is to the Folger Shakespeare Library: to Michael Witmore, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, who brings to our work a gratifying enthusiasm and vision; to Gail Kern Paster, Director of the Library from 2002 until July 2011, whose interest and support have been unfailing and whose scholarly expertise continues to be an invaluable resource; and to Werner Gundersheimer, the Library's Director from 1984 to 2002, who made possible our edition; to Jean Miller, the Library's Art Curator, who combed the Library holdings for illustrations, and to Julie Ainsworth, Head of the Photography Department, who carefully photographed them; to Peggy O'Brien, Director of Education, who gave us expert advice about the needs being expressed by Shakespeare teachers and students (and to Martha Christian and other 'master teachers' who used our texts in manuscript in their classrooms); to the staff of the Academic Programs Division, especially Paul Menzer (who drafted 'Further Reading' material), Mary Tonkinson, Lena Cowen Orlin, Molly Haws, and Jessica Hymowitz; and, finally, to the staff of the Library Reading Room, whose patience and support have been invaluable."

As we revise the play for publication in 2017, we add to the above our gratitude to Michael Witmore, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, who brings to our work a

gratifying enthusiasm and vision; to Gail Kern Paster, Director of the Library from 2002 until July 2011, whose interest and support have been unfailing and whose scholarly expertise continues to be an invaluable resource; to Jonathan Evans and Alysha Bullock, our production editors at Simon & Schuster, whose expertise, attention to detail, and wisdom are essential to this project; to the Folger's Photography Department; to Deborah Curren-Aquino for continuing superb editorial assistance and for her exceptionally fine Further Reading annotations; to Alice Falk for her expert copyediting; to Michael Poston for unfailing computer support; to Gabrielle Linnell and Stacey Redick; and to Rebecca Niles (whose help is crucial). Among the editions we consulted, we found Michael Neill's 2006 Oxford World's Classics edition especially useful. Finally, we once again express our thanks to Stephen Llano for twenty-five years of support as our invaluable production editor, to the late Jean Miller for the wonderful images she unearthed, and to the ever-supportive staff of the Library Reading Room.

Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine
2017

Shakespeare's *Othello*

In *Othello*, Shakespeare creates a powerful drama of a marriage that begins with fascination (between the exotic Moor Othello and the Venetian lady Desdemona), with elopement, and with intense mutual devotion and that ends precipitately with jealous rage and violent deaths. Shakespeare sets this story in the romantic world of the Mediterranean, moving the action from Venice to the island of Cyprus and giving it an even more exotic coloring with stories of Othello's African past. Shakespeare builds so many differences into his hero and heroine—differences of race, of age, of cultural background—that one should not, perhaps, be surprised that the marriage ends disastrously. But most people who see or read the play feel that the love that the play presents between Othello and Desdemona is so strong that it would have overcome all these differences were it not for the words and actions of Othello's standard-bearer, Iago, who hates Othello and sets out to destroy him by destroying his love for Desdemona.

As Othello succumbs to Iago's insinuations that Desdemona is unfaithful, fascination—which dominates the early acts of the play—turns to horror, especially for the audience. We are confronted by spectacles of a generous and trusting Othello in the grip of Iago's schemes; of an innocent Desdemona, who has given herself up entirely to her love for Othello only to be subjected to his horrifying verbal and physical assaults, the outcome of Othello's mistaken convictions about her faithlessness.

At this moment in time, the play's fascination and its horror may be greater than ever before because we have been made so very sensitive to the issues of race, class, and gender that are woven into the texture of *Othello*. Desdemona is white, Othello black. Their interracial marriage is a source of a stream of slurs from Iago that runs throughout the play. Class is emphasized when Iago is presented as someone bitterly resentful of his social inferiority (surely a factor in his initial failure to be named Othello's second-in-command) and so knowledgeable about the workings of prejudice and self-doubt that he can easily twist others' feelings and actions to serve his own mysterious ends. The issue of gender is especially noticeable in the final scenes of the play—with the attacks on Bianca, Emilia, and Desdemona—which are vivid reminders of how terrible the power traditionally exerted by men over women can be.

After you have read the play, we invite you to turn to "*Othello: A Modern Perspective*," written by the late Professor Susan Snyder of Swarthmore College, printed at the back of the book.

Reading Shakespeare's Language: *Othello*

For many people today, reading Shakespeare's language can be a problem—but it is a problem that can be solved. Those who have studied Latin (or even French or German or Spanish) and those who are used to reading poetry will have little difficulty understanding the language of poetic drama. Others, however, need to develop the skills of untangling unusual sentence structures and of recognizing and understanding poetic compressions, omissions, and wordplay. And even those skilled in reading unusual sentence structures may have occasional trouble with Shakespeare's words. More than four hundred years of “static”—caused by changes in language and in life—intervene between his speaking and our hearing. Most of his vocabulary is still in use, but a few of his words are no longer used, and many of his words now have meanings quite different from those they had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the theater, most of these difficulties are solved for us by actors who study the language and articulate it for us so that the essential meaning is heard—or, when combined with stage action, is at least *felt*. When we are reading on our own, we must do what each actor does: go over the lines (often with a dictionary close at hand) until the puzzles are solved and the lines yield up their poetry and the characters speak in words and phrases that are, suddenly, rewarding and wonderfully memorable.

Shakespeare's Words

As you begin to read the opening scenes of a Shakespeare play, you may notice occasional unfamiliar words. Some are unfamiliar simply because we no longer use them. In the opening scene of *Othello*, for example, you will find the words *certes* (i.e., certainly), *affined* (i.e., bound, obliged), *producted* (i.e., produced), as well as expressions like *forsooth*, *God bless the mark*, and *Zounds* (i.e., by Christ's wounds). Words and expressions of this kind are explained in notes to the text and will become familiar the more of Shakespeare's plays you read.

In *Othello*, as in all of Shakespeare's writing, the more problematic are the words that are still in use but that now have different meanings. In the first scene of *Othello* we find, for example, the words *circumstance* (meaning "circumlocution"), *spinster* (meaning "one who spins"), *propose* (meaning "converse"), *peculiar* (meaning "personal"), *owe* (meaning "own"), and *bravery* (meaning "impertinence, defiance"). Such words will be explained in the notes to the text, but they, too, will become familiar as you continue to read Shakespeare's language.

Some words are strange not because of the "static" introduced by changes in language over the past centuries but because these are words that Shakespeare is using to build a dramatic world that has its own geography, history, and background mythology. In *Othello*, three such worlds are built. First is the world of Venice and its surrounding territory, created through references to gondoliers and "togèd consuls," to "the magnifico," to Florentines, to Janus, to the Venetian signiory, to "carracks" and "prizes." These "local" references build the Venice that Othello and Desdemona, Iago, Cassio, and Brabantio inhabit for the first act of the play. Second is the world from which Othello has come, a world of "antres vast and deserts idle," of

Anthropophagi, of the tented field and the imminent deadly breach. In the opening scenes of [Act 2](#), the language that has built the worlds of Venice and of Othello's "extravagant" past is replaced with language that creates the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, to which the action moves—references to "high wrought floods," to "barks" (i.e., ships), to "shots of courtesy," to the "guttered rocks" and "congregated sands" of the ocean, to "the citadel" and the "court of guard." Where necessary, such local references will be explained in notes to the text, and will soon become a familiar part of your reading of the play.

Shakespeare's Sentences

In an English sentence, meaning is quite dependent on the place given each word. "The dog bit the boy" and "The boy bit the dog" mean very different things, even though the individual words are the same. Because English places such importance on the positions of words in sentences, on the way words are arranged, unusual arrangements can puzzle a reader. Shakespeare frequently shifts his sentences away from "normal" English arrangements—often in order to create the rhythm he seeks, sometimes in order to use a line's poetic rhythm to emphasize a particular word, sometimes to give a character his or her own speech patterns or to allow the character to speak in a special way. When we attend a good performance of a play, the actors will have worked out the sentence structures and will articulate the sentences so that the meaning is clear. In reading the play, we need to do as the actor does: that is, when puzzled by a character's speech, check to see if words are being presented in an unusual sequence.

Look first for the placement of subject and verb. Shakespeare often places the verb before the subject or places the subject between the two parts of a verb (e.g., instead of “He goes,” we find “Goes he,” and instead of “He does go,” we find “Does he go”). In the opening scenes of *Othello*, when Iago says (1.1.61) “such a one do I profess myself” and when Brabantio says (1.1.178) “Gone she is,” they are using constructions that place the subject and verb in unusual positions.

Such inversions rarely cause much confusion. More problematic is Shakespeare’s frequent placing of the object before the subject and verb (e.g., instead of “I hit him,” we might find “Him I hit”). Brabantio’s statement to Roderigo at 1.1.134, “This thou shalt answer,” is an example of such an inversion. (The normal order would be “Thou shalt answer this.”) Othello uses an inverted structure when he says, at 1.2.29–31, “I would not my unhoused free condition / Put into circumscription and confine / For the sea’s worth” (where the “normal” structure would be “I would not put my unhoused free condition into circumscription . . .”).

In some plays Shakespeare makes systematic use of inversions (*Julius Caesar* is one such play). In *Othello*, he more often uses sentence structures that involve instead the separation of words that would normally appear together. (Again, this is often done to create a particular rhythm or to stress a particular word.) Roderigo, when he says “I take it much unkindly / That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse / As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this” (1.1.1–3), separates subject and verb (“thou shouldst know”). Iago also separates subject and verb (shown here in italics) when he says “Three *great ones* of the city, / In personal suit to make me his lieutenant, / *Off-capped* to him” (1.1.9–11) and again when he says (1.1.13–14) “But *he*, as loving his own pride

and purposes, / *Evades* them with a bombast circumstance.” In order to create sentences that seem more like the English of everyday speech, you can rearrange the words, putting together the word clusters and placing the remaining words in their more normal order. The result will usually be an increase in clarity but a loss in rhythm or a shift its emphasis.

Locating and if necessary rearranging words that “belong together” is especially helpful in passages that separate subjects from verbs and verbs from objects by long delaying or expanding interruptions. For example, when Iago tells Roderigo about having been passed over for the lieutenancy, he uses such an interrupted structure:

And *I*, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christened and heathen, *must be beleed and calmed*
By debtor and creditor. (1.1.29–33)

Brabantio, accusing Othello of having used witchcraft on Desdemona, also uses an interrupted construction:

For I’ll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, t’ incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight!
(1.2.83–90)

In both of these cases, the interruptions provide details that catch the audience up in the speeches. The separation of the

basic sentence elements “I must be beleed and calmed” forces the audience to attend to supporting details (of Iago’s military experience, of the geographic regions where he has served Othello) while waiting for the basic sentence elements to come together; a similar effect is created when “Whether a maid would ever have run” is interrupted by details about Desdemona’s character (as perceived by her father) and by descriptions of moments from her past.

Occasionally, rather than separating basic sentence elements, Shakespeare simply holds them back, delaying them until much subordinate material has already been given. At the council of the Venetian senators, for instance, the First Senator uses a delayed construction—

When we consider
Th’ importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,
And let ourselves again but understand
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks th’ abilities
That Rhodes is dressed in—if we make thought of
this,
*We must not think the Turk is so unskillful
To leave that latest which concerns him first . . .*

(1.3.24–34)

—delaying the basic sentence elements (“We must not think the Turk is so unskillful”) to the end of this very long sentence, thus holding audience attention as the relationship of Cyprus, Rhodes, and the Turks is explained.

Shakespeare’s sentences are sometimes complicated not because of unusual structures or interruptions or delays but

because he omits words and parts of words that English sentences normally require. (In conversation, we, too, often omit words. We say “Heard from him yet?” and our hearer supplies the missing “Have you.”) Frequent reading of Shakespeare—and of other poets—trains us to supply such missing words.) In some plays (*Macbeth*, for example) Shakespeare uses omissions to great dramatic effect, omitting words and parts of words to build compression and speed in the language of the play. In *Othello* this device is more rarely used, occurring primarily in such constructions as Roderigo’s “But if you know not this” ([1.1.144](#)), where the omission of the word “do” and the placing of “not” after “know” creates a regular iambic rhythm.

Shakespearean Wordplay

Shakespeare plays with language so often and so variously that entire books are written on the topic. Here we will mention only two kinds of wordplay, puns and metaphors. A pun is a play on words that sound the same but that have different meanings. In many plays (*Romeo and Juliet* is a good example) Shakespeare uses puns frequently. In *Othello* they are found less often; when they are used (except in Iago’s “comic” verses in [2.1](#)), they carry meaningful ambiguity or complexity. When Brabantio accuses Desdemona of “treason of the blood” ([1.1.191](#)), for instance, his pun on *blood* allows the phrase to mean both “betrayal of her father and family” and “rebellion of the passions”; when the word *abused* appears (it occurs eight times in this play), it often means both “deluded, deceived” and “violated, injured”; the word *erring* means both “wandering” and “sinning”; *complexion* means both “temperament” and “skin color”; and *period*, in Lodovico’s “O bloody period!”

([5.2.418](#)), signifies (powerfully) the end of Othello's speech (a rhetorical term) and the final point or limit of his life. In this play that focuses so relentlessly on sexuality, many of the puns are on words like *play* (meaning "wager," but carrying a secondary meaning of "engage in sexual sport"), *cope* (meaning "meet, encounter," with a secondary meaning of "copulate"), and *sport* (meaning "fun," but also "amorous play").

It is possible to argue that in the largest sense, puns are extremely important to *Othello*. The visual contrast of black Othello and white Desdemona, for example, is echoed and complicated in punlike wordplay, as Desdemona becomes seen by Othello as morally "black" and as Othello, who has been called "far more fair than black," later talks about the "blackness" of his own face. A second set of punlike expressions turn on the word *honest*, whose various meanings play against each other throughout the play. *Honest* occurs more than forty times in *Othello*, almost always in reference to Iago—where it is both an indicator of his supposed truthfulness and a condescending term for a social inferior—and in reference to Desdemona, where, as is standard when it refers to a woman, it always means "chaste."

A metaphor is a play on words in which one object or idea is expressed as if it were something else, something with which it is said to share common features. For instance, when Iago says ([1.1.31](#)–32) that he has been "beleed and calmed" by Cassio, he is using metaphoric language: as a way of saying that Cassio has interfered with his military career, he uses nautical terms, picturing himself and Cassio as sailing ships, with Cassio coming between Iago and the wind, putting Iago in the lee and thereby stopping his progress. In many of his more inflammatory metaphors,

Iago pictures lovers as mating animals (as in the famous statement to Brabantio about Othello and Desdemona: “[A]n old black ram / Is tupp[ing] [mating with] your white ewe” [1.1.97–98]). And, after working out the details of his entrapment of Desdemona, Cassio, and Othello (2.3.373–82), Iago sums up his plot in graphic metaphorical language: “So will I turn her virtue into pitch, / And out of her own goodness make the net / That shall enmesh them all”—where the qualities of pitch (a substance that is black, malodorous, and extremely sticky) make it the perfect substance for Iago to picture as helping him “enmesh” his victims.

Implied Stage Action

Finally, in reading Shakespeare’s plays we should always remember that what we are reading is a performance script. The dialogue is written to be spoken by actors who, at the same time, are moving, gesturing, picking up objects, weeping, shaking their fists. Some stage action is described in what are called “stage directions”; some is suggested within the dialogue itself. We must learn to be alert to such signals as we stage the play in our imaginations. In the second scene of *Othello*, for example, Brabantio says “Down with him, thief!” Iago answers “You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I am for you,” and Othello says “Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them” (73–77). In this passage, the stage action is obvious: i.e., several of the characters must draw their swords. Again, when, at 3.3.358–65, Emilia shows Iago a handkerchief, saying “Look, here ’tis,” and a few lines later, after his order to “Give it me,” she says “If it be not for some purpose of import, / Give ’t me again,” the stage action is fairly clear: Iago has snatched the handkerchief from her (or, less likely, she has handed it to him and then changed

her mind). However, a bit earlier in that scene, at the crucial moment when the handkerchief is dropped, the action is not so clear. Othello complains of a headache, Desdemona offers to bind his head with her handkerchief, and Othello says “Your napkin [i.e., handkerchief] is too little. / Let it alone. Come, I’ll go in with you,” and he and Desdemona exit. Emilia, alone onstage, then says “I am glad I have found this napkin.” It is almost certain that Emilia picks the handkerchief up, but just how it fell and why neither Othello nor Desdemona saw it fall are matters that the director and the actors (and the reader, in imagination) must address. Learning to read the language of stage action repays one many times over when one reaches a crucial scene like that in [Act 4](#) in which Othello sees the gestures made by Cassio but cannot hear his words, or when one reads the play’s final scene with its complicated murders and attempted murders; in both of these scenes, implied stage action vitally affects our response to the play.

It is immensely rewarding to work carefully with Shakespeare’s language—with the words, the sentences, the wordplay, and the implied stage action—as readers for the past four centuries have discovered. It may be more pleasurable to attend a good performance of a play—though not everyone has thought so. But the joy of being able to stage one of Shakespeare’s plays in one’s imagination, to return to passages that continue to yield further meanings (or further questions) the more one reads them—these are pleasures that, for many, rival (or at least augment) those of the performed text, and certainly make it worth considerable effort to “break the code” of Elizabethan poetic drama and let free the remarkable language that makes up a Shakespeare text.

Shakespeare's Life

Surviving documents that give us glimpses into the life of William Shakespeare show us a playwright, poet, and actor who grew up in the market town of Stratford-upon-Avon, spent his professional life in London, and returned to Stratford a wealthy landowner. He was born in April 1564, died in April 1616, and is buried inside the chancel of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

We wish we could know more about the life of the world's greatest dramatist. His plays and poems are testaments to his wide reading—especially to his knowledge of Virgil, Ovid, Plutarch, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and the Bible—and to his mastery of the English language, but we can only speculate about his education. We know that the King's New School in Stratford-upon-Avon was considered excellent. The school was one of the English "grammar schools" established to educate young men, primarily in Latin grammar and literature. As in other schools of the time, students began their studies at the age of four or five in the attached "petty school," and there learned to read and write in English, studying primarily the catechism from the Book of Common Prayer. After two years in the petty school, students entered the lower form (grade) of the grammar school, where they began the serious study of Latin grammar and Latin texts that would occupy most of the remainder of their school days. (Several Latin texts that Shakespeare used repeatedly in writing his plays and poems were texts that schoolboys memorized and recited.) Latin comedies were introduced early in the lower form; in the

upper form, which the boys entered at age ten or eleven, students wrote their own Latin orations and declamations, studied Latin historians and rhetoricians, and began the study of Greek using the Greek New Testament.



Title page of a 1573 Latin and Greek catechism for children.
From Alexander Nowell, *Catechismus paruus pueris primum Latine . . .* (1573).

Since the records of the Stratford “grammar school” do not survive, we cannot prove that William Shakespeare attended the school; however, every indication (his father’s position as an alderman and bailiff of Stratford, the playwright’s own knowledge of the Latin classics, scenes in

the plays that recall grammar-school experiences—for example, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4.1) suggests that he did. We also lack generally accepted documentation about Shakespeare's life after his schooling ended and his professional life in London began. His marriage in 1582 (at age eighteen) to Anne Hathaway and the subsequent births of his daughter Susanna (1583) and the twins Judith and Hamnet (1585) are recorded, but how he supported himself and where he lived are not known. Nor do we know when and why he left Stratford for the London theatrical world, nor how he rose to be the important figure in that world that he had become by the early 1590s.

We do know that by 1592 he had achieved some prominence in London as both an actor and a playwright. In that year was published a book by the playwright Robert Greene attacking an actor who had the audacity to write blank-verse drama and who was “in his own conceit [i.e., opinion] the only Shake-scene in a country.” Since Greene's attack includes a parody of a line from one of Shakespeare's early plays, there is little doubt that it is Shakespeare to whom he refers, a “Shake-scene” who had aroused Greene's fury by successfully competing with university-educated dramatists like Greene himself. It was in 1593 that Shakespeare became a published poet. In that year he published his long narrative poem *Venus and Adonis*; in 1594, he followed it with *The Rape of Lucrece*. Both poems were dedicated to the young earl of Southampton (Henry Wriothesley), who may have become Shakespeare's patron.

It seems no coincidence that Shakespeare wrote these narrative poems at a time when the theaters were closed because of the plague, a contagious epidemic disease that devastated the population of London. When the theaters reopened in 1594, Shakespeare apparently resumed his

double career of actor and playwright and began his long (and seemingly profitable) service as an acting-company shareholder. Records for December of 1594 show him to be a leading member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It was this company of actors, later named the King's Men, for whom he would be a principal actor, dramatist, and shareholder for the rest of his career.

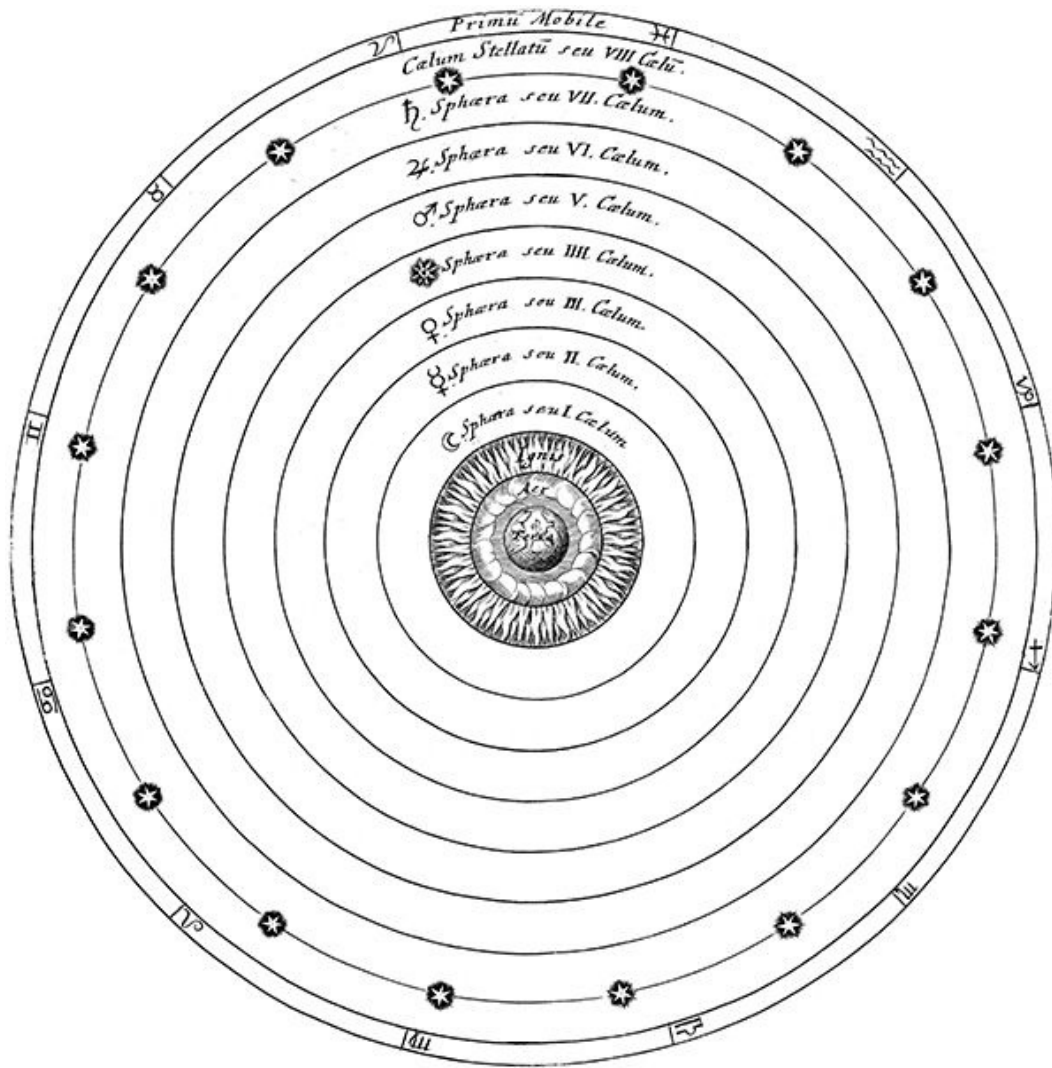
So far as we can tell, that career spanned about twenty years. In the 1590s, he wrote his plays on English history as well as several comedies and at least two tragedies (*Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*). These histories, comedies, and tragedies are the plays credited to him in 1598 in a work, *Palladis Tamia*, that in one chapter compares English writers with "Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets." There the author, Francis Meres, claims that Shakespeare is comparable to the Latin dramatists Seneca for tragedy and Plautus for comedy, and calls him "the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." He also names him "Mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare": "I say," writes Meres, "that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine filed phrase, if they would speak English." Since Meres also mentions Shakespeare's "sugared sonnets among his private friends," it is assumed that many of Shakespeare's sonnets (not published until 1609) were also written in the 1590s.

In 1599, Shakespeare's company built a theater for themselves across the river from London, naming it the Globe. The plays that are considered by many to be Shakespeare's major tragedies (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*) were written while the company was resident in this theater, as were such comedies as *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure*. Many of Shakespeare's plays were performed at court (both for Queen Elizabeth I and, after

her death in 1603, for King James I), some were presented at the Inns of Court (the residences of London's legal societies), and some were doubtless performed in other towns, at the universities, and at great houses when the King's Men went on tour; otherwise, his plays from 1599 to 1608 were, so far as we know, performed only at the Globe. Between 1608 and 1612, Shakespeare wrote several plays—among them *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*—presumably for the company's new indoor Blackfriars theater, though the plays were performed also at the Globe and at court. Surviving documents describe a performance of *The Winter's Tale* in 1611 at the Globe, for example, and performances of *The Tempest* in 1611 and 1613 at the royal palace of Whitehall.

Shakespeare seems to have written very little after 1612, the year in which he probably wrote *King Henry VIII*. (It was at a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 that the Globe caught fire and burned to the ground.) Sometime between 1610 and 1613, according to many biographers, he returned to live in Stratford-upon-Avon, where he owned a large house and considerable property, and where his wife and his two daughters lived. (His son Hamnet had died in 1596.) However, other biographers suggest that Shakespeare did not leave London for good until much closer to the time of his death. During his professional years in London, Shakespeare had presumably derived income from the acting company's profits as well as from his own career as an actor, from the sale of his play manuscripts to the acting company, and, after 1599, from his shares as an owner of the Globe. It was presumably that income, carefully invested in land and other property, that made him the wealthy man that surviving documents show him to have become. It is also assumed that William Shakespeare's growing wealth and reputation played some part in inclining the Crown, in

1596, to grant John Shakespeare, William's father, the coat of arms that he had so long sought. William Shakespeare died in Stratford on April 23, 1616 (according to the epitaph carved under his bust in Holy Trinity Church) and was buried on April 25. Seven years after his death, his collected plays were published as *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (the work now known as the First Folio).



Ptolemaic universe.

From Marcus Manilius, *The sphere of . . .* (1675).

The years in which Shakespeare wrote were among the most exciting in English history. Intellectually, the discovery, translation, and printing of Greek and Roman classics were making available a set of works and worldviews that interacted complexly with Christian texts and beliefs. The result was a questioning, a vital intellectual ferment, that provided energy for the period's amazing dramatic and literary output and that fed directly into Shakespeare's plays. The Ghost in *Hamlet*, for example, is wonderfully complicated in part because he is a figure from Roman tragedy—the spirit of the dead returning to seek revenge—who at the same time inhabits a Christian hell (or purgatory); Hamlet's description of humankind reflects at one moment the Neoplatonic wonderment at mankind ("What a piece of work is a man!") and, at the next, the Christian attitude toward sinful humanity ("And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?").

As intellectual horizons expanded, so also did geographical and cosmological horizons. New worlds—both North and South America—were explored, and in them were found human beings who lived and worshiped in ways radically different from those of Renaissance Europeans and Englishmen. The universe during these years also seemed to shift and expand. Copernicus had earlier theorized that the earth was not the center of the cosmos but revolved as a planet around the sun. Galileo's telescope, created in 1609, allowed scientists to see that Copernicus had been correct: the universe was not organized with the earth at the center, nor was it so nicely circumscribed as people had, until that time, thought. In terms of expanding horizons, the impact of these discoveries on people's beliefs—religious, scientific, and philosophical—cannot be overstated.

London, too, rapidly expanded and changed during the years (from the early 1590s to around 1610) that Shakespeare lived there. London—the center of England’s government, its economy, its royal court, its overseas trade—was, during these years, becoming an exciting metropolis, drawing to it thousands of new citizens every year. Troubled by overcrowding, by poverty, by recurring epidemics of the plague, London was also a mecca for the wealthy and the aristocratic, and for those who sought advancement at court, or power in government or finance or trade. One hears in Shakespeare’s plays the voices of London—the struggles for power, the fear of venereal disease, the language of buying and selling. One hears as well the voices of Stratford-upon-Avon—references to the nearby Forest of Arden, to sheepherding, to small-town gossip, to village fairs and markets. Part of the richness of Shakespeare’s work is the influence felt there of the various worlds in which he lived: the world of metropolitan London, the world of small-town and rural England, the world of the theater, and the worlds of craftsmen and shepherds.

That Shakespeare inhabited such worlds we know from surviving London and Stratford documents, as well as from the evidence of the plays and poems themselves. From such records we can sketch the dramatist’s life. We know from his works that he was a voracious reader. We know from legal and business documents that he was a multifaceted theater man who became a wealthy landowner. We know a bit about his family life and a fair amount about his legal and financial dealings. Most scholars today depend upon such evidence as they draw their picture of the world’s greatest playwright. Such, however, has not always been the case. Until the late eighteenth century, the William Shakespeare who lived in most biographies was the creation of legend

and tradition. This was the Shakespeare who was supposedly caught poaching deer at Charlecote, the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy close by Stratford; this was the Shakespeare who fled from Sir Thomas's vengeance and made his way in London by taking care of horses outside a playhouse; this was the Shakespeare who reportedly could barely read, but whose natural gifts were extraordinary, whose father was a butcher who allowed his gifted son sometimes to help in the butcher shop, where William supposedly killed calves "in a high style," making a speech for the occasion. It was this legendary William Shakespeare whose Falstaff (in *1* and *2 Henry IV*) so pleased Queen Elizabeth that she demanded a play about Falstaff in love, and demanded that it be written in fourteen days (hence the existence of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*). It was this legendary Shakespeare who reached the top of his acting career in the roles of the Ghost in *Hamlet* and old Adam in *As You Like It*—and who died of a fever contracted by drinking too hard at "a merry meeting" with the poets Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson. This legendary Shakespeare is a rambunctious, undisciplined man, as attractively "wild" as his plays were seen by earlier generations to be. Unfortunately, there is no trace of evidence to support these wonderful stories.

Perhaps in response to the disreputable Shakespeare of legend—or perhaps in response to the fragmentary and, for some, all-too-ordinary Shakespeare documented by surviving records—some people since the mid-nineteenth century have argued that William Shakespeare could not have written the plays that bear his name. These persons have put forward some dozen names as more likely authors, among them Queen Elizabeth, Sir Francis Bacon, Edward de Vere (earl of Oxford), and Christopher Marlowe. Such

attempts to find what for these people is a more believable author of the plays is a tribute to the regard in which the plays are held. Unfortunately for their claims, the documents that exist that provide evidence for the facts of Shakespeare's life tie him inextricably to the body of plays and poems that bear his name. Unlikely as it seems to those who want the works to have been written by an aristocrat, a university graduate, or an "important" person, the plays and poems seem clearly to have been produced by a man from Stratford-upon-Avon with a very good "grammar-school" education and a life of experience in London and in the world of the London theater. How this particular man produced the works that dominate the cultures of much of the world four centuries after his death is one of life's mysteries—and one that will continue to tease our imaginations as we continue to delight in his plays and poems.

Shakespeare's Theater

The actors of Shakespeare's time are known to have performed plays in a great variety of locations. They played at court (that is, in the great halls of such royal residences as Whitehall, Hampton Court, and Greenwich); they played in halls at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and at the Inns of Court (the residences in London of the legal societies); and they also played in the private houses of great lords and civic officials. Sometimes acting companies went on tour from London into the provinces, often (but not only) when outbreaks of bubonic plague in the capital forced the closing of theaters to reduce the possibility of contagion in crowded audiences. In the provinces the actors usually staged their plays in churches (until around 1600) or in guildhalls. While surviving records show only a handful of occasions when actors played at inns while on tour, London inns were important playing places up until the 1590s.

The building of theaters in London had begun only shortly before Shakespeare wrote his first plays in the 1590s. These theaters were of two kinds: outdoor or public playhouses that could accommodate large numbers of playgoers, and indoor or private theaters for much smaller audiences. What is usually regarded as the first London outdoor public playhouse was called simply the Theatre. James Burbage—the father of Richard Burbage, who was perhaps the most famous actor in Shakespeare's company—built it in 1576 in an area north of the city of London called Shoreditch. Among the more famous of the other public playhouses that capitalized on the new fashion were the

Curtain and the Fortune (both also built north of the city), the Rose, the Swan, the Globe, and the Hope (all located on the Bankside, a region just across the Thames south of the city of London). All these playhouses had to be built outside the jurisdiction of the city of London because many civic officials were hostile to the performance of drama and repeatedly petitioned the royal council to abolish it.



A stylized representation of the Globe theater.

From Claes Jansz Visscher, *Londinum florentissima Britanniae urbs* . . . [c. 1625].

The theaters erected on the Bankside (a region under the authority of the Church of England, whose head was the monarch) shared the neighborhood with houses of prostitution and with the Paris Garden, where the blood sports of bearbaiting and bullbaiting were carried on. There may have been no clear distinction between playhouses and buildings for such sports, for we know that the Hope was used for both plays and baiting and that Philip Henslowe, owner of the Rose and, later, partner in the ownership of the Fortune, was also a partner in a monopoly on baiting. All these forms of entertainment were easily accessible to Londoners by boat across the Thames or over London Bridge.

Evidently Shakespeare's company prospered on the Bankside. They moved there in 1599. Threatened by difficulties in renewing the lease on the land where their first theater (the Theatre) had been built, Shakespeare's company took advantage of the Christmas holiday in 1598 to dismantle the Theatre and transport its timbers across the Thames to the Bankside, where, in 1599, these timbers were used in the building of the Globe. The weather in late December 1598 is recorded as having been especially harsh. It was so cold that the Thames was "nigh [nearly] frozen," and there was heavy snow. Perhaps the weather aided Shakespeare's company in eluding their landlord, the snow hiding their activity and the freezing of the Thames allowing them to slide the timbers across to the Bankside without paying tolls for repeated trips over London Bridge. Attractive as this narrative is, it remains just as likely that the heavy snow hampered transport of the timbers in wagons through the London streets to the river. It also must be remembered that the Thames was, according to report, only "nigh frozen," and therefore did not necessarily provide solid

footing. Whatever the precise circumstances of this fascinating event in English theater history, Shakespeare's company was able to begin playing at their new Globe theater on the Bankside in 1599. After this theater burned down in 1613 during the staging of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* (its thatch roof was set alight by cannon fire called for in performance), Shakespeare's company immediately rebuilt on the same location. The second Globe seems to have been a grander structure than its predecessor. It remained in use until the beginning of the English Civil War in 1642, when Parliament officially closed the theaters. Soon thereafter it was pulled down.

The public theaters of Shakespeare's time were very different buildings from our theaters today. First of all, they were open-air playhouses. As recent excavations of the Rose and the Globe confirm, some were polygonal or roughly circular in shape; the Fortune, however, was square. The most recent estimates of their size put the diameter of these buildings at 72 feet (the Rose) to 100 feet (the Globe), but we know that they held vast audiences of two or three thousand, who must have been squeezed together quite tightly. Some of these spectators paid extra to sit or stand in the two or three levels of roofed galleries that extended, on the upper levels, all the way around the theater and surrounded an open space. In this space were the stage and, perhaps, the tiring house (what we would call dressing rooms), as well as the so-called yard. In the yard stood the spectators who chose to pay less, the ones whom Hamlet contemptuously called "groundlings." For a roof they had only the sky, and so they were exposed to all kinds of weather. They stood on a floor that was sometimes made of mortar and sometimes of ash mixed with the shells of hazelnuts, which, it has

recently been discovered, were standard flooring material in the period.

Unlike the yard, the stage itself was covered by a roof. Its ceiling, called “the heavens,” is thought to have been elaborately painted to depict the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The exact size of the stage remains hard to determine. We have a single sketch of part of the interior of the Swan. A Dutchman named Johannes de Witt visited this theater around 1596 and sent a sketch of it back to his friend, Arend van Buchel. Because van Buchel found de Witt’s letter and sketch of interest, he copied both into a book. It is van Buchel’s copy, adapted, it seems, to the shape and size of the page in his book, that survives. In this sketch, the stage appears to be a large rectangular platform that thrusts far out into the yard, perhaps even as far as the center of the circle formed by the surrounding galleries. This drawing, combined with the specifications for the size of the stage in the building contract for the Fortune, has led scholars to conjecture that the stage on which Shakespeare’s plays were performed must have measured approximately 43 feet in width and 27 feet in depth, a vast acting area. But the digging up of a large part of the Rose by late-twentieth-century archaeologists has provided evidence of a quite different stage design. The Rose stage was a platform tapered at the corners and much shallower than what seems to be depicted in the van Buchel sketch. Indeed, its measurements seem to be about 37.5 feet across at its widest point and only 15.5 feet deep. Because the surviving indications of stage size and design differ from each other so much, it is possible that the stages in other theaters, like the Theatre, the Curtain, and the Globe (the outdoor playhouses where we know that Shakespeare’s plays were performed), were different from those at both the Swan and the Rose.

After about 1608 Shakespeare's plays were staged not only at the Globe but also at an indoor or private playhouse in Blackfriars. This theater had been constructed in 1596 by James Burbage in an upper hall of a former Dominican priory or monastic house. Although Henry VIII had dissolved all English monasteries in the 1530s (shortly after he had founded the Church of England), the area remained under church, rather than hostile civic, control. The hall that Burbage had purchased and renovated was a large one in which Parliament had once met. In the private theater that he constructed, the stage, lit by candles, was built across the narrow end of the hall, with boxes flanking it. The rest of the hall offered seating room only. Because there was no provision for standing room, the largest audience it could hold was less than a thousand, or about a quarter of what the Globe could accommodate. Admission to Blackfriars was correspondingly more expensive. Instead of a penny to stand in the yard at the Globe, it cost a minimum of sixpence to get into Blackfriars. The best seats at the Globe (in the Lords' Room in the gallery above and behind the stage) cost sixpence; but the boxes flanking the stage at Blackfriars were half a crown, or five times sixpence. Some spectators who were particularly interested in displaying themselves paid even more to sit on stools on the Blackfriars stage.

Whether in the outdoor or indoor playhouses, the stages of Shakespeare's time were different from ours. They were not separated from the audience by the dropping of a curtain between acts and scenes. Therefore the playwrights of the time had to find other ways of signaling to the audience that one scene (to be imagined as occurring in one location at a given time) had ended and the next (to be imagined at perhaps a different location at a later time) had begun. The customary way used by Shakespeare and many

of his contemporaries was to have everyone on stage exit at the end of one scene and have one or more different characters enter to begin the next. In a few cases, where characters remain onstage from one scene to another, the dialogue or stage action makes the change of location clear, and the characters are generally to be imagined as having moved from one place to another. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo and his friends remain onstage in Act 1 from scene 4 to scene 5, but they are represented as having moved between scenes from the street that leads to Capulet's house into Capulet's house itself. The new location is signaled in part by the appearance onstage of Capulet's servingmen carrying table napkins, something they would not take into the streets. Playwrights had to be quite resourceful in the use of hand properties, like the napkin, or in the use of dialogue to specify where the action was taking place in their plays because, in contrast to most of today's theaters, the playhouses of Shakespeare's time did not fill the stage with scenery to make the setting precise. A consequence of this difference was that the playwrights of Shakespeare's time did not have to specify exactly where the action of their plays was set when they did not choose to do so, and much of the action of their plays is tied to no specific place.

Usually Shakespeare's stage is referred to as a "bare stage," to distinguish it from the stages of the last two or three centuries with their elaborate sets. But the stage in Shakespeare's time was not completely bare. Philip Henslowe, owner of the Rose, lists in his inventory of stage properties a rock, three tombs, and two mossy banks. Stage directions in plays of the time also call for such things as thrones (or "states"), banquets (presumably tables with plaster replicas of food on them), and beds and tombs to be

pushed onto the stage. Thus the stage often held more than the actors.

The actors did not limit their performing to the stage alone. Occasionally they went beneath the stage, as the Ghost appears to do in the first act of *Hamlet*. From there they could emerge onto the stage through a trapdoor. They could retire behind the hangings across the back of the stage, as, for example, the actor playing Polonius does when he hides behind the arras. Sometimes the hangings could be drawn back during a performance to “discover” one or more actors behind them. When performance required that an actor appear “above,” as when Juliet is imagined to stand at the window of her chamber in the famous and misnamed “balcony scene,” then the actor probably climbed the stairs to the gallery over the back of the stage and temporarily shared it with some of the spectators. The stage was also provided with ropes and winches so that actors could descend from, and reascend to, the “heavens.”

Perhaps the greatest difference between dramatic performances in Shakespeare’s time and ours was that in Shakespeare’s England the roles of women were played by boys. (Some of these boys grew up to take male roles in their maturity.) There were no women in the acting companies. It was not so in Europe, and had not always been so in the history of the English stage. There are records of women on English stages in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two hundred years before Shakespeare’s plays were performed. After the accession of James I in 1603, the queen of England and her ladies took part in entertainments at court called masques, and with the reopening of the theaters in 1660 at the restoration of Charles II, women again took their place on the public stage.

The chief competitors of such acting companies as the one to which Shakespeare belonged and for which he wrote were companies of exclusively boy actors. The competition was most intense in the early 1600s. There were then two principal children's companies: the Children of Paul's (the choirboys from St. Paul's Cathedral, whose private playhouse was near the cathedral); and the Children of the Chapel Royal (the choirboys from the monarch's private chapel, who performed at the Blackfriars theater built by Burbage in 1596). In *Hamlet* Shakespeare writes of "an aerie [nest] of children, little eyases [hawks], that cry out on the top of question and are most tyrannically clapped for 't. These are now the fashion and . . . berattle the common stages [attack the public theaters]." In the long run, the adult actors prevailed. The Children of Paul's dissolved around 1606. By about 1608 the Children of the Chapel Royal had been forced to stop playing at the Blackfriars theater, which was then taken over by the King's Men, Shakespeare's own troupe.

Acting companies and theaters of Shakespeare's time seem to have been organized in various ways. For example, with the building of the Globe, Shakespeare's company apparently managed itself, with the principal actors, Shakespeare among them, having the status of "sharers" and the right to a share in the takings, as well as the responsibility for a part of the expenses. Five of the sharers, including Shakespeare, owned the Globe. As actor, as sharer in an acting company and in ownership of theaters, and as playwright, Shakespeare was about as involved in the theatrical industry as one could imagine. Although Shakespeare and his fellows prospered, their status under the law was conditional upon the protection of powerful patrons. "Common players"—those who did not have

patrons or masters—were classed in the language of the law with “vagabonds and sturdy beggars.” So the actors had to secure for themselves the official rank of servants of patrons. Among the patrons under whose protection Shakespeare’s company worked were the lord chamberlain and, after the accession of King James in 1603, the king himself.

In the early 1990s we began to learn a great deal more about the theaters in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries performed—or, at least, began to open up new questions about them. At that time about 70 percent of the Rose had been excavated, as had about 10 percent of the second Globe, the one built in 1614. Excavation was halted at that point, but London has come to value the sites of its early playhouses, and takes what opportunities it can to explore them more deeply, both on the Bankside and in Shoreditch. Information about the playhouses of Shakespeare’s London is therefore a constantly changing resource.

The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays

Eighteen of Shakespeare's plays found their way into print during the playwright's lifetime, but there is nothing to suggest that he took any interest in their publication. These eighteen appeared separately in editions in quarto or, in the case of *Henry VI, Part 3*, octavo format. The quarto pages are not much larger than a modern mass-market paperback book, and the octavo pages are even smaller; these little books were sold unbound for a few pence. The earliest of the quartos that still survive were printed in 1594, the year that both *Titus Andronicus* and a version of the play now called *Henry VI, Part 2* became available. While almost every one of these early quartos displays on its title page the name of the acting company that performed the play, only about half provide the name of the playwright, Shakespeare. The first quarto edition to bear the name Shakespeare on its title page is *Love's Labor's Lost* of 1598. A few of the quartos were popular with the book-buying public of Shakespeare's lifetime; for example, quarto *Richard II* went through five editions between 1597 and 1615. But most of the quartos were far from best sellers; *Love's Labor's Lost* (1598), for instance, was not reprinted in quarto until 1631. After Shakespeare's death, two more of his plays appeared in quarto format: *Othello* in 1622 and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, coauthored with John Fletcher, in 1634.

In 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* was published. This printing offered readers in a single book thirty-six of the thirty-eight plays now thought to have been

written by Shakespeare, including eighteen that had never been printed before. And it offered them in a style that was then reserved for serious literature and scholarship. The plays were arranged in double columns on pages nearly a foot high. This large page size is called “folio,” as opposed to the smaller “quarto,” and the 1623 volume is usually called the Shakespeare First Folio. It is reputed to have sold for the lordly price of a pound. (One copy at the Folger Shakespeare Library is marked fifteen shillings—that is, three-quarters of a pound.)

In a preface to the First Folio entitled “To the great Variety of Readers,” two of Shakespeare’s former fellow actors in the King’s Men, John Heminge and Henry Condell, wrote that they themselves had collected their dead companion’s plays. They suggested that they had seen his own papers: “we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.” The title page of the Folio declared that the plays within it had been printed “according to the True Original Copies.” Comparing the Folio to the quartos, Heminge and Condell disparaged the quartos, advising their readers that “before you were abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors.” Many Shakespeareans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries believed Heminge and Condell and regarded the Folio plays as superior to anything in the quartos.

Once we begin to examine the Folio plays in detail, it becomes less easy to take at face value the word of Heminge and Condell about the superiority of the Folio texts. For example, of the first nine plays in the Folio (one-quarter of the entire collection), four were essentially reprinted from earlier quarto printings that Heminge and Condell had disparaged, and four have now been identified as printed

from copies written in the hand of a professional scribe of the 1620s named Ralph Crane; the ninth, *The Comedy of Errors*, was apparently also printed from a manuscript, but one whose origin cannot be readily identified. Evidently, then, eight of the first nine plays in the First Folio were not printed, in spite of what the Folio title page announces, “according to the True Originall Copies,” or Shakespeare’s own papers, and the source of the ninth is unknown. Since today’s editors have been forced to treat Heminge and Condell’s pronouncements with skepticism, they must choose whether to base their own editions upon quartos or the Folio on grounds other than Heminge and Condell’s story of where the quarto and Folio versions originated.

Editors have often fashioned their own narratives to explain what lies behind the quartos and Folio. They have said that Heminge and Condell meant to criticize only a few of the early quartos, the ones that offer much shorter and sometimes quite different, often garbled, versions of plays. Among the examples of these are the 1600 quarto of *Henry V* (the Folio offers a much fuller version) or the 1603 *Hamlet* quarto. (In 1604 a different, much longer form of the play got into print as a quarto.) Early twentieth-century editors speculated that these questionable texts were produced when someone in the audience took notes from the plays’ dialogue during performances and then employed “hack poets” to fill out the notes. The poor results were then sold to a publisher and presented in print as Shakespeare’s plays. More recently this story has given way to another in which the shorter versions are said to be re-creations from memory of Shakespeare’s plays by actors who wanted to stage them in the provinces but lacked manuscript copies. Most of the quartos offer much better texts than these so-called bad quartos. Indeed, in most of the quartos we find texts that are

at least equal to or better than what is printed in the Folio. Many Shakespeare enthusiasts persuaded themselves that most of the quartos were set into type directly from Shakespeare's own papers, although there is nothing on which to base this conclusion except the desire for it to be true. Thus speculation continues about how the Shakespeare plays got to be printed. All that we have are the printed texts.

The book collector who was most successful in bringing together copies of the quartos and the First Folio was Henry Clay Folger, founder of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. While it is estimated that there survive around the world only about 230 copies of the First Folio, Mr. Folger was able to acquire more than seventy-five copies, as well as a large number of fragments, for the library that bears his name. He also amassed a substantial number of quartos. For example, only fourteen copies of the First Quarto of *Love's Labor's Lost* are known to exist, and three are at the Folger Shakespeare Library. As a consequence of Mr. Folger's labors, scholars visiting the Folger Shakespeare Library have been able to learn a great deal about sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printing and, particularly, about the printing of Shakespeare's plays. And Mr. Folger did not stop at the First Folio, but collected many copies of later editions of Shakespeare, beginning with the Second Folio (1632), the Third (1663–64), and the Fourth (1685). Each of these later folios was based on its immediate predecessor and was edited anonymously. The first editor of Shakespeare whose name we know was Nicholas Rowe, whose first edition came out in 1709. Mr. Folger collected this edition and many, many more by Rowe's successors, and the collecting and scholarship continue.

An Introduction to This Text

The play we call *Othello* was printed in two different versions in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. In 1622 appeared *The Tragœdy of Othello, The Moore of Venice. As it hath beene diuerse times acted at the Globe, and at the Black-Friers, by his Maiesties Seruants. Written by VVilliam Shakespeare*, a quarto or pocket-size book that provides a somewhat shorter version of the play than the one most readers know. The second version to be printed is found in the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, published in 1623. Titled simply *The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice*, the Folio play has about 160 lines that do not appear in the Quarto. Some of these cluster together in quite extensive passages. The Folio also lacks a scattering of about a dozen lines or part-lines that are to be found in the Quarto. These two versions also differ from each other in their readings of hundreds of words.

Usually twentieth-century editors of Shakespeare made the decision about which version of a play to prefer according to their theories about the origins of the early printed texts. In the case of *Othello*, however, there has emerged no consensus among editors about what kind of manuscripts can be imagined to lie behind the two early printed texts. Therefore almost all recent editors have relied, for the basis of their editions, upon what they regard as the more accurate text, namely, the Folio's. (Following a recent fashion in Shakespeare editing, some editors have speculated that there were once two distinct Shakespearean versions of the play. According to this view, the Quarto

offers Shakespeare's unrevised version, the Folio his revised version. Since these editors are led by their hypothesis to prefer the Folio, their speculations have made little difference to the kind of editions they have produced.)

For the present edition we have reexamined these early printed texts. This edition is based directly on the Folio printing of *Othello* rather than on any modern edition.¹ But our text offers an *edition* of the Folio because it prints such Quarto readings and such later editorial emendations as are, in our judgment, necessary to repair what may be errors and deficiencies in the Folio. The present edition also offers its readers the lines and part-lines and many of the words that are to be found only in the Quarto, marking them as such (see below).

Quarto words are *added* when their omission would seem to leave a gap in our text. For example, in the first scene of the play, a half-line found in the Quarto, "And in conclusion," seems to have been dropped from the Folio between the lines "Horribly stuffed with epithets of war" and "Nonsuits my mediators"; we have added that needed half-line. We also add Quarto words when they are oaths or interjections ("O God," "Zounds," etc.) that may be missing from the Folio through censorship. When the Folio lacks Quarto words that appear to add nothing of significance, we do not add these words to our text. For example, the Quarto's "O, then" in the line "If she be false, <O, then> heaven mocks itself" ([3.3.319](#)) and the Quarto's "did" in the line "That I <did> love the Moor to live with him" ([1.3.283](#)) seem only to regularize the meter without adding anything of significance. Both of these lines can be read without the Quarto additions as potent iambic pentameter lines. We have therefore chosen not to alter the Folio reading.

Occasionally Quarto readings are *substituted* for Folio words when a word in the Folio is unintelligible (i.e., is not a word) or is incorrect according to the standards of that time for acceptable grammar, rhetoric, idiom, or usage, and the Quarto provides an intelligible and acceptable word. (Examples of such substitutions are the Quarto's "pains" for the Folio's "apines" [1.1.171], Q's "Sometimes" for F's "Sometime" [1.2.4], and Q's "these" for F's "this" in the line "There's no composition in <these> news" [1.3.1].) We recognize that our understanding of what was acceptable in Shakespeare's time is to some extent inevitably based on reading others' editions of *Othello*, but it is also based on reading other writing from the period and on historical dictionaries and studies of Shakespeare's grammar.

We also prefer the Quarto reading to the Folio's when a word in the Folio seems to be the result of censorship or "damping down" of an oath or solemn interjection, and the Quarto provides a stronger oath or interjection (for example, when the Quarto reads "God" in place of the Folio's "Heaven" or Q reads "By the Mass" in place of F's "in troth"). And, finally, we print a word from the Quarto rather than the Folio when a word in the Folio seems at odds with the story that the play tells and the Quarto supplies a word that coheres with the story. (For example, the Folio has Othello report that Desdemona gave him "a world of kisses" before he had declared his love and they had discussed marriage, while the Quarto has him refer to a "world of sighs" [1.3.183]. Like almost all modern editions, we here adopt the Quarto reading.)

In order to enable its readers to tell the difference between the Folio and Quarto versions, the present edition uses a variety of signals:

(1) All the words in this edition that are printed in the Quarto version but not in the Folio appear in pointed brackets (< >).

(2) All full lines that are found in the Folio and not in the Quarto are printed in square brackets ([]).

(3) Sometimes neither the Folio nor the Quarto seems to offer a satisfactory reading, and it is necessary to print a word different from what is offered by either. Such words (called “emendations” by editors) are printed within half-brackets (⌈ ⌋).

By observing these signals and by referring to the textual notes printed after the play, a reader can use this edition to read the play as it was printed in the Folio, or as it was printed in the Quarto, or as it has been presented in the editorial tradition, which has combined Folio and Quarto. (This tradition can be traced back, ultimately, to the anonymous editor of the Second Quarto of 1630.)

In this edition whenever we change the wording of the Folio or add anything to its stage directions, we mark the change. We want our readers to be immediately aware when we have intervened. (Only when we correct an obvious typographical error in the Quarto or Folio does the change not get marked.) Whenever we change the wording of the Folio or Quarto, or change the punctuation so as to affect meaning, we list the change in the textual notes at the back of the book. Those who wish to find the Quarto’s alternatives to the Folio’s readings will be able to find these also in the textual notes.

For the convenience of the reader, we have modernized the punctuation and the spelling of both the Folio and the Quarto. Sometimes we go so far as to modernize certain old forms of words; for example, when *a* means “he,” we change it to *he*; we change *mo* to *more* and *ye* to *you*. But it is not

our practice in editing any of the plays to modernize words that sound distinctly different from modern forms. For example, when the early printed texts read *sith* or *apricocks* or *porpentine*, we have not modernized to *since*, *apricots*, *porcupine*. When the forms *an*, *and*, or *and if* appear instead of the modern form *if*, we have reduced *and* to *an* but have not changed any of these forms to their modern equivalent, *if*. We also modernize *and*, where necessary, correct passages in foreign languages, unless an error in the early printed text can be reasonably explained as a joke.

We correct or regularize a number of the proper names, as is the usual practice in editions of the play. For example, the Folio's spelling "Rodorigo" is changed to "Roderigo," and there are a number of other comparable adjustments in the names. We expand the often severely abbreviated forms of names used as speech headings in early printed texts into the full names of the characters. We also regularize the speakers' names in speech headings, using only a single designation for each character, even though the early printed texts sometimes use a variety of designations. Variations in the speech headings of the early printed texts are recorded in the textual notes.

This edition differs from many earlier ones in its efforts to aid the reader in imagining the play as a performance. Thus stage directions are written with reference to the stage. For example, the stage direction for Brabantio's first entrance is based on the Folio, "*Enter Brabantio above*" rather than on the Quarto, "*Enter Brabantio at a window*." While in the fiction of the play we are no doubt to imagine the old man appearing at a window in the upper story of his house, there is little evidence that there were windows in the gallery of early seventeenth-century theaters. We print the stage direction more likely to have reference to the stage rather

than to the story. Whenever it is reasonably certain, in our view, that a speech is accompanied by a particular action, we provide a stage direction describing the action. (Occasional exceptions to this rule occur when the action is so obvious that to add a stage direction would insult the reader.) Stage directions for the entrance of characters in mid-scene are, with rare exceptions, placed so that they immediately precede the characters' participation in the scene, even though these entrances may appear somewhat earlier in the early printed texts. Whenever we move a stage direction, we record this change in the textual notes. Latin stage directions (e.g., *Exeunt*) are translated into English (e.g., *They exit*).

In the present edition, as well, we mark with a dash any change of address within a speech, unless a stage direction intervenes. When the *-ed* ending of a word is to be pronounced, we mark it with an accent. Like editors for the past two centuries, we print metrically linked lines in the following way:

IAGO

Are your doors locked?

BRABANTIO

Why, wherefore ask you this?

However, when there are a number of short verse-lines that can be linked in more than one way, we do not, with rare exceptions, indent any of them.

The Explanatory Notes

The notes that appear in the [commentary](#) linked to the text are designed to provide readers with the help they may need to enjoy the play. Whenever the meaning of a word in the


text is not readily accessible in a good contemporary dictionary, we offer the meaning in a note. Sometimes we provide a note even when the relevant meaning is to be found in the dictionary but when the word has acquired since Shakespeare's time other potentially confusing meanings. In our notes, we try to offer modern synonyms for Shakespeare's words. We also try to indicate to the reader the connection between the word in the play and the modern synonym. For example, Shakespeare sometimes uses the word *head* to mean "source," but, for modern readers, there may be no connection evident between these two words. We provide the connection by explaining Shakespeare's usage as follows: "**head:** fountainhead, source." On some occasions, a whole phrase or clause needs explanation. Then we rephrase in our own words the difficult passage, and add at the end synonyms for individual words in the passage. When scholars have been unable to determine the meaning of a word or phrase, we acknowledge the uncertainty. Unless otherwise noted, biblical quotations are from the Geneva Bible (1560), with spelling and punctuation modernized.

I. We have also consulted the computerized text of the First Folio provided by the Text Archive of the Oxford University Computing Centre, to which we are grateful.

The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

The Names of the Actors.

(: * * :)

 Thello, *the Moore.*
Brabantio, *Father to Desdemona.*
Cassio, *an Honourable Lieutenant.*
Iago, *a Villaine.*
Rodorigo, *a gull'd Gentleman.*
Duke of Venice.
Senators.
Montano, *Governour of Cyprus.*
Gentlemen of Cyprus.
Lodouico, *and Gratiano, two Noble Venetians.*
Saylors.
Clowne.

Desdemona, *wife to Othello.*
Æmilia, *wife to Iago.*
Bianca, *a Curtezan.*

Othello cast of characters in the 1623 First Folio.

From the Folger Shakespeare Library Collection.

Characters in the Play

OTHELLO, a Moorish general in the Venetian army

DESDEMONA, a Venetian lady

BRABANTIO, a Venetian senator, father to Desdemona

IAGO, Othello's standard-bearer, or "ancient"

EMILIA, Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant

CASSIO, Othello's second-in-command, or lieutenant

RODERIGO, a Venetian gentleman

Duke of Venice

LODOVICO

GRATIANO

] *Venetian gentlemen, kinsmen to Brabantio*

Venetian senators

MONTANO, an official in Cyprus

BIANCA, Cassio's mistress

CLOWN, a comic servant to Othello and Desdemona

Gentlemen of Cyprus

Sailors

Servants, Attendants, Officers, Messengers, Herald,
Musicians, Torchbearers.



The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

ACT 1



ACT 1

Scene 1

Enter Roderigo and Iago.

RODERIGO

⟨Tush,⟩ never tell me! I take it much unkindly 1
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse 2
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this. 3

IAGO ⟨'Sblood,⟩ but you'll not hear me! 4
If ever I did dream of such a matter, 5
Abhor me. 6

RODERIGO

Thou toldst me thou didst hold him in thy hate. 7

IAGO Despise me 8

If I do not. Three great ones of the city, 9
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant, 10
Off-capped to him; and, by the faith of man, 11
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place. 12
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes, 13
Evades them with a bombast circumstance, 14
Horribly stuffed with epithets of war, 15
⟨And in conclusion,⟩ 16
Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he, 17
"I have already chose my officer." 18
And what was he? 19
Forsooth, a great arithmetician, 20
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine, 21
A fellow almost damned in a fair wife, 22
That never set a squadron in the field, 23

Nor the <u>division of a battle</u> knows	24
More than a <u>spinster</u> — <u>unless</u> the bookish <u>theoric</u> ,	25
Wherein the <u>⟨togèd⟩ consuls</u> can <u>propose</u>	26
As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice	27
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, <u>had th' election</u> ;	28
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof	29
At <u>Rhodes, at Cyprus</u> , and on ⟨other⟩ grounds	30
Christened and heathen, must be <u>beleed and</u>	31
<u>calmed</u>	32
<u>By debtor and creditor</u> . This <u>countercaster</u> ,	33
He, <u>in good time</u> , must his lieutenant be,	34
And I, <u>⟨God⟩ bless the mark, his Moorship's ancient</u> .	35
RODERIGO	
By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.	36
IAGO	
Why, there's no remedy. 'Tis the curse of <u>service</u> .	37
Preferment goes by letter and <u>affection</u> ,	38
And not by <u>old gradation, where each second</u>	39
<u>Stood heir to th' first</u> . Now, sir, be judge yourself	40
Whether I in any just term am <u>affined</u>	41
To love the Moor.	42
RODERIGO	
I would not follow him, then.	43
IAGO	O, sir, content you.
I follow him to <u>serve my turn upon him</u> .	45
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters	46
Cannot be truly followed. You shall <u>mark</u>	47
Many a duteous and <u>knee-crooking knave</u>	48
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,	49
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,	50
For naught but provender, and when he's old,	51
cashiered.	52
<u>Whip me</u> such honest knaves! Others there are	53
Who, <u>trimmed in forms and visages of duty</u> ,	54
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,	55

And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,	56
Do well thrive by them; and when they have <u>lined</u>	57
<u>their coats</u> ,	58
<u>Do themselves homage</u> . These fellows have some	59
soul,	60
And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,	61
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,	62
Were I the Moor I would not be Iago.	63
In following him, <u>I follow but myself</u> .	64
Heaven is my judge, <u>not I for love and duty</u> ,	65
<u>But seeming so</u> for my <u>peculiar end</u> .	66
For when my outward action doth demonstrate	67
The <u>native act and figure</u> of my heart	68
In <u>complement extern</u> , 'tis not long after	69
<u>But</u> I will wear my heart upon my sleeve	70
For <u>daws</u> to peck at. <u>I am not what I am</u> .	71
RODERIGO	
What a <full> fortune does the < <u>thick-lips</u> > <u>owe</u>	72
If he can <u>carry 't</u> !	73
IAGO <u>Call up</u> her father.	74
Rouse him. <u>Make after him</u> , poison his delight,	75
<u>Proclaim him</u> in the streets; incense her kinsmen,	76
And, <u>though he in a fertile climate dwell</u> ,	77
<u>Plague him with flies</u> . Though that his joy be joy,	78
Yet throw such <u>chances</u> of vexation on 't	79
<u>As it may lose some color</u> .	80
RODERIGO	
Here is her father's house. I'll call aloud.	81
IAGO	
Do, with <u>like timorous accent</u> and dire yell	82
As when, <u>by night and negligence</u> , the fire	83
Is spied in populous cities.	84
RODERIGO	
What ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!	85
IAGO	

Awake! What ho, Brabantio! Thieves, thieves!	86
Look to your house, your daughter, and your <u>bags</u> !	87
Thieves, thieves!	88
<i>「Enter Brabantio,」 <u>above</u>.</i>	
BRABANTIO	
What is the reason <u>of</u> this <u>terrible</u> summons?	89
What is the matter there?	90
RODERIGO	
Signior, is all your family within?	91
IAGO	
Are your doors locked?	92
BRABANTIO	Why, <u>wherefore ask you</u> this?
IAGO	
⟨ <u>Zounds</u> ,⟩ sir, you're robbed. For shame, put on your	94
<u>gown</u> !	95
Your heart is burst. You have lost half your soul.	96
Even now, now, <u>very now</u> , an old black ram	97
Is <u>tupping</u> your white ewe. Arise, arise!	98
Awake the <u>snorting</u> citizens with the bell,	99
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.	100
Arise, I say!	101
BRABANTIO	What, have you lost your wits?
RODERIGO	
Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?	103
BRABANTIO	Not I. What are you?
RODERIGO	
My name is Roderigo.	105
BRABANTIO	The worser welcome.
I have <u>charged</u> thee not to haunt about my doors.	107
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say	108
My daughter is not for thee. And now in madness,	109
Being full of supper and <u>distemp'ring</u> draughts,	110
<u>Upon</u> malicious ⟨ <u>bravery</u> ⟩ dost thou come	111
To <u>start my quiet</u> .	112

RODERIGO	Sir, sir, sir—	113
BRABANTIO	But thou must needs be sure	114
	My ⟨spirit⟩ and my <u>place</u> have in ⟨them⟩ power	115
	To make this bitter to thee.	116
RODERIGO		
	Patience, good sir.	117
BRABANTIO	What tell'st thou me of robbing?	118
	This is Venice. My house is not a <u>grange</u> .	119
RODERIGO	Most grave Brabantio,	120
	In <u>simple</u> and pure soul I come to you—	121
IAGO	⟨Zounds,⟩ sir, you are one of those that will not	122
	serve God if the devil bid you. Because we come to	123
	do you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll	124
	<u>have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse,</u>	125
	you'll have your <u>nephews</u> neigh to you, you'll have	126
	<u>coursers</u> for <u>cousins and jennets for Germans.</u>	127
BRABANTIO	What <u>profane</u> wretch art thou?	128
IAGO	I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daugh-	129
	ter and the Moor are ⟨now⟩ making the beast with	130
	two backs.	131
BRABANTIO	Thou art a villain.	132
IAGO	You are a senator.	133
BRABANTIO		
	This thou shalt <u>answer</u> . I know thee, Roderigo.	134
RODERIGO		
	Sir, I will answer anything. But I beseech you,	135
	[If 't be your pleasure and most wise consent—	136
	As partly I find it is—that your fair daughter,	137
	At this <u>odd-even and dull watch o' th' night,</u>	138
	Transported with no worse nor better guard	139
	<u>But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,</u>	140
	To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor:	141
	If this be known to you, and <u>your allowance,</u>	142
	We then have done you bold and <u>saucy</u> wrongs.	143
	But if you know not this, my <u>manners</u> tell me	144

We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe	145
That <u>from</u> the sense of all civility	146
I thus would play and trifle with your Reverence.	147
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,	148
I say again, hath made a <u>gross</u> revolt,	149
Tying her duty, beauty, <u>wit</u> , and fortunes	150
<u>In</u> an <u>extravagant and wheeling</u> stranger	151
Of here and everywhere. <u>Straight satisfy yourself.</u>]	152
If she be in her chamber or your house,	153
Let loose on me the justice of the state	154
For thus deluding you.	155
BRABANTIO <u>Strike on the tinder</u> , ho!	156
Give me a <u>taper</u> . Call up all my people.	157
This <u>accident</u> is not unlike my dream.	158
Belief of it oppresses me already.	159
Light, I say, light!	160
<i>He exits.</i>	
IAGO, 「to Roderigo」 Farewell, for I must leave you.	161
It seems <u>not meet nor wholesome to my place</u>	162
To be <u>producted</u> , as if I stay I shall,	163
Against the Moor. For I do know the state,	164
However this may <u>gall</u> him with some <u>check</u> ,	165
Cannot with safety <u>cast</u> him, for he's <u>embarked</u>	166
<u>With such loud reason to</u> the Cyprus wars,	167
Which even now <u>stands in act</u> , that, <u>for their souls</u> ,	168
Another <u>of his fathom</u> they have none	169
To lead their business. In which regard,	170
Though I do hate him as I do hell <pains,>	171
Yet, for necessity of present <u>life</u> ,	172
I must show out a flag and sign of love—	173
Which is indeed but sign. <u>That</u> you shall surely find	174
him,	175
Lead to the <u>Sagittary</u> the raised <u>search</u> ,	176

And there will I be with him. So, farewell. 177

He exits.

Enter Brabantio (in his nightgown), with Servants and Torches.

BRABANTIO

It is too true an evil. Gone she is, 178

And what's to come of my despisèd time 179

Is naught but bitterness.—Now, Roderigo, 180

Where didst thou see her?—O, unhappy girl!— 181

With the Moor, sayst thou?—Who would be a 182

father?— 183

How didst thou know 'twas she?—O, she deceives 184

me 185

Past thought!—What said she to you?—Get more 186

tapers. 187

Raise all my kindred.—Are they married, think 188

you? 189

RODERIGO Truly, I think they are. 190

BRABANTIO

O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood! 191

Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds 192

By what you see them act.—Is there not charms 193

By which the property of youth and maidhood 194

May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo, 195

Of some such thing? 196

RODERIGO Yes, sir, I have indeed. 197

BRABANTIO

Call up my brother.—O, would you had had her!— 198

Some one way, some another.—Do you know 199

Where we may apprehend her and the Moor? 200

RODERIGO

I think I can discover him, if you please 201

To get good guard and go along with me. 202

BRABANTIO

Pray you lead on. At every house I'll call. 203

I may command at most.—Get weapons, ho! 204
And raise some special officers of <night>.— 205
On, good Roderigo. I will deserve your pains. 206

They exit.

Scene 2

Enter Othello, Iago, Attendants, with Torches.

IAGO

Though in the trade of war I have slain men, 1
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' th' conscience 2
To do no contrived murder. I lack iniquity 3
<Sometimes> to do me service. Nine or ten times 4
I had thought t' have yerked him here under the 5
ribs. 6

OTHELLO

'Tis better as it is. 7

IAGO Nay, but he prated 8

And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms 9
Against your Honor, 10
That with the little godliness I have 11
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray you, sir, 12
Are you fast married? Be assured of this, 13
That the magnifico is much beloved, 14
And hath in his effect a voice potential 15
As double as the Duke's. He will divorce you 16
Or put upon you what restraint or grievance 17
The law (with all his might to enforce it on) 18
Will give him cable. 19

OTHELLO Let him do his spite. 20

My services which I have done the signiory 21
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know 22
(Which, when I know that boasting is an honor, 23
I shall promulgate) I fetch my life and being 24

From men of royal <u>siege</u> , and <u>my demerits</u>	25
<u>May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune</u>	26
<u>As this that I have reached</u> . For know, Iago,	27
<u>But</u> that I love the gentle Desdemona,	28
I would not my <u>unhousèd</u> free condition	29
Put into <u>circumscription and confine</u>	30
For the <u>sea's worth</u> . But look, what lights come	31
yond?	32
IAGO	
Those are the <u>raisèd</u> father and his friends.	33
You were best go in.	34
OTHELLO Not I. I must be found.	35
My <u>parts</u> , my title, and my <u>perfect</u> soul	36
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?	37
IAGO By <u>Janus</u> , I think no.	38
<i>Enter Cassio, with <Officers, and> <u>Torches</u>.</i>	
OTHELLO	
The servants of the <Duke> and my lieutenant!	39
The goodness of the night upon you, friends.	40
What is the news?	41
CASSIO The Duke does greet you, general,	42
And he requires your <u>haste-post-haste</u> appearance,	43
Even <u>on the instant</u> .	44
OTHELLO What is the matter, think you?	45
CASSIO	
Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.	46
It is a business of some <u>heat</u> . The galleys	47
Have sent a dozen <u>sequent</u> messengers	48
This very night at one another's heels,	49
And many of the <u>Consuls</u> , raised and met,	50
Are at the Duke's already. You have been <u>hotly</u>	51
called for.	52
When, being not at your lodging to be found,	53
The Senate hath <u>sent about</u> three <u>several</u> quests	54

	To search you out.	55
OTHELLO	'Tis well I am found by you.	56
	I will but spend a word here in the house	57
	And go with you.	58
	<i>「He exits.」</i>	
CASSIO	Ancient, <u>what makes he</u> here?	59
IAGO		
	Faith, he tonight hath <u>boarded</u> a land <u>carrack</u> .	60
	If it prove lawful <u>prize</u> , he's made forever.	61
CASSIO	I do not understand.	62
IAGO	He's married.	63
CASSIO	To who?	64
IAGO	<u>Marry</u> , to—	65
	<i>「Reenter Othello.」</i>	
	Come, captain, will you go?	66
OTHELLO	<u>Have with you</u> .	67
CASSIO		
	Here comes another troop to seek for you.	68
	<i>Enter Brabantio, Roderigo, with Officers, and Torches.</i>	
IAGO		
	It is Brabantio. General, be <u>advised</u> ,	69
	He comes <u>to</u> bad intent.	70
OTHELLO	Holla, <u>stand</u> there!	71
	Signior, it is the Moor.	72
BRABANTIO	Down with him,	73
	thief!	74
	<i>「They draw their swords.」</i>	
IAGO		
	You, Roderigo! Come, sir, <u>I am for you</u> .	75
OTHELLO		
	<u>Keep up</u> your <u>bright</u> swords, for the dew will rust	76
	them.	77
	Good signior, you shall more command with years	78

Than with your weapons.	79
BRABANTIO	
O, thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my	80
daughter?	81
Damned as thou art, thou hast <u>enchanted</u> her!	82
For I'll <u>refer me</u> to all <u>things of sense</u> ,	83
[If she in chains of magic were not bound,]	84
Whether a maid so <u>tender</u> , <u>fair</u> , and <u>happy</u> ,	85
So opposite to marriage that she shunned	86
The wealthy curlèd <darlings> of our nation,	87
Would ever have, t' incur <u>a general mock</u> ,	88
Run from her <u>guardage</u> to the sooty bosom	89
Of such a thing as thou—to <u>fear</u> , not to delight!	90
[<u>Judge me the world</u> , if 'tis not <u>gross in sense</u>	91
That thou hast <u>practiced on her</u> with foul charms,	92
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or <u>minerals</u>	93
That weakens <u>motion</u> . I'll have 't <u>disputed on</u> .	94
'Tis probable, and palpable to thinking.	95
I therefore apprehend and do <u>attach</u> thee]	96
For an abuser of the world, a practicer	97
Of <u>arts inhibited and out of warrant</u> .—	98
Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,	99
Subdue him at his peril.	100
OTHELLO <u>Hold</u> your hands,	101
Both <u>you of my inclining</u> and the rest.	102
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it	103
Without a prompter.— <u>Whither will you</u> that I go	104
To answer this your charge?	105
BRABANTIO To prison, <u>till fit time</u>	106
<u>Of law and course of direct session</u>	107
<u>Call thee to answer</u> .	108
OTHELLO What if <I> do obey?	109
How may the Duke be therewith satisfied,	110
Whose messengers are here about my side,	111

Upon some present business of the state, 112
To bring me to him? 113

OFFICER	'Tis true, most worthy signior.	114
	The Duke's in council, and your noble self	115
	I am sure is sent for.	116

BRABANTIO	How? The Duke in council?	117
	In this time of the night? Bring him away;	118
	Mine's not an idle cause. The Duke himself,	119
	Or any of my brothers of the state,	120
	Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own.	121
	For if such actions may have passage free,	122
	Bondslaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.	123

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Duke, Senators, and Officers.

DUKE, 「*reading a paper*」
 There's no composition in these news
 That gives them credit.

FIRST SENATOR, 「*reading a paper*」
 Indeed, they are disproportioned.
 My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

DUKE
And mine, a hundred forty. 5

SECOND SENATOR, *「reading a paper」*
And mine, two hundred. 6

But though they jump not on a just account 7
(As in these cases, where the aim reports 8
'Tis oft with difference), yet do they all confirm 9
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus. 10

DUKE
Nay, it is possible enough to judgment. 11

I do not so secure me in the error, 12
But the main article I do approve 13
In fearful sense. 14
SAILOR, within What ho, what ho, what ho! 15

Enter Sailor.

OFFICER A messenger from the galleys. 16
DUKE Now, what's the business? 17
SAILOR
The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes. 18
So was I bid report here to the state 19
By Signior Angelo. 20
DUKE
How say you by this change? 21
FIRST SENATOR This cannot be, 22
By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant 23
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider 24
Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk, 25
And let ourselves again but understand 26
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes, 27
So may he with more facile question bear it, 28
[For that it stands not in such warlike brace, 29
But altogether lacks th' abilities 30
That Rhodes is dressed in—if we make thought of 31
this, 32
We must not think the Turk is so unskillful 33
To leave that latest which concerns him first, 34
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain 35
To wake and wage a danger profitless.] 36
DUKE
Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes. 37
OFFICER Here is more news. 38

Enter a Messenger.

MESSENGER

The Ottomites, Reverend and Gracious, 39
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes, 40
Have there injoined them with an after fleet. 41

[FIRST SENATOR
Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?] 42

MESSENGER
Of thirty sail; and now they do restem 43
Their backward course, bearing with frank 44
appearance 45
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano, 46
Your trusty and most valiant servitor, 47
With his free duty recommends you thus, 48
And prays you to believe him. 49

DUKE 'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus. 50
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town? 51

FIRST SENATOR
He's now in Florence. 52

DUKE Write from us to him. 53
Post-post-haste. Dispatch. 54

FIRST SENATOR
Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor. 55

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

DUKE
Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you 56
Against the general enemy Ottoman. 57
「To Brabantio.」 I did not see you. Welcome, gentle 58
signior. 59
We lacked your counsel and your help tonight. 60

BRABANTIO
So did I yours. Good your Grace, pardon me. 61
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business 62
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general 63
care 64
Take hold on me, for my particular grief 65

	Is of so <u>floodgate</u> and o'erbearing nature	66
	That it <u>engluts</u> and swallows other sorrows	67
	And it is still itself.	68
DUKE	Why, what's the matter?	69
BRABANTIO		
	My daughter! O, my daughter!	70
「FIRST SENATOR」	Dead?	71
BRABANTIO	Ay, to me.	72
	She is <u>abused</u> , stol'n from me, and corrupted	73
	By spells and medicines bought of <u>mountebanks</u> ;	74
	For <u>nature so prepost'rously to err—</u>	75
	<u>[Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense—]</u>	76
	<u>Sans witchcraft could not.</u>	77
DUKE		
	Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding	78
	Hath thus <u>beguiled</u> your daughter of herself	79
	And you of her, <u>the bloody book of law</u>	80
	<u>You shall yourself read in the bitter letter,</u>	81
	<u>After your own sense</u> , yea, though our <u>proper</u> son	82
	<u>Stood in your action.</u>	83
BRABANTIO	Humbly I thank your Grace.	84
	Here is the man—this Moor, whom now it seems	85
	Your special mandate for the state affairs	86
	Hath hither brought.	87
ALL	We are very sorry for 't.	88
DUKE, 「to Othello」		
	What, <u>in your own part</u> , can you say to this?	89
BRABANTIO	Nothing, <u>but</u> this is so.	90
OTHELLO		
	Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,	91
	My very noble and <u>approved good</u> masters:	92
	That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,	93
	It is most true; true I have married her.	94
	<u>The very head and front of my offending</u>	95
		96

Hath this extent, no more. <u>Rude</u> am I in my speech, And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace;	97
For since these arms of mine had seven years' <u>pith</u> ,	98
Till <u>now some nine moons wasted</u> , they have used	99
Their <u>dearest</u> action in the <u>tented field</u> ,	100
And little of this great world can I speak	101
More than pertains to feats of <broil> and battle.	102
And therefore little shall I grace my cause	103
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,	104 105
I will a <u>round</u> unvarnished tale deliver	106
Of my whole course of love—what drugs, what charms,	107 108
What conjuration, and what mighty magic	109
(For such proceeding I am charged <u>withal</u>)	110
I won his daughter.	111
BRABANTIO A maiden never bold,	112
Of spirit so still and quiet that <u>her motion</u>	113
<u>Blushed at herself</u> . And she, in spite of nature,	114
Of years, of country, <u>credit</u> , everything,	115
To fall in love with what she feared to look on!	116
It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect	117
That will confess perfection so could err	118
Against all rules of nature, and <u>must be driven</u>	119
To find out <u>practices of cunning hell</u>	120
<u>Why</u> this should be. I therefore vouch again	121
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the <u>blood</u> ,	122
Or with some <u>dram conjured to this effect</u> ,	123
He <u>wrought upon</u> her.	124
<DUKE> To vouch this is no proof	125
Without <u>more wider and more <overt> test</u>	126
Than these <u>thin habits</u> and poor <u>likelihoods</u>	127
Of <u>modern seeming</u> do <u>prefer</u> against him.	128
<FIRST SENATOR> But, Othello, speak:	129

Did you by <u>indirect and forcèd courses</u>	130
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?	131
Or came <u>it</u> by request, and such fair <u>question</u>	132
As soul to soul <u>affordeth</u> ?	133
OTHELLO I do beseech you,	134
Send for the lady to the Sagittary	135
And let her speak of me <u>before</u> her father.	136
If you do find me foul in her report,	137
[The trust, the office I do hold of you,]	138
Not only take away, but let your sentence	139
Even fall upon my life.	140
DUKE Fetch Desdemona hither.	141
OTHELLO	
Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.	142
	<i>「Iago and Attendants exit.」</i>
And <till> she come, as truly as to heaven	143
[I do confess the <u>vices of my blood</u> ,]	144
So <u>justly</u> to your grave ears I'll present	145
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,	146
And she in mine.	147
DUKE Say it, Othello.	148
OTHELLO	
Her father loved me, oft invited me,	149
<u>Still</u> questioned me <u>the story</u> of my life	150
From year to year—the <battles,> sieges, <fortunes>	151
That I have <u>passed</u> .	152
I ran it through, even from my boyish days	153
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,	154
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances:	155
Of <u>moving accidents</u> by flood and field,	156
Of hairbreadth 'scapes i' th' <u>imminent deadly</u>	157
<u>breach</u> ,	158
Of being taken by the insolent foe	159
And sold to slavery, of my <u>redemption</u> thence,	160

And portance in my traveler's history, 161
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle, 162
 Rough quarries, rocks, <and> hills whose <heads> 163
 touch heaven, 164
 It was my hint to speak—such was my process— 165
 And of the cannibals that each <other> eat, 166
 The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads 167
<Do grow> beneath their shoulders. These things to 168
 hear 169
 Would Desdemona seriously incline. 170
 But still the house affairs would draw her <thence,> 171
 Which ever as she could with haste dispatch 172
 She'd come again, and with a greedy ear 173
 Devour up my discourse. Which I, observing, 174
 Took once a pliant hour, and found good means 175
 To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart 176
 That I would all my pilgrimage dilate, 177
 Whereof by parcels she had something heard, 178
 But not <intently.> I did consent, 179
 And often did beguile her of her tears 180
 When I did speak of some distressful stroke 181
 That my youth suffered. My story being done, 182
 She gave me for my pains a world of <sighs.> 183
 She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing 184
 strange, 185
 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful. 186
 She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished 187
 That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked 188
 me, 189
 And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her, 190
 I should but teach him how to tell my story, 191
 And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake. 192
 She loved me for the dangers I had passed, 193
 And I loved her that she did pity them. 194

This only is the witchcraft I have used. 195
Here comes the lady. Let her witness it. 196

Enter Desdemona, Iago, Attendants.

DUKE

I think this tale would win my daughter, too. 197
Good Brabantio, 198
Take up this mangled matter at the best. 199
Men do their broken weapons rather use 200
Than their bare hands. 201

BRABANTIO

I pray you hear her speak. 202

If she confess that she was half the wooer, 203
Destruction on my head if my bad blame 204
Light on the man.—Come hither, gentle mistress. 205
Do you perceive in all this noble company 206
Where most you owe obedience? 207

DESDEMONA

My noble father, 208

I do perceive here a divided duty. 209
To you I am bound for life and education. 210
My life and education both do learn me 211
How to respect you. You are the lord of duty. 212
I am hitherto your daughter. But here's my 213
husband. 214
And so much duty as my mother showed 215
To you, preferring you before her father, 216
So much I challenge that I may profess 217
Due to the Moor my lord. 218

BRABANTIO God be with you! I have done. 219

Please it your Grace, on to the state affairs. 220
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.— 221
Come hither, Moor. 222
I here do give thee that with all my heart 223
[Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart] 224
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel, 225

I am glad at soul I have no other child,	226
<u>For</u> thy <u>escape</u> would teach me tyranny,	227
To hang <u>clogs</u> on them.—I have done, my lord.	228
DUKE	
Let me speak like yourself and <u>lay a sentence</u> ,	229
Which as a <u>grise</u> or step may help these lovers	230
⟨Into your favor.⟩	231
<u>When remedies</u> are past, the griefs are ended	232
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.	233
To mourn a <u>mischief</u> that is past and gone	234
Is the <u>next</u> way to draw new mischief on.	235
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,	236
<u>Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.</u>	237
<u>The robbed</u> that smiles steals something from the	238
thief;	239
He robs himself that <u>spends a bootless grief.</u>	240
BRABANTIO	
So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,	241
We lose it not so long as we can smile.	242
<u>He bears the sentence well that nothing bears</u>	243
<u>But the free comfort which from thence he hears;</u>	244
<u>But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow</u>	245
<u>That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.</u>	246
These sentences to sugar or to <u>gall</u> ,	247
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.	248
But words are words. I never yet did hear	249
That the bruised heart was <u>piercèd</u> through the	250
⟨ear.⟩	251
I humbly beseech you, proceed to th' affairs of	252
state.	253
DUKE The Turk with a most mighty <u>preparation</u> makes	254
for Cyprus. Othello, the <u>fortitude</u> of the place is	255
best known to you. And though we have there a	256
<u>substitute</u> of most <u>allowed</u> sufficiency, yet opinion, a	257
	258

<u>sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you.</u>	259
<u>slubber</u> the gloss of your new fortunes with this more <u>stubborn and boist'rous</u> expedition.	260 261
OTHELLO	
The tyrant <u>custom, most grave senators,</u>	262
<u>Hath made the flinty and steel</u> 「 <u>couch</u> 」 <u>of war</u>	263
<u>My thrice-driven bed of down.</u> I do <u>agnize</u>	264
A natural and prompt alacrity	265
I find in <u>hardness</u> , and do undertake	266
This present <u>wars</u> against the Ottomites.	267
Most humbly, therefore, bending to your <u>state</u> ,	268
I crave <u>fit disposition</u> for my wife,	269
<u>Due reference of place and exhibition,</u>	270
With such accommodation and <u>besort</u>	271
As <u>levels with her breeding.</u>	272
DUKE	
Why, at her father's.	273
BRABANTIO I will not have it so.	274
OTHELLO Nor I.	275
DESDEMONA Nor would I there reside	276
To put my father in impatient thoughts	277
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke,	278
To my <u>unfolding</u> lend your <u>prosperous</u> ear	279
And let me find a <u>charter</u> in your voice	280
T' assist my <u>simpleness.</u>	281
DUKE What <u>would you</u> , Desdemona?	282
DESDEMONA	
That <u>I love</u> the Moor to live with him	283
<u>My downright violence and storm of fortunes</u>	284
May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued	285
Even to the very <u>quality</u> of my lord.	286
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,	287
And to his honors and his valiant <u>parts</u>	288

Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.	289
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,	290
A <u>moth</u> of peace, and he go to the war,	291
 The rites for why I love him are bereft me	292
And I a <u>heavy</u> interim shall <u>support</u>	293
<u>By</u> his dear absence. Let me go with him.	294
OTHELLO Let her have your <u>voice</u> .	295
<u>Vouch</u> with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not	296
To please the palate of my appetite,	297
Nor to comply with <u>heat</u> (the young affects	298
<u>In</u> <u>me</u> defunct) and <u>proper satisfaction</u> ,	299
But to be <u>free and bounteous</u> to her mind.	300
And <u>heaven defend your good souls that you think</u>	301
I will your serious and great business <u>scant</u>	302
⟨ <u>For</u> ⟩ she is with me. No, when light-winged toys	303
Of <u>feathered Cupid seel</u> with <u>wanton</u> dullness	304
My <u>speculative and officed</u> ⟨ <u>instruments</u> ,⟩	305
<u>That</u> my <u>disports</u> corrupt and taint my business,	306
Let housewives make a skillet of my <u>helm</u> ,	307
And all <u>indign</u> and base adversities	308
<u>Make head against my estimation</u> .	309
DUKE	
Be it as you shall privately determine,	310
Either for her stay or going. Th' affair cries haste,	311
And speed must answer it.	312
⟨FIRST⟩ SENATOR You must away tonight.	313
OTHELLO With all my	314
heart.	315
DUKE	
At nine i' th' morning here we'll meet again.	316
Othello, leave some officer behind	317
And he shall our commission bring to you,	318
⟨With⟩ such things else <u>of quality and respect</u>	319
<u>As doth import you</u> .	320

OTHELLO	So please your Grace, my	321
	ancient.	322
	A man he is of <u>honesty</u> and trust.	323
	To his <u>conveyance</u> I assign my wife,	324
	With what else needful your good Grace shall think	325
	To be sent after me.	326
DUKE	Let it be so.	327
	Good night to everyone. 「 <i>To Brabantio.</i> 」 And, noble	328
	signior,	329
	If virtue no <u>delighted</u> beauty lack,	330
	Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.	331
〈FIRST〉 SENATOR		
	Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well.	332
BRABANTIO		
	<u>Look to</u> her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.	333
	She has deceived her father, and may thee.	334
	<i>He exits.</i>	
OTHELLO		
	<u>My life upon her faith!</u>	335
	「 <i>The Duke, the Senators, Cassio, and Officers exit.</i> 」	
	<u>Honest</u> Iago,	336
	My Desdemona must I leave to thee.	337
	I prithee let thy wife attend on her,	338
	And bring them after in the best <u>advantage</u> .—	339
	Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour	340
	Of love, of <u>〈worldly matters,〉 and direction</u>	341
	To spend with thee. We must obey the time.	342
	<i>〈Othello and Desdemona〉 exit.</i>	
RODERIGO	Iago—	343
IAGO	What sayst thou, noble heart?	344
RODERIGO	What will I do, think'st thou?	345
IAGO	Why, go to bed and sleep.	346
RODERIGO	I will <u>incontinently</u> drown myself.	347

IAGO	If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why,	348
	thou silly gentleman!	349
RODERIGO	It is silliness to live, when to live is torment,	350
	and then have we a prescription to die when death is	351
	our physician.	352
IAGO	O, villainous! I have looked upon the world for	353
	four times seven years, and since I could distin-	354
	guish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found	355
	man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say	356
	I would drown myself for the love of a <u>guinea hen</u> , I	357
	would <u>change</u> my humanity with a baboon.	358
RODERIGO	What should I do? I confess it is my shame	359
	to be so <u>fond</u> , but it is not in my <u>virtue</u> to amend it.	360
IAGO	Virtue? A <u>fig</u> ! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or	361
	thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our	362
	wills are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles	363
	or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme,	364
	supply it with one <u>gender</u> of herbs or <u>distract it</u>	365
	<u>with</u> many, either to have it sterile with idleness or	366
	manured with industry, why the power and <u>corrigi-</u>	367
	<u>ble</u> authority of this lies in our wills. If the <u>balance</u>	368
	of our lives had not one scale of reason to <u>poise</u>	369
	another of sensuality, the <u>blood</u> and baseness of our	370
	natures would conduct us to most prepost'rous	371
	conclusions. But we have reason to cool our raging	372
	<u>motions</u> , our <u>carnal stings</u> , <u>our</u> <u>unbitted</u> lusts—	373
	whereof I take this that you call love to be a <u>sect, or</u>	374
	<u>scion</u> .	375
RODERIGO	It cannot be.	376
IAGO	It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission	377
	of the will. Come, be a man! Drown thyself? Drown	378
	cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy	379
	friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving	380
	with cables of perdurable toughness. I could never	381

better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse. 382
 Follow thou the wars; defeat thy favor with an 383
 usurped beard. I say, put money in thy purse. It 384
 cannot be that Desdemona should ⟨long⟩ continue 385
 her love to the Moor—put money in thy purse— 386
 nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement in 387
 her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration 388
 —put but money in thy purse. These Moors are 389
 changeable in their wills. Fill thy purse with money. 390
 The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts 391
 shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. 392
 She must change for youth. When she is sated 393
 with his body she will find the ⟨error⟩ of her choice. 394
 Therefore, put money in thy purse. If thou wilt 395
needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than 396
 drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sancti- 397
mony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian 398
 and ⟨a⟩ supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my 399
 wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her. 400
 Therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! 401
 It is clean out of the way. Seek thou rather to be 402
 hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned 403
 and go without her. 404
 RODERIGO Wilt thou be fast to my hopes if I depend on 405
 the issue? 406
 IAGO Thou art sure of me. Go, make money. I have 407
 told thee often, and I retell thee again and again, I 408
 hate the Moor. My cause is hearted; thine hath no 409
 less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge 410
 against him. If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost 411
 thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many 412
 events in the womb of time which will be delivered. 413
Traverse, go, provide thy money. We will have more 414
 of this tomorrow. Adieu. 415

RODERIGO Where shall we meet i' th' morning? 416
 IAGO At my lodging. 417
 RODERIGO I'll be with thee betimes. 418
 IAGO Go to, farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo? 419
 <RODERIGO What say you? 420
 IAGO No more of drowning, do you hear? 421
 RODERIGO I am changed. 422
 IAGO Go to, farewell. Put money enough in your 423
 purse.> 424
 [RODERIGO I'll sell all my land.] 425

He exits.

IAGO
 Thus do I ever make my fool my purse. 426
 For I mine own gained knowledge should profane 427
 If I would time expend with such <a> snipe 428
 But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor, 429
 And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets 430
 'Has done my office. I know not if 't be true, 431
 But I, for mere suspicion in that kind, 432
 Will do as if for surety. He holds me well. 433
 The better shall my purpose work on him. 434
 Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now: 435
 To get his place and to plume up my will 436
 In double knavery—How? how?—Let's see. 437
 After some time, to abuse Othello's <ear> 438
 That he is too familiar with his wife. 439
He hath a person and a smooth dispose 440
 To be suspected, framed to make women false. 441
 The Moor is of a free and open nature 442
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so, 443
 And will as tenderly be led by th' nose 444
 As asses are. 445
 I have 't. It is engendered. Hell and night 446
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light. 447

⟨*He exits.*⟩



The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

ACT 2



ACT 2

Scene 1

Enter Montano and two Gentlemen.

MONTANO

What from the cape can you discern at sea? 1

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood. 2

I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main 3

Descry a sail. 4

MONTANO

Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land. 5

A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements. 6

If it hath ruffianed so upon the sea, 7

What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them, 8

Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this? 9

SECOND GENTLEMAN

A segregation of the Turkish fleet. 10

For do but stand upon the foaming shore, 11

The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds, 12

The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous 13

mane, 14

Seems to cast water on the burning Bear 15

And quench the guards of th' ever-fixèd pole. 16

I never did like molestation view 17

On the enchafèd flood. 18

MONTANO If that the Turkish fleet 19

Be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned. 20

It is impossible to bear it out. 21

Enter a ⟨third⟩ Gentleman.

THIRD GENTLEMAN News, lads! Our wars are done. 22
The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks 23
That their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice 24
Hath seen a grievous wrack and sufferance 25
On most part of their fleet. 26

MONTANO

How? Is this true? 27

THIRD GENTLEMAN The ship is here put in, 28
A Veronesa. Michael Cassio, 29
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello, 30
Is come on shore; the Moor himself at sea, 31
And is in full commission here for Cyprus. 32

MONTANO

I am glad on 't. 'Tis a worthy governor. 33

THIRD GENTLEMAN

But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort 34
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly 35
And ⟨prays⟩ the Moor be safe, for they were parted 36
With foul and violent tempest. 37

MONTANO Pray ⟨heaven⟩ he be; 38

For I have served him, and the man commands 39
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho! 40
As well to see the vessel that's come in 41
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello, 42
[Even till we make the main and th' aerial blue 43
An indistinct regard.] 44

⟨THIRD⟩ GENTLEMAN Come, let's do so; 45
For every minute is expectancy 46
Of more ⟨arrivance.⟩ 47

Enter Cassio.

CASSIO

Thanks, you the valiant of ⟨this⟩ warlike isle, 48
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens 49

Give him defense against the elements,	50
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.	51
MONTANO Is he well shipped?	52
CASSIO	
His <u>bark</u> is stoutly timbered, and his pilot	53
<u>Of very expert and approved allowance;</u>	54
Therefore <u>my hopes, not surfeited to death,</u>	55
<u>Stand in bold cure.</u>	56
「Voices cry」within. “A sail, a sail, a sail!”	
〈Enter a Messenger.〉	
CASSIO What noise?	57
〈MESSENGER〉	
The town is empty; on the brow o’ th’ sea	58
Stand ranks of people, and they cry “A sail!”	59
CASSIO	
<u>My hopes do shape him for</u> the Governor.	60
	〈A shot.〉
〈SECOND〉 GENTLEMAN	
They do discharge their <u>shot of courtesy.</u>	61
Our friends, at least.	62
CASSIO I pray you, sir, go forth,	63
And give us truth who ’tis that is arrived.	64
〈SECOND〉 GENTLEMAN I shall.	65
	<i>He exits.</i>
MONTANO	
But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?	66
CASSIO	
Most fortunately. He hath <u>achieved</u> a maid	67
That <u>paragons</u> description and wild fame,	68
One that excels the <u>quirks</u> of <u>blazoning pens,</u>	69
And <u>in th’ essential vesture of creation</u>	70
<u>Does tire the 「ingener.」</u>	71
<i>Enter 〈Second〉 Gentleman.</i>	
How now? Who has put in?	72

〈SECOND〉 GENTLEMAN

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the General. 73

CASSIO

'Has had most favorable and happy speed! 74

Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds, 75

The guttered rocks and congregated sands 76

(Traitors ensteeped to 〈clog〉 the guiltless keel), 77

As having sense of beauty, do omit 78

Their mortal natures, letting go safely by 79

The divine Desdemona. 80

MONTANO

What is she? 81

CASSIO

She that I spake of, our great captain's captain, 82

Left in the conduct of the bold Iago, 83

Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts 84

A sennight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard, 85

And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath, 86

That he may bless this bay with his tall ship, 87

Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms, 88

Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits, 89

〈And bring all Cyprus comfort!〉 90

Enter Desdemona, Iago, Roderigo, and Emilia.

O, behold, 91

The riches of the ship is come on shore! 92

You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. 93

「*He kneels.*」

Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven, 94

Before, behind thee, and on every hand 95

Enwheel thee round. 96

「*He rises.*」

DESDEMONA

I thank you, valiant Cassio. 97

What tidings can you tell of my lord? 98

CASSIO

He is not yet arrived, nor know I aught 99

But that he's well and will be shortly here. 100
 DESDEMONA
 O, but I fear—How lost you company? 101
 CASSIO
 The great contention of sea and skies 102
 Parted our fellowship. 103
Within "A sail, a sail!" "A shot." 104
 But hark, a sail!
 〈SECOND〉 GENTLEMAN
 They give 〈their〉 greeting to the citadel. 105
 This likewise is a friend. 106
 CASSIO See for the news. 107
Second Gentleman exits.
 Good ancient, you are welcome. Welcome, mistress. 108
He kisses Emilia.
 Let it not gall your patience, good Iago, 109
 That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding 110
 That gives me this bold show of courtesy. 111
 IAGO
 Sir, would she give you so much of her lips 112
 As of her tongue she oft bestows on me, 113
 You would have enough. 114
 DESDEMONA
 Alas, she has no speech! 115
 IAGO In faith, too much. 116
 I find it still when I have 〈list〉 to sleep. 117
Marry, before your Ladyship, I grant, 118
 She puts her tongue a little in her heart 119
 And chides with thinking. 120
 EMILIA You have little cause to say so. 121
 IAGO Come on, come on! You are pictures out of door, 122
bells in your parlors, wildcats in your kitchens, 123
 saints in your injuries, devils being offended, play- 124
 ers in your huswifery, and huswives in your beds. 125
 DESDEMONA Oh, fie upon thee, slanderer. 126

IAGO
 Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk. 127
 You rise to play, and go to bed to work. 128

EMILIA You shall not write my praise. 129

IAGO No, let me not. 130

DESDEMONA
 What wouldst write of me if thou shouldst praise 131
 me? 132

IAGO
 O, gentle lady, do not put me to 't, 133
 For I am nothing if not critical. 134

DESDEMONA
 Come on, assay.—There's one gone to the harbor? 135

IAGO Ay, madam. 136

DESDEMONA, *「aside」*
 I am not merry, but I do beguile 137
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.— 138
 Come, how wouldst thou praise me? 139

IAGO I am about it, but indeed my invention comes 140
 from my pate as birdlime does from frieze: it 141
 plucks out brains and all. But my muse labors, and 142
 thus she is delivered: 143
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit, 144
The one's for use, the other useth it. 145

DESDEMONA
 Well praised! How if she be black and witty? 146

IAGO
If she be black, and thereto have a wit, 147
She'll find a white that shall her blackness hit. 148

DESDEMONA
 Worse and worse. 149

EMILIA How if fair and foolish? 150

IAGO
She never yet was foolish that was fair, 151
For even her folly helped her to an heir. 152

DESDEMONA These are old fond paradoxes to make 153
fools laugh i' th' alehouse. What miserable praise 154
hast thou for her that's foul and foolish? 155

IAGO
There's none so foul and foolish thereunto, 156
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do. 157

DESDEMONA O heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the 158
worst best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on 159
a deserving woman indeed, one that in the authori- 160
ty of her merit did justly put on the vouch of very 161
malice itself? 162

IAGO
She that was ever fair and never proud, 163
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud, 164
Never lacked gold and yet went never gay, 165
Fled from her wish, and yet said "Now I may," 166
She that being angered, her revenge being nigh, 167
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly, 168
She that in wisdom never was so frail 169
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail, 170
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind, 171
[See suitors following and not look behind,] 172
She was a wight, if ever such <wight> were— 173

DESDEMONA To do what? 174

IAGO
To suckle fools and chronicle small beer. 175

DESDEMONA O, most lame and impotent conclusion! 176
—Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy 177
husband.—How say you, Cassio? Is he not a most 178
profane and liberal counselor? 179

CASSIO He speaks home, madam. You may relish him 180
more in the soldier than in the scholar. 181

[Cassio takes Desdemona's hand.]

IAGO, [aside] He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, 182
whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as 183

great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do. I will	184
<u>['gyve'] thee in thine own courtship.</u> You say true, 'tis	185
so indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of	186
your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not	187
<u>kissed your three fingers</u> so oft, which now again	188
you are most apt to play <u>the sir</u> in. Very good; well	189
kissed; <an> excellent courtesy! 'Tis so, indeed. Yet	190
again your fingers to your lips? Would they were	191
<u><clyster> pipes</u> for your sake!	192
<i><Trumpets within.></i>	
The Moor. I know his trumpet.	193
CASSIO 'Tis truly so.	194
DESDEMONA Let's meet him and receive him.	195
CASSIO Lo, where he comes!	196
<i>Enter Othello and Attendants.</i>	
OTHELLO	
O, my fair warrior!	197
DESDEMONA My dear Othello!	198
OTHELLO	
It gives me wonder great as my content	199
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!	200
If after every tempest come such calms,	201
May the winds blow till they have wakened death,	202
And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas	203
<u>Olympus</u> high, and duck again as low	204
As hell's from heaven! <u>If it were now to die,</u>	205
'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear	206
My soul <u>hath her content so absolute</u>	207
That not another <u>comfort</u> like to this	208
<u>Succeeds</u> in <u>unknown fate.</u>	209
DESDEMONA The heavens forbid	210
But that our loves and comforts should increase	211
Even as our days do grow!	212
OTHELLO Amen to that, sweet powers!	213

I cannot speak enough of this content.	214
It stops me here; it is too much of joy.	215
<i>⟨They kiss.⟩</i>	
And this, and this, the greatest discords be	216
That e'er our hearts shall make!	217
IAGO, <i>「aside」</i> O, you are <u>well tuned</u> now,	218
But I'll <u>set down the pegs that make this music</u> ,	219
<u>As honest as I am.</u>	220
OTHELLO Come. Let us to the castle.—	221
News, friends! Our wars are done. The Turks are	222
drowned.	223
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?—	224
Honey, you shall be <u>well desired</u> in Cyprus.	225
I have found great love amongst them. O, my sweet,	226
I prattle <u>out of fashion</u> , and I dote	227
In mine own comforts.—I prithee, good Iago,	228
Go to the bay and disembark my <u>coffers</u> .	229
Bring thou the <u>master</u> to the citadel.	230
He is a good one, and his worthiness	231
Does <u>challenge</u> much respect.—Come, Desdemona.	232
Once more, well met at Cyprus.	233
<i>「All but Iago and Roderigo」 exit.</i>	
IAGO, <i>「to a departing Attendant」</i> Do thou meet me pres- ently at the harbor. <i>「To Roderigo.」</i> Come <i>⟨hither.⟩</i> If thou be'st valiant—as they say <u>base</u> men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them— <u>list</u> me. The Lieutenant tonight <u>watches</u> on <u>the court of guard</u> . First, I must tell thee this: Desdemona is <u>directly</u> in love with him.	234 235 236 237 238 239 240
RODERIGO With him? Why, 'tis not possible.	241
IAGO Lay thy finger <u>thus</u> , and let thy soul be instructed. <u>Mark me</u> with what violence she first loved the Moor <u>but</u> for bragging and telling her fantastical lies. <i>⟨And will she⟩</i> love him <u>still</u> for <u>prating</u> ? Let not	242 243 244 245

thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed. And 246
 what delight shall she have to look on the devil? 247
 When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, 248
 there should be, again to inflame it and to give 249
 satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favor, sympathy 250
 in years, manners, and beauties, all which the Moor 251
 is defective in. Now, for want of these required 252
conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find it- 253
 self abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and 254
 abhor the Moor. Very nature will instruct her in it 255
 and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, 256
 this granted—as it is a most pregnant and unforced 257
 position—who stands so eminent in the degree of 258
this fortune as Cassio does? A knave very voluble, no 259
 further conscionable than in putting on the mere 260
 form of civil and humane seeming for the better 261
compassing of his salt and most hidden loose 262
 affection. Why, none, why, none! A slipper and 263
 subtle knave, a finder-out of occasions, that has an 264
 eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though 265
 true advantage never present itself; a devilish knave! 266
 Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all 267
 those requisites in him that folly and green minds 268
look after. A pestilent complete knave, and the 269
 woman hath found him already. 270

RODERIGO I cannot believe that in her. She's full of 271
 most blessed condition. 272

IAGO Blessed fig's end! The wine she drinks is made of 273
grapes. If she had been blessed, she would never 274
 have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou 275
 not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst 276
 not mark that? 277

RODERIGO Yes, that I did. But that was but courtesy. 278

IAGO Lechery, by this hand! An index and obscure 279

<u>prologue to the history</u> of lust and foul thoughts.	280
They met so near with their lips that their breaths	281
embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo!	282
When these <u><mutualities></u> so <u>marshal the way</u> , <u>hard</u>	283
<u>at hand</u> comes the <u>master and main exercise</u> , th'	284
<u>incorporate</u> conclusion. <u>Pish!</u> But, sir, be you ruled	285
by me. I have brought you from Venice. <u>Watch you</u>	286
tonight. <u>For the command, I'll lay 't upon you.</u>	287
Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you. Do	288
you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by	289
speaking too loud, or <u>tainting</u> his discipline, or from	290
what other course you please, which the time shall	291
more favorably <u>minister</u> .	292
RODERIGO Well.	293
IAGO Sir, he's rash and very sudden in <u>choler</u> , and	294
<u>haply</u> may strike at you. Provoke him that he may,	295
for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to	296
<u>mutiny, whose qualification shall come into no</u>	297
<u>true taste again but by</u> the <u>displanting</u> of Cassio. So	298
shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by	299
the means I shall then have to <u>prefer</u> them, and the	300
<u>impediment</u> most profitably removed, without the	301
which there were no expectation of our prosperity.	302
RODERIGO I will do this, if you can <u>bring it to any</u>	303
<u>opportunity</u> .	304
IAGO I <u>warrant</u> thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I	305
must fetch <u>his</u> necessaries ashore. Farewell.	306
RODERIGO Adieu.	307
	<i>He exits.</i>
IAGO	
That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.	308
That she loves him, 'tis <u>apt</u> and <u>of great credit</u> .	309
The Moor, <u>howbeit that</u> I endure him not,	310
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,	311

And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona 312
 A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too, 313
 Not out of absolute lust (though peradventure 314
 I stand accountant for as great a sin) 315
 But partly led to diet my revenge 316
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor 317
 Hath leaped into my seat—the thought whereof 318
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards, 319
 And nothing can or shall content my soul 320
 Till I am evened with him, wife for wife, 321
 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor 322
 At least into a jealousy so strong 323
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do, 324
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace 325
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on, 326
 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip, 327
Abuse him to the Moor in the <rank> garb 328
 (For I fear Cassio with my <nightcap> too), 329
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me 330
 For making him egregiously an ass 331
 And practicing upon his peace and quiet 332
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused. 333
 Knavery's plain face is never seen till used. 334

He exits.

Scene 2

Enter Othello's Herald with a proclamation.

HERALD It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant 1
 general, that upon certain tidings now arrived, 2
importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, 3
 every man put himself into triumph: some to 4
 dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what 5

sport and revels his addition leads him. For besides
these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his
nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be pro-
claimed. All offices are open, and there is full
liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till
the bell have told eleven. 〈Heaven〉 bless the isle of
Cyprus and our noble general, Othello!

He exits.

Scene 3

Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Attendants.

OTHELLO

Good Michael, look you to the guard tonight. 1
Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop 2
Not to outsport discretion. 3

CASSIO

Iago hath direction what to do, 4
But notwithstanding, with my personal eye 5
Will I look to 't. 6

OTHELLO Iago is most honest. 7

Michael, goodnight. Tomorrow with your earliest 8
Let me have speech with you. 「To Desdemona.」 Come, 9
my dear love, 10
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue; 11
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.— 12
Goodnight. 13

〈Othello and Desdemona〉 exit, 「with Attendants.」

Enter Iago.

CASSIO

Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch. 14

IAGO Not this hour, lieutenant. 'Tis not yet ten o' th' 15
clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of 16

his Desdemona—who let us not therefore blame; 17
he hath not yet made wanton the night with her, and 18
she is sport for Jove. 19

CASSIO She's a most exquisite lady. 20

IAGO And, I'll warrant her, full of game. 21

CASSIO Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate crea- 22
ture. 23

IAGO What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley 24
to provocation. 25

CASSIO An inviting eye, and yet methinks right mod- 26
est. 27

IAGO And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love? 28

CASSIO She is indeed perfection. 29

IAGO Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieuten- 30
ant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a 31
brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a 32
measure to the health of black Othello. 33

CASSIO Not tonight, good Iago. I have very poor and 34
unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish 35
courtesy would invent some other custom of enter- 36
tainment. 37

IAGO O, they are our friends! But one cup; I'll drink 38
for you. 39

CASSIO I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was 40
craftily qualified too, and behold what innovation it 41
makes here. I am ⟨unfortunate⟩ in the infirmity and 42
dare not task my weakness with any more. 43

IAGO What, man! 'Tis a night of revels. The gallants 44
desire it. 45

CASSIO Where are they? 46

IAGO Here at the door. I pray you, call them in. 47

CASSIO I'll do 't, but it dislikes me. 48

He exits.

IAGO

If I can fasten but one cup upon him	49
With that which he hath drunk tonight already,	50
He'll be as full of quarrel and <u>offense</u>	51
As <u>my young mistress' dog</u> . Now my sick fool	52
Roderigo,	53
Whom love hath turned almost the wrong side out,	54
To Desdemona hath tonight <u>caroused</u>	55
<u>Potations pottle-deep</u> ; and he's to watch.	56
Three <u>else</u> of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits	57
<u>That hold their honors in a wary distance,</u>	58
<u>The very elements of this warlike isle,</u>	59
Have I tonight <u>flustered</u> with flowing cups;	60
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of	61
drunkards	62
Am I <to put> our Cassio in some action	63
That may offend the isle. But here they come.	64
<u>If consequence do but approve my dream,</u>	65
My boat sails freely both with wind and stream.	66
<i>Enter Cassio, Montano, and Gentlemen, 'followed by Servants with wine.'</i>	
CASSIO 'Fore <God,> they have given me a <u>rouse</u> al-	67
ready.	68
MONTANO Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I	69
am a soldier.	70
IAGO Some wine, ho!	71
「Sings.」 <u>And let me the cannikin clink, clink,</u>	72
<u>And let me the cannikin clink.</u>	73
<u>A soldier's a man,</u>	74
<u>O, man's life's but a span,</u>	75
<u>Why, then, let a soldier drink.</u>	76
Some wine, boys!	77
CASSIO 'Fore <God,> an excellent song.	78
IAGO I learned it in England, where indeed they are	79

most potent in <u>potting</u> . <u>Your Dane</u> , your German,	80
and your <u>swag-bellied</u> Hollander—drink, ho!—are	81
nothing to your English.	82
CASSIO Is your ⟨Englishman⟩ so <u>exquisite</u> in his drink-	83
ing?	84
IAGO Why, he <u>drinks you</u> , with facility, your Dane	85
dead drunk. <u>He sweats not to overthrow your Al-</u>	86
<u>main</u> . <u>He gives your Hollander a vomit</u> ere the next	87
pottle can be filled.	88
CASSIO To the health of our general!	89
MONTANO I am for it, lieutenant, and <u>I'll do you</u>	90
<u>justice</u> .	91
IAGO O sweet England!	92
「Sings.」 <u>King Stephen was and-a worthy peer,</u>	93
<u>His breeches cost him but a crown;</u>	94
<u>He held them sixpence all too dear;</u>	95
<u>With that he called the tailor lown.</u>	96
<u>He was a wight of high renown,</u>	97
<u>And thou art but of low degree;</u>	98
<u>'Tis pride that pulls the country down,</u>	99
<u>⟨Then⟩ take thy auld cloak about thee.</u>	100
Some wine, ho!	101
CASSIO ⟨'Fore God,⟩ this is a more exquisite song than	102
the other!	103
IAGO Will you hear 't again?	104
CASSIO No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his <u>place</u>	105
that does those things. Well, ⟨God's⟩ above all; and	106
there be souls must be saved, [and there be souls	107
must not be saved.]	108
IAGO It's true, good lieutenant.	109
CASSIO For mine own part—no offense to the General,	110
nor any man of <u>quality</u> —I hope to be saved.	111
IAGO And so do I too, lieutenant.	112
CASSIO Ay, but, by your leave, not before me. The	113

Lieutenant is to be saved before the Ancient. Let's	114
have no more of this. Let's to our affairs. <God>	115
forgive us our sins! Gentlemen, let's look to our	116
business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This	117
is my ancient, this is my right hand, and this is my	118
left. I am not drunk now. I can stand well enough,	119
and I speak well enough.	120
GENTLEMEN Excellent well.	121
CASSIO Why, very well then. You must not think then	122
that I am drunk.	123
<i>He exits.</i>	
MONTANO	
To th' <u>platform</u> , masters. Come, let's set the watch.	124
	「Gentlemen exit.」
IAGO, 「to Montano」	
You see this fellow that is gone before?	125
He's a soldier fit to stand by Caesar	126
And give direction; and do but see his vice.	127
'Tis to his virtue a <u>just equinox</u> ,	128
The one as long as th' other. 'Tis <u>pity of</u> him.	129
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,	130
<u>On some odd time of his infirmity</u> ,	131
Will shake this island.	132
MONTANO But is he often thus?	133
IAGO	
'Tis evermore <the> prologue to his sleep.	134
He'll <u>watch the horologe a double set</u>	135
<u>If drink rock not his cradle.</u>	136
MONTANO It were well	137
The General were put in mind of it.	138
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature	139
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio	140
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?	141
<i>Enter Roderigo.</i>	

IAGO, 「*aside to Roderigo*」 How now, Roderigo? 142
 I pray you, after the Lieutenant, go. 143
〈*Roderigo exits.*〉

MONTANO
 And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor 144
 Should hazard such a place as his own second 145
 With one of an engrafted infirmity. 146
 It were an honest action to say so 147
 To the Moor. 148

IAGO Not I, for this fair island. 149
 I do love Cassio well and would do much 150
 To cure him of this evil— 151
〈“*Help, help!*” within.〉
 But hark! What noise? 152
Enter Cassio, pursuing Roderigo.

CASSIO 〈Zounds,〉 you rogue, you rascal! 153
 MONTANO What's the matter, lieutenant? 154
 CASSIO A knave teach me my duty? I'll beat the knave 155
 into a twiggen bottle. 156
 RODERIGO Beat me? 157
 CASSIO Dost thou prate, rogue? 158
「*He hits Roderigo.*」

MONTANO Nay, good lieutenant. I pray you, sir, hold 159
 your hand. 160
 CASSIO Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the 161
 mazard. 162
 MONTANO Come, come, you're drunk. 163
 CASSIO Drunk? 164
〈*They fight.*〉

IAGO, 「*aside to Roderigo*」
 Away, I say! Go out and cry a mutiny. 165
「*Roderigo exits.*」
 Nay, good lieutenant.—〈God's will,〉 gentlemen!— 166
 Help, ho! Lieutenant—sir—Montano—〈sir〉— 167

Help, masters!—Here's a <u>goodly</u> watch indeed!	168
	⟨A bell is rung.⟩
Who's that which rings the <u>bell</u> ? <u>Diablo</u> , ho!	169
The town will <u>rise</u> . ⟨God's will,⟩ lieutenant, ⟨ <u>hold</u> !⟩	170
You ⟨will be shamed⟩ forever.	171
<i>Enter Othello and Attendants.</i>	
OTHELLO What is the matter here?	172
MONTANO	⟨Zounds,⟩ I bleed
still.	174
I am hurt to th' death. He dies!	175
	「He attacks Cassio.」
OTHELLO	Hold, for your lives!
IAGO	176
Hold, ho! Lieutenant—sir—Montano—	177
gentlemen—	178
Have you forgot all 「sense of place」 and duty?	179
Hold! The General speaks to you. Hold, for shame!	180
OTHELLO	
Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?	181
Are we turned Turks, and <u>to ourselves do that</u>	182
<u>Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites</u> ?	183
For Christian shame, <u>put by</u> this barbarous brawl!	184
He that stirs next <u>to carve for his own rage</u>	185
<u>Holds his soul light</u> ; he dies upon his motion.	186
Silence that dreadful bell. It frights the isle	187
From her <u>propriety</u> . What is the matter, masters?	188
Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,	189
Speak. Who began this? <u>On thy love, I charge thee</u> .	190
IAGO	
I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,	191
<u>In quarter and in terms</u> like bride and groom	192
Divesting them for bed; and then but now,	193
<u>As if some planet had unwitted men</u> ,	194
Swords out, and <u>tilting one at other's</u> ⟨breast,⟩	195

In opposition bloody. I cannot <u>speak</u>	196
Any beginning to this peevish <u>odds</u> ,	197
And <u>would</u> in action glorious I had lost	198
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!	199
OTHELLO	
How comes it, Michael, <u>you are thus forgot</u> ?	200
CASSIO	
I pray you pardon me; I cannot speak.	201
OTHELLO	
Worthy Montano, you <u>were wont be</u> civil.	202
The <u>gravity and stillness</u> of your youth	203
The world hath noted. And your <u>name</u> is great	204
In mouths of wisest <u>censure</u> . What's the matter	205
That you <u>unlace</u> your reputation thus,	206
And <u>spend your rich opinion</u> for the name	207
Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.	208
MONTANO	
Worthy Othello, I am <u>hurt to danger</u> .	209
Your officer Iago can inform you,	210
While I spare speech, which <u>something now offends</u>	211
me,	212
Of all that I do know; nor know I aught	213
<u>By me that's said or done amiss</u> this night,	214
Unless <u>self-charity</u> be sometimes a vice,	215
And to defend ourselves it be a sin	216
When violence assails us.	217
OTHELLO	
Now, by heaven,	218
<u>My blood begins my safer guides to rule</u> ,	219
And passion, having my best judgment <u>collied</u> ,	220
<u>Assays</u> to lead the way. ‹Zounds, if I› stir,	221
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you	222
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know	223
How this foul <u>rout</u> began, who set it on;	224
And he that is <u>approved in</u> this offense,	225
Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,	226

Shall <u>lose me</u> . What, in a <u>town of war</u>	227
<u>Yet</u> wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,	228
To <u>manage</u> private and domestic quarrel,	229
In night, and <u>on the court and guard of safety</u> ?	230
'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?	231
MONTANO	
If <u>partially affined</u> , or 'leagued' in office,	232
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,	233
Thou art no soldier.	234
IAGO <u>Touch me not so near.</u>	235
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth	236
Than it should do <u>offense</u> to Michael Cassio.	237
Yet I persuade myself, to speak the truth	238
Shall nothing wrong him. <Thus> it is, general:	239
Montano and myself being in speech,	240
There comes a fellow crying out for help,	241
And Cassio following him with determined sword	242
To <u>execute upon</u> him. Sir, this gentleman	243
<i>Pointing to Montano.</i>	
Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause.	244
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,	245
Lest by his clamor—as it so <u>fell out</u> —	246
The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,	247
Outran my purpose, and I returned <u><the> rather</u>	248
<u>For that</u> I heard the clink and <u>fall</u> of swords	249
And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight	250
I ne'er might say before. When I came back—	251
For this was brief—I found them close together	252
At blow and thrust, <u>even</u> as again they were	253
When you yourself did part them.	254
More of this matter cannot I report.	255
But <u>men are men; the best sometimes forget.</u>	256
Though Cassio did some little wrong to <u>him</u> ,	257
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,	258

Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received	259
From him that fled some <u>strange indignity</u>	260
Which patience could not <u>pass</u> .	261
OTHELLO I know, Iago,	262
Thy honesty and love doth <u>mince</u> this matter,	263
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee,	264
But nevermore be officer of mine.	265
<i>Enter Desdemona attended.</i>	
Look if my gentle love be not raised up!	266
I'll make thee an example.	267
DESDEMONA What is the matter, dear?	268
OTHELLO All's well (now,)	269
sweeting.	270
Come away to bed. 「 <i>To Montano.</i> 」 Sir, for your hurts,	271
Myself will be your surgeon.—Lead him off.	272
「 <i>Montano is led off.</i> 」	
Iago, look with care about the town	273
And silence those whom this vile brawl	274
<u>distracted</u> .—	275
Come, Desdemona. 'Tis the soldier's life	276
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.	277
「 <i>All but Iago and Cassio</i> 」 exit.	
IAGO What, are you hurt, lieutenant?	278
CASSIO Ay, past all surgery.	279
IAGO <u>Marry</u> , 〈God〉 forbid!	280
CASSIO Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have	281
lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of	282
myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation,	283
Iago, my reputation!	284
IAGO As I am an honest man, I thought you had	285
received some bodily wound. There is more <u>sense</u>	286
in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and	287
most false <u>imposition</u> , oft got without merit and lost	288

without deserving. You have lost no reputation at	289
all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What,	290
man, there are ways to <u>recover</u> the General again!	291
You are but now <u>cast in his mood</u> —a <u>punishment</u>	292
<u>more in policy than in malice, even so as one would</u>	293
<u>beat his offenseless dog to affright an imperious</u>	294
<u>lion. Sue to</u> him again and he's yours.	295
CASSIO I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive	296
so good a commander with so slight, so drunken,	297
and so indiscreet an officer. [Drunk? And <u>speak</u>	298
<u>parrot</u> ? And squabble? Swagger? Swear? And <u>dis-</u>	299
<u>course fustian</u> with one's own shadow?] O thou	300
invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be	301
known by, let us call thee devil!	302
IAGO What was he that you followed with your sword?	303
What had he done to you?	304
CASSIO I know not.	305
IAGO Is 't possible?	306
CASSIO I remember a mass of things, but nothing	307
distinctly; a quarrel, but <u>nothing wherefore</u> . O	308
⟨God,⟩ that men should put an enemy in their	309
mouths to steal away their brains! That we should	310
with joy, <u>pleasance</u> , revel, and applause transform	311
ourselves into beasts!	312
IAGO Why, but you are now well enough. How came	313
you thus recovered?	314
CASSIO It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give	315
place to the devil wrath. One <u>unperfectness</u> shows	316
me another, to make me frankly despise myself.	317
IAGO Come, you are too severe a <u>moraler</u> . As the time,	318
the place, and the condition of this country stands,	319
I could heartily wish this had not ⟨so⟩ befallen. But	320
since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.	321
CASSIO I will ask him for <u>my place</u> again; he shall tell	322

me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as 323
Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be 324
now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently 325
a beast! O, strange! Every inordinate cup is un- 326
blessed, and the ingredient is a devil. 327

IAGO Come, come, good wine is a good familiar crea- 328
ture, if it be well used. Exclaim no more against it. 329
And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you. 330

CASSIO I have well approved it, sir.—I drunk! 331

IAGO You or any man living may be drunk at a time, 332
man. (I'll) tell you what you shall do. Our general's 333
wife is now the general: I may say so in this 334
respect, for that he hath devoted and given up 335
himself to the contemplation, mark, and denote- 336
ment¹ of her parts and graces. Confess yourself 337
freely to her. Importune her help to put you in your 338
place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so 339
blessed a disposition she holds it a vice in her 340
goodness not to do more than she is requested. This 341
broken joint between you and her husband entreat 342
her to splinter, and, my fortunes against any lay 343
worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow 344
stronger than it was before. 345

CASSIO You advise me well. 346

IAGO I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest 347
kindness. 348

CASSIO I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I 349
will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake 350
for me. I am desperate of my fortunes if they check 351
me (here). 352

IAGO You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant. I 353
must to the watch. 354

CASSIO Good night, honest Iago. 355

Cassio exits.

IAGO

And what's he, then, that says I play the villain, 356
When this advice is free I give and honest, 357
Probal to thinking, and indeed the course 358
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy 359
Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue 360
In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful 361
As the free elements. And then for her 362
To win the Moor—〈were 't〉 to renounce his baptism, 363
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin— 364
His soul is so enfettered to her love 365
That she may make, unmake, do what she list, 366
Even as her appetite shall play the god 367
With his weak function. How am I then a villain 368
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course 369
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell! 370
When devils will the blackest sins put on, 371
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows, 372
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool 373
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune, 374
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor, 375
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear: 376
That she repeals him for her body's lust; 377
And by how much she strives to do him good, 378
She shall undo her credit with the Moor. 379
So will I turn her virtue into pitch, 380
And out of her own goodness make the net 381
That shall enmesh them all. 382

Enter Roderigo.

How now, Roderigo? 383
RODERIGO I do follow here in the chase, not like a 384
hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My 385
money is almost spent, I have been tonight exceed- 386
ingly well cudgeled, and I think the issue will be I 387

shall have so much experience for my pains, and so, 388
with no money at all and a little more wit, return 389
again to Venice. 390

IAGO

How poor are they that have not patience! 391
What wound did ever heal but by degrees? 392
Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft, 393
And wit depends on dilatory time. 394
Dost not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee, 395
And thou, by that small hurt, (hast) cashiered Cassio. 396
Though other things grow fair against the sun, 397
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe. 398
Content thyself awhile. (By th' Mass,) 'tis morning! 399
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short. 400
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted. 401
Away, I say! Thou shalt know more hereafter. 402
Nay, get thee gone. 403

Roderigo exits.

Two things are to be done. 404
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress. 405
I'll set her on. 406
Myself 'till the while to draw the Moor apart 407
And bring him jump when he may Cassio find 408
Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way. 409
Dull not device by coldness and delay. 410

He exits.



The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

ACT 3



ACT 3

Scene 1

Enter Cassio <with> Musicians.

CASSIO

Masters, play here (I will content your pains) 1
Something that's brief; and bid "Good morrow, 2
general." 3

「They play.」

「Enter the Clown.」

CLOWN Why masters, have your instruments been in 4
Naples, that they speak i' th' nose thus? 5

MUSICIAN How, sir, how? 6

CLOWN Are these, I pray you, wind instruments? 7

MUSICIAN Ay, marry, are they, sir. 8

CLOWN O, thereby hangs a tail. 9

MUSICIAN Whereby hangs a tale, sir? 10

CLOWN Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I 11
know. But, masters, here's money for you; and the 12
General so likes your music that he desires you, for 13
love's sake, to make no more noise with it. 14

MUSICIAN Well, sir, we will not. 15

CLOWN If you have any music that may not be heard, to 16
't again. But, as they say, to hear music the General 17
does not greatly care. 18

MUSICIAN We have none such, sir. 19

CLOWN Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll 20
away. Go, vanish into air, away! 21

Musicians exit.

CASSIO Dost thou hear, mine honest friend? 22

CLOWN No, I hear not your honest friend. I hear you. 23

CASSIO Prithee, keep up thy quillets. 24

「Giving money.」

There's a poor piece of gold for thee. If the gentle- 25

woman that attends the 〈General's wife〉 be stirring, 26

tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favor 27

of speech. Wilt thou do this? 28

CLOWN She is stirring, sir. If she will stir hither, I shall 29

seem to notify unto her. 30

〈CASSIO

Do, good my friend.〉 31

Clown exits.

Enter Iago.

In happy time, Iago. 32

IAGO You have not been abed, then? 33

CASSIO Why, no. The day had broke 34

Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago, 35

To send in to your wife. My suit to her 36

Is that she will to virtuous Desdemona 37

Procure me some access. 38

IAGO I'll send her to you presently, 39

And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor 40

Out of the way, that your converse and business 41

May be more free. 42

CASSIO

I humbly thank you for 't. *「Iago」 exits*. I never 43

knew 44

A Florentine more kind and honest. 45

Enter Emilia.

EMILIA

Good morrow, good lieutenant. I am sorry 46

For your displeasure, but all will sure be well. 47
The General and his wife are talking of it, 48
And she speaks for you stoutly. The Moor replies 49
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus 50
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom 51
He might not but refuse you. But he protests he 52
loves you 53
And needs no other suitor but his likings 54
〈To take the safest occasion by the front〉 55
To bring you in again. 56
CASSIO Yet I beseech you, 57
If you think fit, or that it may be done, 58
Give me advantage of some brief discourse 59
With Desdemon alone. 60
EMILIA Pray you come in. 61
I will bestow you where you shall have time 62
To speak your bosom freely. 63
[CASSIO I am much bound to you.] 64
〈They exit.〉

Scene 2

OTHELLO		
These letters give, Iago, to the <u>pilot</u>		1
And <u>by him do my duties</u> to the Senate.		2
	「 <i>He gives Iago some papers.</i> 」	
That done, I will be walking on the <u>works</u> .		3
<u>Repair</u> there to me.		4
IAGO	Well, my good lord, I'll do 't.	5
OTHELLO		
This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?		6
「GENTLEMEN」		
〈We〉 <u>wait upon</u> your Lordship.		7

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia.

DESDEMONA

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do 1
All my abilities in thy behalf. 2

EMILIA

Good madam, do. I warrant it grieves my husband 3
As if the cause were his. 4

DESDEMONA

O, that's an honest fellow! Do not doubt, Cassio, 5
But I will have my lord and you again 6
As friendly as you were. 7

CASSIO

Bounteous madam, 8

Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, 9
He's never anything but your true servant. 10

DESDEMONA

I know 't. I thank you. You do love my lord; 11
You have known him long; and be you well assured 12
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off 13
Than in a politic distance. 14

CASSIO

Ay, but, lady, 15

That policy may either last so long, 16
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet, 17
Or breed itself so out of (circumstance,) 18
That, I being absent and my place supplied, 19
My general will forget my love and service. 20

DESDEMONA

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here, 21
I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee, 22
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it 23
To the last article. My lord shall never rest: 24

I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience; 25
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift; 26
I'll intermingle everything he does 27
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio, 28
For thy solicitor shall rather die 29
Than give thy cause away. 30

Enter Othello and Iago.

EMILIA Madam, here comes my lord. 31
CASSIO Madam, I'll take my leave. 32
DESDEMONA Why, stay, and hear me speak. 33
CASSIO
Madam, not now. I am very ill at ease, 34
Unfit for mine own purposes. 35
DESDEMONA Well, do your discretion. 36

Cassio exits.

IAGO
Ha, I like not that. 37
OTHELLO What dost thou say? 38
IAGO
Nothing, my lord; or if—I know not what. 39
OTHELLO
Was not that Cassio parted from my wife? 40
IAGO
Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it 41
That he would steal away so guiltylike, 42
Seeing your coming. 43
OTHELLO I do believe 'twas he. 44
DESDEMONA How now, my lord? 45
I have been talking with a suitor here, 46
A man that languishes in your displeasure. 47
OTHELLO Who is 't you mean? 48
DESDEMONA
Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord, 49
If I have any grace or power to move you, 50
His present reconciliation take; 51

For if he be not one that truly loves you,	52
That errs in ignorance and not <u>in cunning</u> ,	53
I have no judgment <u>in</u> an honest face.	54
I prithee call him back.	55
OTHELLO Went he hence now?	56
DESDEMONA <Yes, <u>faith</u> ,> so humbled	57
That he hath left part of his grief with me	58
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.	59
OTHELLO	
Not now, sweet Desdemon. Some other time.	60
DESDEMONA	
But shall 't be shortly?	61
OTHELLO The sooner, sweet, for you.	62
DESDEMONA	
Shall 't be tonight at supper?	63
OTHELLO No, not tonight.	64
DESDEMONA Tomorrow <u>dinner</u> , then?	65
OTHELLO I shall not dine at home;	66
I meet the captains at the citadel.	67
DESDEMONA	
Why then tomorrow night, <or> Tuesday morn,	68
On Tuesday noon or night; on Wednesday morn.	69
I prithee name the time, but let it not	70
Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent;	71
And yet his trespass, <u>in our common reason</u> —	72
<u>Save</u> that, they say, <u>the wars must make example</u>	73
<u>Out of her best</u> —is <u>not almost</u> a fault	74
T' incur <u>a private check</u> . When shall he come?	75
Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul	76
What you would ask me that I should deny,	77
Or stand so <u>mamm'ring on</u> ? What? Michael Cassio,	78
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,	79
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,	80
Hath ta'en your part—to have so much to do	81
To <u>bring him in</u> ! < <u>By'r Lady</u> ,> I could do much—	82

OTHELLO	
Prithee, no more. Let him come when he will;	83
I will deny thee nothing.	84
DESDEMONA Why, this is not a <u>boon</u> !	85
'Tis <u>as</u> I should entreat you wear your gloves,	86
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,	87
Or sue to you to do <u>a peculiar profit</u>	88
To your own person. Nay, when I have a <u>suit</u>	89
Wherein I mean to <u>touch</u> your love indeed,	90
It shall be full of <u>poise</u> and difficult weight,	91
And fearful to be granted.	92
OTHELLO I will deny thee nothing!	93
<u>Whereon</u> , I do beseech thee, grant me this,	94
To leave me but a little to myself.	95
DESDEMONA	
Shall I deny you? No. Farewell, my lord.	96
OTHELLO	
Farewell, my Desdemona. I'll come to thee <u>straight</u> .	97
DESDEMONA	
Emilia, come.—Be as your <u>fancies</u> teach you.	98
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.	99
	<i>⟨Desdemona and Emilia⟩ exit.</i>
OTHELLO	
Excellent <u>wretch</u> ! Perdition catch my soul	100
<u>But</u> I do love thee! And <u>when I love thee not,</u>	101
<u>Chaos is come again.</u>	102
IAGO My noble lord—	103
OTHELLO	
What dost thou say, Iago?	104
IAGO Did Michael Cassio,	105
When ⟨you⟩ wooed my lady, know of your love?	106
OTHELLO	
He did, from first to last. Why dost thou ask?	107
IAGO	
But for a satisfaction of my thought,	108
No further harm.	109

OTHELLO	Why of thy thought, Iago?	110
IAGO		
	I did not think he had been acquainted with her.	111
OTHELLO		
	O yes, and went between us very oft.	112
IAGO	Indeed?	113
OTHELLO		
	Indeed? Ay, indeed! Discern'st thou aught in that?	114
	Is he not <u>honest</u> ?	115
IAGO	Honest, my lord?	116
OTHELLO	Honest—ay, honest.	117
IAGO		
	My lord, for aught I know.	118
OTHELLO	What dost thou think?	119
IAGO	Think, my lord?	120
OTHELLO		
	"Think, my lord?" <By heaven,> thou echo'st me	121
	As if there were some monster in thy thought	122
	Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean	123
	something.	124
	I heard thee say even now, thou lik'st not that,	125
	When Cassio left my wife. What <u>didst</u> not like?	126
	And when I told thee he was <u>of my counsel</u>	127
	<In> my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st	128
	"Indeed?"	129
	And didst contract and purse thy brow together	130
	As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain	131
	Some horrible <u>conceit</u> . If thou dost love me,	132
	Show me thy thought.	133
IAGO	My lord, you know I love you.	134
OTHELLO	I think thou dost;	135
	And <u>for</u> I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty	136
	And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them	137
	breath,	138
	Therefore these <u>stops</u> of thine fright me the more.	139

	For such things in a false, disloyal knave	140
	Are <u>tricks of custom</u> ; but in a man that's just,	141
	They're <u>close dilations</u> working from the heart	142
	<u>That passion cannot rule.</u>	143
IAGO	<u>For</u> Michael Cassio,	144
	I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.	145
OTHELLO		
	I think so too.	146
IAGO	Men should be what they seem;	147
	Or those that be not, would they might seem none!	148
OTHELLO	<u>Certain</u> , men should be what they seem.	149
IAGO		
	Why then, I think Cassio's an honest man.	150
OTHELLO	Nay, yet there's more in this.	151
	I prithee speak to me as to thy thinkings,	152
	As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of	153
	thoughts	154
	The worst of words.	155
IAGO	Good my lord, pardon me.	156
	Though I am bound to every act of duty,	157
	I am not bound to <u><that all slaves are free to.></u>	158
	Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and	159
	false—	160
	As where's that palace <u>whereinto</u> foul things	161
	Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so	162
	pure	163
	<u><But some> uncleanly apprehensions</u>	164
	<u>Keep leets and law days</u> and <u>in sessions sit</u>	165
	<u>With</u> meditations lawful?	166
OTHELLO		
	Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,	167
	If thou but think'st him wronged and mak'st his ear	168
	A stranger to thy thoughts.	169
IAGO	I do beseech you,	170
	Though I perchance am <u>vicious</u> in my guess—	171

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague	172
To spy into abuses, and <oft> my <u>jealousy</u>	173
<u>Shapes</u> faults that are not— <u>that your wisdom</u>	174
<u>From one that so imperfectly conceits</u>	175
<u>Would take no notice</u> , nor build yourself a trouble	176
Out of his scattering and unsure <u>observance</u> .	177
<u>It were not for</u> your quiet nor your good,	178
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,	179
To let you know my thoughts.	180
OTHELLO What dost thou mean?	181
IAGO	
<u>Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,</u>	182
<u>Is the immediate jewel of their souls.</u>	183
Who steals my <u>purse</u> steals trash. 'Tis something,	184
nothing;	185
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to	186
thousands.	187
But he that filches from me my good name	188
Robs me of that which not enriches him	189
And makes me poor indeed.	190
OTHELLO <By heaven,> I'll know thy thoughts.	191
IAGO	
You cannot, <u>if</u> my heart were in your hand,	192
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.	193
[OTHELLO	
Ha?	194
IAGO] O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!	195
It is the green-eyed monster which <u>doth mock</u>	196
<u>The meat it feeds on</u> . That <u>cuckold</u> lives in bliss	197
Who, <u>certain of his fate</u> , loves not <u>his wronger</u> ;	198
But O, what damnèd minutes <u>tells he o'er</u>	199
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet <strongly> loves!	200
OTHELLO O misery!	201
IAGO	
<u>Poor</u> and content is rich, and rich enough;	202

But riches <u>fineless</u> is as poor as winter	203
To him that <u>ever</u> fears he shall be poor.	204
Good <God,> the souls of all my tribe defend	205
From jealousy!	206
OTHELLO Why, why is this?	207
Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,	208
To follow <u>still</u> the changes of the moon	209
With fresh suspicions? No. To be once in doubt	210
Is <u><once> to be resolved</u> . Exchange me for a goat	211
When I shall turn the business of my soul	212
To such <u>exsufflicate and <blown></u> surmises,	213
<u>Matching thy inference</u> . 'Tis not to make me jealous	214
To say my wife is <u>fair</u> , <u>feeds</u> well, loves company,	215
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances <well.>	216
<u>Where virtue is, these are more virtuous</u> .	217
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw	218
The smallest fear or <u>doubt of her revolt</u> ,	219
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago,	220
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, <u>prove</u> ;	221
And <u>on the proof</u> , there is no more but this:	222
Away at once with love or jealousy.	223
IAGO	
I am glad of this, for now I shall have reason	224
To show the love and duty that I bear you	225
With franker spirit. Therefore, as I am bound,	226
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.	227
<u>Look to</u> your wife; observe her well with Cassio;	228
Wear your eyes thus, <u>not jealous nor secure</u> .	229
I would not have your free and noble nature,	230
Out of <u>self-bounty</u> , be <u>abused</u> . <u>Look to 't</u> .	231
I know our <u>country</u> disposition well.	232
In Venice they do let <God> see the pranks	233
They dare not show their husbands. Their best	234
conscience	235

Is not to leave 't undone, but 'keep 't' unknown. 236

OTHELLO Dost thou say so? 237

IAGO

She did deceive her father, marrying you, 238

And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks, 239

She loved them most. 240

OTHELLO And so she did. 241

IAGO Why, go to, then! 242

She that, so young, could give out such a seeming, 243

To seel her father's eyes up close as oak, 244

He thought 'twas witchcraft! But I am much to 245

blame. 246

I humbly do beseech you of your pardon 247

For too much loving you. 248

OTHELLO I am bound to thee forever. 249

IAGO

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits. 250

OTHELLO

Not a jot, not a jot. 251

IAGO <I' faith,> I fear it has. 252

I hope you will consider what is spoke 253

Comes from <my> love. But I do see you're moved. 254

I am to pray you not to strain my speech 255

To grosser issues nor to larger reach 256

Than to suspicion. 257

OTHELLO I will not. 258

IAGO Should you do so, my lord, 259

My speech should fall into such vile success 260

<As my thoughts aim not at.> Cassio's my worthy 261

friend. 262

My lord, I see you're moved. 263

OTHELLO No, not much moved. 264

I do not think but Desdemona's honest. 265

IAGO 266

Long live she so! And long live you to think so!
 OTHELLO
 And yet, how nature erring from itself— 267

IAGO
 Ay, there's the point. As, to be bold with you, 268
 Not to affect many proposèd matches 269
 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree, 270
Whereto we see in all things nature tends— 271
 Foh! One may smell in such a will most rank, 272
 Foul <disproportion,> thoughts unnatural— 273
 But pardon me—I do not in position 274
Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear 275
 Her will, recoiling to her better judgment, 276
 May fall to match you with her country forms 277
 And happily repent. 278

OTHELLO Farewell, farewell! 279
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know more. 280
Set on thy wife to observe. Leave me, Iago. 281

IAGO, *「beginning to exit」* My lord, I take my leave. 282

OTHELLO
 Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless 283
 Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds. 284

IAGO, *「returning」*
 My lord, I would I might entreat your Honor 285
 To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time. 286
 Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place— 287
 For sure he fills it up with great ability— 288
 Yet, if you please to <hold> him off awhile, 289
 You shall by that perceive him and his means. 290
 Note if your lady strain his entertainment 291
 With any strong or vehement importunity. 292
 Much will be seen in that. In the meantime, 293
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears— 294
As worthy cause I have to fear I am— 295

And hold her free, I do beseech your Honor. 296
 OTHELLO Fear not my government. 297
 IAGO I once more take my leave. 298

He exits.

OTHELLO
 This fellow's of exceeding honesty, 299
 And knows all qualities with a learnèd spirit 300
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard, 301
Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings, 302
 I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind 303
 To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black 304
 And have not those soft parts of conversation 305
 That chamberers have, or for I am declined 306
 Into the vale of years—yet that's not much— 307
 She's gone, I am abused, and my relief 308
 Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage, 309
 That we can call these delicate creatures ours 310
 And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad 311
 And live upon the vapor of a dungeon 312
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love 313
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones; 314
Prerogated are they less than the base. 315
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death. 316
 Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us 317
 When we do quicken. Look where she comes. 318

Enter Desdemona and Emilia.

If she be false, heaven mocks itself! 319
 I'll not believe 't. 320
 DESDEMONA How now, my dear Othello? 321
 Your dinner, and the generous islanders 322
 By you invited, do attend your presence. 323
 OTHELLO I am to blame. 324
 DESDEMONA
 Why do you speak so faintly? Are you not well? 325

OTHELLO

I have a pain upon my forehead, here. 326

DESDEMONA

⟨Faith,⟩ that's with watching. 'Twill away again. 327

Let me but bind it hard; within this hour 328

It will be well. 329

OTHELLO Your napkin is too little. 330

Let it alone. 331

「The handkerchief falls, unnoticed.」

Come, I'll go in with you. 332

DESDEMONA

I am very sorry that you are not well. 333

⟨Othello and Desdemona⟩ exit.

EMILIA, *「picking up the handkerchief」*

I am glad I have found this napkin. 334

This was her first remembrance from the Moor. 335

My wayward husband hath a hundred times 336

Woody me to steal it. But she so loves the token 337

(For he conjured her she should ever keep it) 338

That she reserves it evermore about her 339

To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out 340

And give 't Iago. What he will do with it 341

Heaven knows, not I. 342

I nothing but to please his fantasy. 343

Enter Iago.

IAGO How now? What do you here alone? 344

EMILIA

Do not you chide. I have a thing for you. 345

IAGO

You have a thing for me? It is a common thing— 346

EMILIA Ha? 347

IAGO To have a foolish wife. 348

EMILIA

O, is that all? What will you give me now 349

	For that same handkerchief?	350
IAGO	What handkerchief?	351
EMILIA	What handkerchief?	352
	Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona,	353
	That which so often you did bid me steal.	354
IAGO	Hast stol'n it from her?	355
EMILIA		
	No, <faith,> she let it drop by negligence,	356
	And <u>to th' advantage</u> I, being here, took 't up.	357
	Look, here 'tis.	358
IAGO	A good wench! Give it me.	359
EMILIA		
	What will you do with 't, that you have been so	360
	earnest	361
	To have me filch it?	362
IAGO, ¹ <i>snatching it</i>	Why, what is that to you?	363
EMILIA		
	If it be not for some <u>purpose of import</u> ,	364
	Give 't me again. Poor lady, she'll run mad	365
	When she shall lack it.	366
IAGO	<u>Be not acknown on 't.</u>	367
	I have use for it. Go, leave me.	368
	<i>Emilia exits.</i>	
	I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin	369
	And let him find it. Trifles light as air	370
	Are to the jealous confirmations strong	371
	As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.	372
	[The Moor already changes with my poison;]	373
	Dangerous <u>conceits</u> are in their natures poisons,	374
	Which at the first <u>are scarce found to distaste</u> ,	375
	But with a little <u>act</u> upon the blood	376
	Burn like <u>the mines of sulfur</u> .	377
	<i>Enter Othello.</i>	
	I did say so.	378

Look where he comes. Not <u>poppy</u> nor <u>mandragora</u>	379
Nor all the <u>drowsy</u> syrups of the world	380
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep	381
Which thou <u>owedst</u> yesterday.	382
OTHELLO Ha, ha, false to me?	383
IAGO	
Why, how now, general? No more of that!	384
OTHELLO	
<u>Avaunt!</u> Begone! Thou hast set me on <u>the rack</u> .	385
I swear 'tis better to be much <u>abused</u>	386
Than but to know 't a little.	387
IAGO How now, my lord?	388
OTHELLO	
What sense had I <of> her stol'n hours of lust?	389
I saw 't not, thought it not; it harmed not me.	390
I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and	391
merry.	392
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.	393
He that is robbed, not <u>wanting</u> what is stol'n,	394
Let him not know 't, and he's not robbed at all.	395
IAGO I am sorry to hear this.	396
OTHELLO	
I had been happy if <u>the general camp</u> ,	397
<u>Pioners</u> and all, had tasted her sweet body,	398
<u>So</u> I had nothing known. O, now, forever	399
Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!	400
Farewell the plumèd troops and the big wars	401
That makes ambition virtue! O, farewell!	402
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill <u>trump</u> ,	403
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,	404
The <u>royal</u> banner, and all quality,	405
<u>Pride</u> , pomp, and <u>circumstance</u> of glorious war!	406
And O you <u>mortal engines</u> , whose rude throats	407
Th' immortal <u>Jove's dread clamors counterfeit</u> ,	408
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!	409

IAGO Is 't possible, my lord? 410

OTHELLO

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore! 411

Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof, 412

Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul, 413

Thou hadst been better have been born a dog 414

Than answer my waked wrath. 415

IAGO Is 't come to this? 416

OTHELLO

Make me to see 't, or at the least so prove it 417

That the probation bear no hinge nor loop 418

To hang a doubt on, or woe upon thy life! 419

IAGO My noble lord— 420

OTHELLO

If thou dost slander her and torture me, 421

Never pray more. Abandon all remorse; 422

On horror's head horrors accumulate; 423

Do deeds to make heaven weep, all Earth amazed; 424

For nothing canst thou to damnation add 425

Greater than that. 426

IAGO O grace! O heaven forgive me! 427

Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense? 428

God b' wi' you. Take mine office.—O wretched fool, 429

That ⟨liv'st⟩ to make thine honesty a vice!— 430

O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world: 431

To be direct and honest is not safe.— 432

I thank you for this profit, and from hence 433

I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offense. 434

OTHELLO Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest. 435

IAGO

I should be wise; for honesty's a fool 436

And loses that it works for. 437

[OTHELLO By the world, 438

I think my wife be honest and think she is not. 439

440

I think that thou art just and think thou art not.
 I'll have some proof! 「Her」 name, that was as fresh 441

As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black 442
 As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives, 443
 Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams, 444
 I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!] 445

IAGO
 I see you are eaten up with passion. 446
 I do repent me that I put it to you. 447
 You would be satisfied? 448

OTHELLO Would? Nay, and I will. 449

IAGO
 And may; but how? How satisfied, my lord? 450
 Would you, the <supervisor,> grossly gape on, 451
 Behold her topped? 452

OTHELLO Death and damnation! O! 453

IAGO
 It were a tedious difficulty, I think, 454
 To bring them to that prospect. Damn them then 455
 If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster 456
More than their own! What then? How then? 457
 What shall I say? Where's satisfaction? 458
 It is impossible you should see this, 459
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys, 460
 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross 461
 As ignorance made drunk. But yet I say, 462
If imputation and strong circumstances 463
Which lead directly to the door of truth 464
Will give you satisfaction, you might have 't. 465

OTHELLO
 Give me a living reason she's disloyal. 466

IAGO I do not like the office, 467
 But sith I am entered in this cause so far, 468
Pricked to 't by foolish honesty and love, 469

I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately,	470
And being troubled with a raging tooth	471
I could not sleep. There are a kind of men	472
So loose of soul that in their sleeps will mutter	473
Their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio.	474
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,	475
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."	476
And then, sir, would he <u>gripe</u> and wring my hand,	477
Cry "O sweet creature!" then kiss me hard,	478
As if he plucked up kisses by the roots	479
That grew upon my lips; <then> laid his leg	480
O'er my thigh, and <sighed,> and <kissed,> and then	481
<Cried> "Cursèd fate that gave thee to the Moor!"	482
OTHELLO	
O monstrous! Monstrous!	483
IAGO Nay, this was <u>but</u> his	484
dream.	485
OTHELLO	
But this <u>denoted a foregone conclusion</u> .	486
'Tis a <u>shrewd doubt</u> , though it be but a dream.	487
IAGO	
And this may help to thicken other proofs	488
That do <u>demonstrate</u> thinly.	489
OTHELLO I'll tear her all to pieces.	490
IAGO	
Nay, <but> be wise. <u>Yet</u> we see nothing done.	491
She may be honest <u>yet</u> . Tell me but this:	492
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief	493
<u>Spotted with strawberries</u> in your wife's hand?	494
OTHELLO	
I gave her such a one. 'Twas my first gift.	495
IAGO	
I know not that; but such a handkerchief—	496
I am sure it was your wife's—did I today	497
See Cassio wipe his beard with.	498

OTHELLO	If it be that—	499
IAGO		
	If it be that, or any [「] that [」] was hers,	500
	It speaks against her with the other proofs.	501
OTHELLO		
	O, that <u>the slave</u> had forty thousand lives!	502
	One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.	503
	Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago,	504
	All my <u>fond</u> love thus do I blow to heaven.	505
	'Tis gone.	506
	Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!	507
	Yield up, O love, thy crown and <u>hearted throne</u>	508
	To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy <u>fraught</u> ,	509
	For 'tis of <u>aspics' tongues</u> !	510
IAGO	Yet be content.	511
OTHELLO	O, blood, blood, blood!	512
IAGO		
	Patience, I say. Your mind ⟨perhaps⟩ may change.	513
OTHELLO		
	Never, [Iago. Like to <u>the Pontic Sea</u> ,	514
	<u>Whose icy current and compulsive course</u>	515
	<u>Ne'er [「]feels[」] retiring ebb, but keeps due on</u>	516
	<u>To the Propontic and the Hellespont,</u>	517
	Even so my <u>bloody</u> thoughts, with violent pace	518
	Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,	519
	Till that a <u>capable</u> and wide revenge	520
	Swallow them up. ⟨ <i>He kneels.</i> ⟩ Now by yond <u>marble</u>	521
	<u>heaven,</u>]	522
	In the due reverence of a sacred vow,	523
	I here <u>engage</u> my words.	524
IAGO	Do not rise yet.	525
		⟨ <i>Iago kneels.</i> ⟩
	Witness, you ever-burning lights above,	526
	You elements that <u>clip</u> us round about,	527

Witness that here Iago doth <u>give up</u>	528
<u>The execution of his wit</u> , hands, heart	529
To wronged Othello's service! Let him command,	530
And to obey shall be in me <u>remorse</u> ,	531
<u>What bloody business ever</u> .	532
	<i>「They rise.」</i>
OTHELLO I greet thy love	533
Not with vain thanks but with acceptance	534
<u>bounteous</u> ,	535
And will upon the instant <u>put thee to 't</u> .	536
Within these three days let me hear thee say	537
That Cassio's not alive.	538
IAGO My friend is dead.	539
'Tis done at your request. But let her live.	540
OTHELLO Damn her, lewd <u>minx</u> ! O, damn her, damn	541
her!	542
Come, go with me apart. I will withdraw	543
To furnish me with some swift means of death	544
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.	545
IAGO I am your own forever.	546
	<i>They exit.</i>

Scene 4

Enter Desdemona, Emilia, and Clown.

DESDEMONA Do you know, <u>sirrah</u> , where Lieutenant	1
Cassio <u>lies</u> ?	2
CLOWN I dare not say he lies anywhere.	3
DESDEMONA Why, man?	4
CLOWN He's a soldier, and for me to say a soldier <u>lies</u> ,	5
<u>'tis stabbing</u> .	6
DESDEMONA <u>Go to</u> ! Where lodges he?	7
[CLOWN To tell you where he lodges is to tell you	8

where I lie. 9

DESDEMONA Can anything be made of this? 10

CLOWN I know not where he lodges; and for me to 11
devise a lodging and say he lies here, or he lies 12
there, were to lie in mine own throat. 13

DESDEMONA Can you inquire him out, and be edified 14
by report? 15

CLOWN I will catechize the world for him—that is, 16
make questions, and by them answer. 17

DESDEMONA Seek him, bid him come hither. Tell him I 18
have moved my lord on his behalf and hope all will 19
be well. 20

CLOWN To do this is within the compass of man's wit, 21
and therefore I will attempt the doing it. 22

Clown exits.

DESDEMONA

Where should I lose <that> handkerchief, Emilia? 23

EMILIA I know not, madam. 24

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse 25
Full of crusadoes. And but my noble Moor 26
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness 27
As jealous creatures are, it were enough 28
To put him to ill thinking. 29

EMILIA Is he not jealous? 30

DESDEMONA

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born 31
Drew all such humors from him. 32

EMILIA Look where he 33
comes. 34

Enter Othello.

DESDEMONA

I will not leave him now till Cassio 35

Be called to him.—How is 't with you, my lord?	36
OTHELLO	
Well, my good lady. 「 <i>Aside.</i> 」 O, <u>hardness</u> to	37
dissemble!—	38
How do you, Desdemona?	39
DESDEMONA	
Well, my good lord.	40
OTHELLO	
Give me your hand. 「 <i>He takes her hand.</i> 」 This hand	41
is moist, my lady.	42
DESDEMONA	
It <yet has> felt no age nor known no sorrow.	43
OTHELLO	
This argues fruitfulness and <u>liberal</u> heart.	44
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires	45
A <u>sequester</u> from liberty, fasting and prayer,	46
Much <u>castigation</u> , <u>exercise devout</u> ;	47
For here's a young and sweating devil here	48
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,	49
A <u>frank</u> one.	50
DESDEMONA You may indeed say so,	51
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.	52
OTHELLO	
A liberal hand! <u>The hearts of old gave hands,</u>	53
<u>But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.</u>	54
DESDEMONA	
I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.	55
OTHELLO What promise, <u>chuck</u> ?	56
DESDEMONA	
I have <u>sent</u> to bid Cassio come speak with you.	57
OTHELLO	
I have <u>a salt and sorry rheum</u> <u>offends</u> me.	58
Lend me thy handkerchief.	59
DESDEMONA	
Here, my lord.	60
OTHELLO	
That which I gave you.	61
	62

DESDEMONA	I have it not about me.	
OTHELLO	Not?	63
DESDEMONA	No, <faith,> my lord.	64
OTHELLO	That's a fault. That handkerchief	65
	Did an Egyptian to my mother give.	66
	She was a <u>charmer</u> , and could almost read	67
	The thoughts of people. <u>She</u> told <u>her</u> , while <u>she</u> kept	68
	it,	69
	'Twould make her <u>amiable</u> and subdue my father	70
	Entirely to her love. But if she lost it,	71
	Or made a gift of it, my father's eye	72
	Should <u>hold her</u> loathèd, and his spirits should hunt	73
	After new <u>fancies</u> . She, dying, gave it me,	74
	And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,	75
	To give it <u>her</u> . I did so; and take <u>heed on 't</u> ,	76
	<u>Make it a darling</u> like your precious eye.	77
	To lose 't or give 't away were such <u>perdition</u>	78
	As nothing else could match.	79
DESDEMONA	Is 't possible?	80
OTHELLO		
	'Tis true. There's magic in the <u>web</u> of it.	81
	<u>A sybil that had numbered in the world</u>	82
	<u>The sun to course two hundred compasses,</u>	83
	In her prophetic <u>fury</u> sewed the work.	84
	The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk,	85
	And it was dyed in <u>mummy</u> , which the skillful	86
	<u>Conserved of</u> maidens' hearts.	87
DESDEMONA	<I' faith,> is 't true?	88
OTHELLO		
	Most veritable. Therefore, look to 't well.	89
DESDEMONA		
	Then <u>would</u> to <God> that I had never seen 't!	90
OTHELLO	Ha? <u>Wherefore?</u>	91
DESDEMONA		

Why do you speak so <u>startingly</u> and <u>rash</u> ?	92
OTHELLO	
Is 't lost? Is 't gone? Speak, is 't <u>out o' th' way</u> ?	93
DESDEMONA <Heaven> bless us!	94
OTHELLO Say you?	95
DESDEMONA	
It is not lost, but what <u>an if</u> it were?	96
OTHELLO How?	97
DESDEMONA I say it is not lost.	98
OTHELLO Fetch 't. Let me see 't!	99
DESDEMONA	
Why, so I can. But I will not now.	100
This is a trick to put me from my <u>suit</u> .	101
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.	102
OTHELLO	
Fetch me the handkerchief! 「 <i>Aside.</i> 」 My mind	103
misgives.	104
DESDEMONA Come, come.	105
You'll never meet a more <u>sufficient</u> man.	106
OTHELLO	
The handkerchief!	107
<DESDEMONA I pray, talk me of Cassio.	108
OTHELLO The handkerchief!>	109
DESDEMONA A man that all his time	110
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love;	111
Shared dangers with you—	112
OTHELLO	
The handkerchief!	113
DESDEMONA <I' faith,> you are to blame.	114
OTHELLO < <u>Zounds</u> !>	115
<i>Othello exits.</i>	
EMILIA Is not this man jealous?	116
DESDEMONA I ne'er saw this before.	117
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief!	118
I am most <u>unhappy</u> in the loss of it.	119

EMILIA

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man. 120

They are all but stomachs, and we all but food; 121

They eat us hungrily, and when they are full 122

They belch us. 123

Enter Iago and Cassio.

Look you—Cassio and my husband. 124

IAGO, *to Cassio*

There is no other way; 'tis she must do 't, 125

And, lo, the happiness! Go and importune her. 126

DESDEMONA

How now, good Cassio, what's the news with you? 127

CASSIO

Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you 128

That by your virtuous means I may again 129

Exist, and be a member of his love 130

Whom I with all the office of my heart 131

Entirely honor. I would not be delayed. 132

If my offense be of such mortal kind 133

That nor my service past nor present sorrows 134

Nor purposed merit in futurity 135

Can ransom me into his love again, 136

But to know so must be my benefit. 137

So shall I clothe me in a forced content, 138

And shut myself up in some other course 139

To fortune's alms. 140

DESDEMONA Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio, 141

My advocation is not now in tune. 142

My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him 143

Were he in favor as in humor altered. 144

So help me every spirit sanctified 145

As I have spoken for you all my best, 146

And stood within the blank of his displeasure 147

For my free speech! You must awhile be patient. 148

	What I can do I will; and more I will	149
	Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.	150
IAGO		
	Is my lord angry?	151
EMILIA	He went hence but now,	152
	And certainly in strange <u>unquietness</u> .	153
IAGO		
	Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon	154
	When it hath blown his ranks into the air	155
	And, like the devil, from his very arm	156
	Puffed his own brother—and is he angry?	157
	Something of <u>moment</u> then. I will go meet him.	158
	There's matter in 't indeed if he be angry.	159
DESDEMONA		
	I prithee do so.	160
	<i>He exits.</i>	
	<u>Something, sure, of state,</u>	161
	Either from Venice, or some <u>unhatched practice</u>	162
	<u>Made demonstrable</u> here in Cyprus to him,	163
	Hath <u>puddled</u> his clear spirit; and in such cases	164
	Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,	165
	Though great ones are their <u>object</u> . 'Tis even so.	166
	For <u>let our finger ache, and it endues</u>	167
	<u>Our other healthful members even to a sense</u>	168
	<u>Of pain</u> . Nay, we must think men are not gods,	169
	Nor of them look for such <u>observancy</u>	170
	As fits the <u>bridal</u> . <u>Beshrew me</u> much, Emilia,	171
	I was— <u>unhandsome</u> warrior as I am!—	172
	<u>Arraigning his unkindness with my soul</u> .	173
	But now I find I had suborned the witness,	174
	And <u>he's</u> indicted falsely.	175
EMILIA	Pray heaven it be	176
	State matters, as you think, and no <u>conception</u>	177
	Nor no jealous <u>toy</u> concerning you.	178
DESDEMONA		

Alas the day, I never gave him cause! 179

EMILIA

But jealous souls will not be answered so. 180

They are not ever jealous for the cause, 181

But jealous for they're jealous. It is a monster 182

Begot upon itself, born on itself. 183

DESDEMONA

Heaven keep <that> monster from Othello's mind! 184

EMILIA Lady, amen. 185

DESDEMONA

I will go seek him.—Cassio, walk hereabout. 186

If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit 187

And seek to effect it to my uttermost. 188

CASSIO I humbly thank your Ladyship. 189

<Desdemona and Emilia> exit.

Enter Bianca.

BIANCA

'Save you, friend Cassio! 190

CASSIO What make you from 191

home? 192

How is 't with you, my most fair Bianca? 193

<'I' faith,> sweet love, I was coming to your house. 194

BIANCA

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio. 195

What, keep a week away? Seven days and nights, 196

Eightscore eight hours, and lovers' absent hours 197

More tedious than the dial eightscore times? 198

O weary reck'ning! 199

CASSIO Pardon me, Bianca. 200

I have this while with leaden thoughts been pressed, 201

But I shall in a more continue time 202

Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca, 203

「Giving her Desdemona's handkerchief.」

Take me this work out. 204

BIANCA	O, Cassio, whence came this?	205
	This is some token from a newer <u>friend</u> .	206
	To the felt absence now I feel a cause.	207
	Is 't come to this? Well, well.	208
CASSIO	Go to, woman!	209
	Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,	210
	From whence you have them. You are jealous now	211
	That this is from some mistress, some	212
	<u>remembrance</u> .	213
	No, <by my faith,> Bianca.	214
BIANCA	Why, whose is it?	215
CASSIO		
	I know not neither. I found it in my chamber.	216
	I like the work well. <u>Ere it be demanded</u> ,	217
	As <u>like</u> enough it will, I would have it copied.	218
	Take it, and do 't, and leave me for this time.	219
BIANCA	Leave you? Wherefore?	220
CASSIO		
	I do <u>attend here on</u> the General,	221
	And think it no <u>addition</u> , nor my wish,	222
	To have him see me <u>womaned</u> .	223
[BIANCA	Why, I pray you?	224
CASSIO	Not that I love you not.]	225
BIANCA	But that you do not love me!	226
	I pray you <u>bring me</u> on the way a little,	227
	And say if I shall see you soon <u>at night</u> .	228
CASSIO		
	'Tis but a little way that I can bring you,	229
	For I attend here. But I'll see you soon.	230
BIANCA		
	'Tis very good. I must <u>be circumstanced</u> .	231

<They exit.>



The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

ACT 4



ACT 4

Scene 1

Enter Othello and Iago.

IAGO		
Will you think so?		1
OTHELLO	Think so, Iago?	2
IAGO	What,	3
To kiss in private?		4
OTHELLO		
An unauthorized kiss.		5
IAGO		
Or to be naked with her friend in bed		6
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?		7
OTHELLO		
Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm?		8
It is <u>hypocrisy against the devil</u> !		9
They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,		10
The devil their virtue tempts, and they <u>tempt</u>		11
<u>heaven</u> .		12
IAGO		
If they do nothing, 'tis a <u>venial slip</u> .		13
But if I give my wife a handkerchief—		14
OTHELLO	What then?	15
IAGO		
Why then, 'tis hers, my lord, and being hers,		16
She may, I think, bestow 't on any man.		17
OTHELLO		
She is protectress of her honor, too.		18

May she give that?	19
IAGO	
Her honor is an essence that's not seen;	20
They have <u>it very oft that have it</u> not.	21
But for the handkerchief—	22
OTHELLO	
By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.	23
Thou saidst—O, it comes o'er my memory	24
As doth the <u>raven</u> o'er the <u>infectious</u> house,	25
<u>Boding</u> to all—he had my handkerchief.	26
IAGO	
Ay, what of that?	27
OTHELLO That's not so good now.	28
IAGO What	29
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?	30
Or heard him say (as knaves be such abroad,	31
Who having, by their own importunate suit	32
Or <u>voluntary dotage</u> of some mistress,	33
<u>Convincèd or supplied them</u> , cannot choose	34
But they must blab)—	35
OTHELLO Hath he said anything?	36
IAGO	
He hath, my lord, but be you well assured,	37
No more than he'll unswear.	38
OTHELLO What hath he said?	39
IAGO	
⟨Faith,⟩ that he did—I know not what he did.	40
OTHELLO What? What?	41
IAGO	
Lie—	42
OTHELLO With her?	43
IAGO With her—on her—what you will.	44
OTHELLO Lie with her? Lie on her? We say “lie on her”	45
when they <u>belie</u> her. Lie with her—⟨Zounds,⟩ that's	46
<u>fulsome</u> ! Handkerchief—confessions—handker-	47

	chief. [<u>To confess and be hanged</u> for his labor.	48
	First to be hanged and then to confess—I tremble	49
	at it. Nature would not <u>invest</u> herself in <u>such shad-</u>	50
	<u>owing passion</u> without some <u>instruction</u> . It is not	51
	<u>words</u> that shakes me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and	52
	lips—is 't possible? Confess—handkerchief—O,	53
	devil!]	54
	<i>⟨He⟩ falls in a trance.</i>	
IAGO	Work on,	55
	My medicine, ⟨work!⟩ Thus credulous fools are	56
	caught,	57
	And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,	58
	All guiltless, meet reproach.—What ho! My lord!	59
	My lord, I say. Othello!	60
	<i>Enter Cassio.</i>	
	How now, Cassio?	61
CASSIO	What's the matter?	62
IAGO		
	My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy.	63
	This is his second fit. He had one yesterday.	64
CASSIO		
	Rub him about the temples.	65
IAGO	⟨No, forbear.⟩	66
	The <u>lethargy</u> must have <u>his</u> quiet course.	67
	If not, he foams at mouth, and <u>by and by</u>	68
	Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.	69
	Do you withdraw yourself a little while.	70
	He will recover <u>straight</u> . When he is gone,	71
	I would on <u>great occasion</u> speak with you.	72
	<i>「Cassio exits.」</i>	
	How is it, general? Have you not hurt your head?	73
OTHELLO		
	Dost thou <u>mock me</u> ?	74
IAGO	I mock you not, by heaven!	75

<u>Would</u> you would bear your <u>fortune</u> like a man!	76
OTHELLO	
A <u>hornèd man</u> 's a monster and a beast.	77
IAGO	
There's many a beast, then, in a populous city,	78
And many a <u>civil</u> monster.	79
OTHELLO	
Did he confess it?	80
IAGO Good sir, be a man!	81
Think <u>every bearded fellow that's but yoked</u>	82
<u>May draw with you</u> . There's millions now alive	83
That nightly lie in those <u>unproper beds</u>	84
Which they dare swear <u>peculiar</u> . Your case is better.	85
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,	86
To <u>lip a wanton</u> in a <u>secure couch</u>	87
And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know,	88
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.	89
OTHELLO O, thou art wise, 'tis certain.	90
IAGO Stand you awhile apart.	91
Confine yourself but <u>in a patient list</u> .	92
Whilst you were here, o'erwhelmèd with your grief—	93
A passion most ⟨unsuited⟩ such a man—	94
Cassio came hither. I <u>shifted him away</u>	95
And <u>laid good 'scuses upon your ecstasy</u> ,	96
Bade him <u>anon</u> return and here speak with me,	97
The which he promised. Do but <u>encave</u> yourself,	98
And mark the <u>fleers</u> , the <u>gibes</u> , and notable scorns	99
That dwell in every region of his face.	100
For I will make him tell the tale anew—	101
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when	102
He hath and is again to <u>cope</u> your wife.	103
I say <u>but mark his gesture</u> . Marry, <u>patience</u> ,	104
Or I shall say you're <u>all in all in spleen</u> ,	105
And nothing of a man.	106
OTHELLO Dost thou hear, Iago,	107

	I will be found most cunning in my patience,	108
	But (dost thou hear?) most bloody.	109
IAGO	That's not amiss.	110
	But yet <u>keep time</u> in all. Will you withdraw?	111
	<i>「Othello withdraws.」</i>	
	Now will I question Cassio <u>of</u> Bianca,	112
	A <u>huswife</u> that by selling her desires	113
	Buys herself bread and <clothes.> It is a creature	114
	That dotes on Cassio—as 'tis the strumpet's plague	115
	To beguile many and be beguiled by one.	116
	He, when he hears of her, cannot restrain	117
	From the excess of laughter. Here he comes.	118
	<i>Enter Cassio.</i>	
	As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad,	119
	And his <u>unbookish</u> jealousy must <construe>	120
	Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and <u>light</u> behaviors	121
	Quite in the wrong.—How do you, lieutenant?	122
CASSIO		
	The <u>worser</u> that you give me the <u>addition</u>	123
	Whose <u>want</u> even kills me.	124
IAGO		
	Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on 't.	125
	Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's <power,>	126
	How quickly should you <u>speed</u> !	127
CASSIO, 「laughing」	Alas, poor <u>caitiff</u> !	128
OTHELLO	Look how he laughs already!	129
IAGO	I never knew woman love man so.	130
CASSIO		
	Alas, poor rogue, I think <i' faith> she loves me.	131
OTHELLO		
	Now he denies it faintly and laughs it out.	132
IAGO		
	Do you hear, Cassio?	133
OTHELLO	Now he <u>importunes</u> him	134

To tell it o'er. Go to, well said, well said. 135
IAGO
She gives it out that you shall marry her. 136
Do you intend it? 137
CASSIO Ha, ha, ha! 138
OTHELLO
Do you triumph, Roman? Do you triumph? 139
CASSIO I marry ⟨her?⟩ What, a customer? Prithee bear 140
some charity to my wit! Do not think it so unwhole- 141
some. Ha, ha, ha! 142
OTHELLO So, so, so, so. They laugh that wins. 143
IAGO
⟨Faith,⟩ the cry goes that you marry her. 144
CASSIO Prithee say true! 145
IAGO I am a very villain else. 146
OTHELLO Have you scored me? Well. 147
CASSIO This is the monkey's own giving out. She is 148
persuaded I will marry her out of her own love and 149
flattery, not out of my promise. 150
OTHELLO
Iago ⟨beckons⟩ me. Now he begins the story. 151
CASSIO She was here even now. She haunts me in 152
every place. I was the other day talking on the 153
sea-bank with certain Venetians, and thither comes 154
the bauble. ⟨By this hand, she falls⟩ thus about my 155
neck! 156
OTHELLO Crying, "O dear Cassio," as it were; his 157
gesture imports it. 158
CASSIO So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so 159
shakes and pulls me. Ha, ha, ha! 160
OTHELLO Now he tells how she plucked him to my 161
chamber.—O, I see that nose of yours, but not that 162
dog I shall throw it to. 163
CASSIO Well, I must leave her company. 164
IAGO Before me, look where she comes. 165

Enter Bianca.

CASSIO 'Tis such another fitchew—marry, a per- 166
fumed one!—What do you mean by this haunting 167
of me? 168

BIANCA Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did 169
you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me 170
even now? I was a fine fool to take it! I must take 171
out the work? A likely piece of work, that you 172
should find it in your chamber and know not who 173
left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must 174
take out the work! There, give it your hobbyhorse. 175
Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on't. 176

CASSIO
How now, my sweet Bianca? How now? How now? 177

OTHELLO
By heaven, that should be my handkerchief! 178

BIANCA If you'll come to supper tonight you may. If 179
you will not, come when you are next prepared 180
for. 181

She exits.

IAGO After her, after her! 182

CASSIO 〈Faith,〉 I must. She'll rail in the streets else. 183

IAGO Will you sup there? 184

CASSIO 〈Faith,〉 I intend so. 185

IAGO Well, I may chance to see you, for I would very 186
fain speak with you. 187

CASSIO Prithee come. Will you? 188

IAGO Go to; say no more. 189

〈Cassio exits.〉

OTHELLO, 「coming forward」 How shall I murder him, 190
Iago? 191

IAGO Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice? 192

OTHELLO O Iago! 193

IAGO And did you see the handkerchief? 194

OTHELLO	Was that mine?	195
[IAGO	Yours, by this hand! And to see how he <u>prizes</u>	196
	the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and	197
	he hath giv'n it his whore.]	198
OTHELLO	I would have him nine years a-killing! A fine	199
	woman, a fair woman, a sweet woman!	200
IAGO	Nay, you must forget that.	201
OTHELLO	Ay, let her rot and perish and be damned	202
	tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned	203
	to stone. <u>I strike it</u> , and it hurts my hand. O, the	204
	world hath not a sweeter creature! She might lie by	205
	an emperor's side and command him tasks.	206
IAGO	Nay, that's not <u>your way</u> .	207
OTHELLO	Hang her, I do but say what she is! So	208
	delicate with her needle, an admirable musi-	209
	cian—O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!	210
	Of so high and plenteous <u>wit and invention</u> !	211
IAGO	She's the worse for all this.	212
OTHELLO	O, a thousand, a thousand times!—And then	213
	of so <u>gentle</u> a <u>condition</u> !	214
IAGO	Ay, too <u>gentle</u> .	215
OTHELLO	Nay, that's certain. But yet the pity of it,	216
	Iago! O, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!	217
IAGO	If you are so <u>fond over</u> her iniquity, give her	218
	<u>patent</u> to offend, for if it <u>touch</u> not you, it <u>comes</u>	219
	<u>near</u> nobody.	220
OTHELLO	I will chop her into <u>messes</u> ! Cuckold me?	221
IAGO	O, 'tis foul in her.	222
OTHELLO	With mine officer!	223
IAGO	That's fouler.	224
OTHELLO	Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not	225
	expostulate with her lest her body and beauty	226
	<u>unprovide my mind</u> again. This night, Iago.	227
IAGO	Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed,	228

even the bed she hath contaminated. 229
 OTHELLO Good, good. The justice of it pleases. Very 230
 good. 231
 IAGO And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker. You 232
 shall hear more by midnight. 233
 OTHELLO
 Excellent good. 234
⟨A trumpet sounds.⟩
 What trumpet is that same? 235
 IAGO I warrant something from Venice. 236
Enter Lodovico, Desdemona, and Attendants.
 'Tis Lodovico. This comes from the Duke. 237
 See, your wife's with him. 238
 LODOVICO ⟨God⟩ save you, worthy general. 239
 OTHELLO With all my heart, sir. 240
 LODOVICO
 The Duke and the Senators of Venice greet you. 241
「He hands Othello a paper.」
 OTHELLO
 I kiss the instrument of their pleasures. 242
 DESDEMONA
 And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico? 243
 IAGO
 I am very glad to see you, signior. 244
 Welcome to Cyprus. 245
 LODOVICO
 I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio? 246
 IAGO Lives, sir. 247
 DESDEMONA
 Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord 248
 An unkind breach, but you shall make all well. 249
 OTHELLO Are you sure of that? 250
 DESDEMONA My lord? 251
 OTHELLO, 「reading」 "This fail you not to do, as you 252

will"—	253
LODOVICO	
He did not call; he's busy <u>in</u> the paper.	254
Is there division ' <u>twixt</u> my lord and Cassio?	255
DESDEMONA	
A most unhappy one. I would do much	256
T' <u>atone</u> them, for the love I bear to Cassio.	257
OTHELLO Fire and brimstone!	258
DESDEMONA My lord?	259
OTHELLO Are you <u>wise</u> ?	260
DESDEMONA	
What, is he angry?	261
LODOVICO May be the letter moved him.	262
For, as I think, they do command him home,	263
<u>Deputing Cassio in his government.</u>	264
DESDEMONA <By my <u>troth</u> ,> I am glad <u>on</u> 't.	265
OTHELLO Indeed?	266
DESDEMONA My lord?	267
OTHELLO I am glad to see you <u>mad</u> .	268
DESDEMONA Why, sweet Othello!	269
OTHELLO, 「striking her」 Devil!	270
DESDEMONA I have not deserved this.	271
LODOVICO	
My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,	272
Though I should swear I saw 't. 'Tis very much.	273
Make her amends. She weeps.	274
OTHELLO O, devil, devil!	275
If that the earth could <u>teem with</u> woman's tears,	276
Each drop she <u>falls</u> would prove a <u>crocodile</u> .	277
Out of my sight!	278
DESDEMONA I will not stay to offend you.	279
	「She begins to leave.」
LODOVICO Truly <an> obedient lady.	280
I do beseech your Lordship call her back.	281
OTHELLO Mistress.	282

DESDEMONA, 「turning back」	My lord?	283
OTHELLO	What would you with her, sir?	284
LODOVICO	Who, I, my lord?	285
OTHELLO		
	Ay, you did wish that I would make her <u>turn</u> .	286
	Sir, she can <u>turn</u> , and turn, and yet go on,	287
	And <u>turn</u> again. And she can weep, sir, weep.	288
	And she's obedient, as you say, obedient.	289
	Very obedient.—Proceed you in your tears.—	290
	Concerning this, sir—O, <u>well-painted passion</u> !—	291
	I am commanded home.—Get you away.	292
	I'll send for you <u>anon</u> .—Sir, I obey the mandate	293
	And will return to Venice.—Hence, avaunt!	294
	<i>「Desdemona exits.」</i>	
	Cassio shall have my <u>place</u> . And, sir, tonight	295
	I do entreat that we may sup together.	296
	You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. <u>Goats and</u>	297
	<u>monkeys</u> !	298
	<i>He exits.</i>	
LODOVICO		
	Is this the noble Moor, whom our full senate	299
	Call <u>all in all sufficient</u> ? Is this the nature	300
	Whom passion could not shake, whose solid <u>virtue</u>	301
	The shot of accident nor dart of chance	302
	Could neither graze nor pierce?	303
IAGO	He is much	304
	changed.	305
LODOVICO		
	Are his wits <u>safe</u> ? Is he not light of brain?	306
IAGO		
	He's <u>that</u> he is. I may not breathe my <u>censure</u>	307
	What he <u>might</u> be. If what he might he is not,	308
	I <u>would</u> to heaven he were.	309
LODOVICO	What? Strike his wife?	310
IAGO		

'Faith, that was not so well. Yet would I knew	311
That stroke would prove the worst.	312
LODOVICO	
Is it his <u>use</u> ?	313
Or did the letters work upon his <u>blood</u>	314
And new-create <this> fault?	315
IAGO	
Alas, alas!	316
It is not honesty in me to speak	317
What I have seen and known. You shall observe	318
him,	319
And his own <u>courses will denote</u> him so	320
That I may save my speech. Do but go after	321
And mark how he continues.	322
LODOVICO	
I am sorry that I am deceived in him.	323

Scene 2

OTHELLO	You have seen nothing then?	1
EMILIA		
	Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.	2
OTHELLO		
	Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.	3
EMILIA		
	But then I saw no harm, and then I heard	4
	Each syllable that breath <u>made up</u> between them.	5
OTHELLO		
	What, did they never whisper?	6
EMILIA	Never, my lord.	7
OTHELLO	Nor send you out o' th' way?	8
EMILIA	Never.	9
OTHELLO		
	To fetch her fan, her gloves, her <u>mask</u> , nor nothing?	10

EMILIA	Never, my lord.	11
OTHELLO	That's strange.	12
EMILIA		
	I <u>durst</u> , my lord, to wager she is <u>honest</u> ,	13
	Lay down my soul <u>at stake</u> . If you think <u>other</u> ,	14
	Remove your thought. It doth <u>abuse</u> your bosom.	15
	If any wretch have put this in your head,	16
	<u>Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse</u> ,	17
	For if she be not honest, chaste, and true,	18
	There's no man <u>happy</u> . The purest of their wives	19
	Is foul as slander.	20
OTHELLO	Bid her come hither. Go.	21
	<i>Emilia exits.</i>	
	<u>She</u> says enough. Yet <u>she's a simple bawd</u>	22
	<u>That cannot say as much</u> . This is a subtle whore,	23
	A <u>closet</u> lock and key of villainous secrets.	24
	And yet she'll kneel and pray. I have seen her do 't.	25
	<i>Enter Desdemona and Emilia.</i>	
DESDEMONA	My lord, what is your will?	26
OTHELLO		
	Pray you, chuck, come hither.	27
DESDEMONA	What is your	28
	pleasure?	29
OTHELLO		
	Let me see your eyes. Look in my face.	30
DESDEMONA	What horrible fancy's this?	31
OTHELLO, 「to Emilia」	<u>Some of your function</u> ,	32
	mistress.	33
	Leave <u>procreants</u> alone, and shut the door.	34
	Cough, or cry "hem," if anybody come.	35
	Your <u>mystery</u> , your mystery! 〈Nay,〉 <u>dispatch</u> .	36
	<i>Emilia exits.</i>	
DESDEMONA, 「kneeling」		
	Upon my 〈knees,〉 what doth your speech import?	37

I understand a fury in your words,	38
⟨But not the words.⟩	39
OTHELLO Why? What art thou?	40
DESDEMONA	
Your wife, my lord, your true and loyal wife.	41
OTHELLO Come, swear it. Damn thyself,	42
<u>Lest</u> , being like one of heaven, the devils themselves	43
Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double	44
damned.	45
Swear thou art honest.	46
DESDEMONA Heaven doth truly know it.	47
OTHELLO	
Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.	48
DESDEMONA, 「standing」	
To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?	49
OTHELLO	
Ah, Desdemon, away, away, away!	50
DESDEMONA	
Alas the <u>heavy</u> day, why do you weep?	51
Am I the <u>motive</u> of these tears, my lord?	52
If <u>haply</u> you my father do suspect	53
An instrument of this your <u>calling back</u> ,	54
Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,	55
I have lost him too.	56
OTHELLO Had it pleased heaven	57
To <u>try</u> me with affliction, had they rained	58
All kind of sores and shames on my bare head,	59
Steeped me in poverty to the very lips,	60
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,	61
I should have found in some place of my soul	62
A drop of patience. But alas, to make me	63
<u>⟨A⟩ fixed figure for the time of scorn</u>	64
<u>To point his slow ⟨unmoving⟩ finger at—</u>	65
Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.	66
But <u>there</u> where I have <u>garnered up</u> my heart,	67

Where either I must live or bear no life,	68
The <u>fountain</u> from the which my current runs	69
Or else dries up—to be discarded thence,	70
Or keep it as a <u>cistern</u> for foul toads	71
To <u>knot and gender</u> in— <u>turn thy complexion there,</u>	72
<u>Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin,</u>	73
<u>Ay, 'there' look grim as hell.</u>	74
DESDEMONA	
I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.	75
OTHELLO	
O, ay, as <u>summer flies are in the shambles,</u>	76
<u>That quicken even with blowing!</u> O thou weed,	77
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet	78
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst	79
⟨ne'er⟩ been born!	80
DESDEMONA	
Alas, what <u>ignorant sin have I committed?</u>	81
OTHELLO	
Was this <u>fair paper</u> , this most goodly book,	82
Made to write “whore” upon? What committed?	83
[Committed? O thou public <u>commoner</u> ,	84
I should make very forges of my cheeks	85
That would to cinders burn up modesty,	86
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?]	87
Heaven stops the nose at <u>it</u> , and the <u>moon winks;</u>	88
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets	89
Is hushed within the hollow <u>mine</u> of earth	90
And <u>will not</u> hear 't. What committed?	91
⟨ <u>Impudent</u> strumpet!⟩	92
DESDEMONA By heaven, you do me wrong!	93
OTHELLO Are not you a strumpet?	94
DESDEMONA No, as I am a Christian!	95
If to preserve this <u>vessel</u> for my lord	96
From any other foul unlawful touch	97

Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.	98
OTHELLO What, not a whore?	99
DESDEMONA No, as I shall be saved.	100
OTHELLO Is 't possible?	101
DESDEMONA	
O, heaven forgive us!	102
OTHELLO I <u>cry you mercy</u> , then.	103
I <u>took you for</u> that cunning whore of Venice	104
That married with Othello.—You, mistress,	105
<i>Enter Emilia.</i>	
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter	106
And keeps the gate of hell—you, you, ay, you!	107
We have <u>done our course</u> . There's money for your	108
pains.	109
<i>「He gives her money.」</i>	
I pray you turn the key and keep our counsel.	110
<i>He exits.</i>	
EMILIA	
Alas, what does this gentleman <u>conceive</u> ?	111
How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?	112
DESDEMONA Faith, half asleep.	113
EMILIA	
Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?	114
DESDEMONA With who?	115
EMILIA Why, with my lord, madam.	116
[DESDEMONA Who is thy lord?	117
EMILIA He that is yours, sweet lady.]	118
DESDEMONA	
I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.	119
I cannot weep, nor answers have I none	120
But what should <u>go by water</u> . Prithee, tonight	121
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember.	122
And call thy husband hither.	123
EMILIA Here's a change indeed.	124

She exits.

DESDEMONA

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet. 125

How have I been behaved that he might stick 126

The small'st opinion on my least misuse? 127

Enter Iago and Emilia.

IAGO

What is your pleasure, madam? How is 't with you? 128

DESDEMONA

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes 129

Do it with gentle means and easy tasks. 130

He might have chid me so, for, in good faith, 131

I am a child to chiding. 132

IAGO What is the matter, lady? 133

EMILIA

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her, 134

Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her 135

⟨As⟩ true hearts cannot bear. 136

DESDEMONA Am I that name, Iago? 137

IAGO What name, fair 138

lady? 139

DESDEMONA

Such as she said my lord did say I was. 140

EMILIA

He called her "whore." A beggar in his drink 141

Could not have laid such terms upon his callet. 142

IAGO Why did he so? 143

DESDEMONA

I do not know. I am sure I am none such. 144

IAGO

Do not weep, do not weep! Alas the day! 145

EMILIA

Hath she forsook so many noble matches, 146

Her father and her country and her friends, 147

To be called "whore"? Would it not make one 148

	weep?	149
DESDEMONA	It is my wretched fortune.	150
IAGO	<u>Beshrew</u> him for 't! How comes this <u>trick</u> upon him?	151
DESDEMONA	Nay, heaven doth know.	152
EMILIA	<u>I will be hanged if</u> some <u>eternal</u> villain,	153
	Some <u>busy</u> and insinuating rogue,	154
	Some <u>cogging</u> , <u>cozening</u> slave, to get some office,	155
	Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else.	156
IAGO	Fie, there is no such man. It is impossible.	157
DESDEMONA	If any such there be, heaven pardon him.	158
EMILIA	A <u>halter</u> pardon him, and hell gnaw his bones!	159
	Why should he call her "whore"? Who keeps her	160
	company?	161
	What place? What time? <u>What form? What</u>	162
	<u>likelihood?</u>	163
	The Moor's <u>abused</u> by some most villainous knave,	164
	Some base notorious knave, some <u>scurvy</u> fellow.	165
	O <heaven,> <u>that</u> such <u>companions</u> thou'dst <u>unfold</u> ,	166
	And put in every honest hand a whip	167
	To lash the rascals naked through the world,	168
	Even from the east to th' west!	169
IAGO	<u>Speak within door.</u>	170
EMILIA	O, fie upon them! Some such <u>squire</u> he was	171
	That turned your wit <u>the seamy side without</u>	172
	And made you to suspect me with the Moor.	173
IAGO	You are a fool. Go to!	174
DESDEMONA	Alas, Iago,	175
	What shall I do to win my lord again?	176

Good friend, go to him. For by this light of heaven, 177
I know not how I lost him. 「*She kneels.*」 [Here I 178
kneel. 179
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love, 180
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed, 181
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense 182
Delighted them 「in」 any other form, 183
Or that I do not yet, and ever did, 184
And ever will—though he do shake me off 185
To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly, 186
Comfort forswear me! 「*She stands.*」 Unkindness may 187
do much, 188
And his unkindness may defeat my life, 189
But never taint my love. I cannot say “whore”— 190
It does abhor me now I speak the word. 191
To do the act that might the addition earn, 192
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.] 193

IAGO

I pray you be content. 'Tis but his humor. 194
The business of the state does him offense, 195
<And he does chide with you.> 196

DESDEMONA

If 'twere no other— 197

IAGO It is but so, I warrant. 198

「*Trumpets sound.*」

Hark how these instruments summon to supper. 199

The messengers of Venice stays the meat. 200

Go in and weep not. All things shall be well. 201

Desdemona and Emilia exit.

Enter Roderigo.

How now, Roderigo? 202

RODERIGO I do not find 203

That thou deal'st justly with me. 204

IAGO What in the contrary? 205

RODERIGO Every day thou daff'st me with some de- 206
vice, Iago, and rather, as it seems to me now, 207
 keep'st from me all conveniency than suppliest me 208
 with the least advantage of hope. I will indeed no 209
 longer endure it. Nor am I yet persuaded to put up 210
 in peace what already I have foolishly suffered. 211
 IAGO Will you hear me, Roderigo? 212
 RODERIGO 〈Faith,〉 I have heard too much, and your 213
 words and performances are no kin together. 214
 IAGO You charge me most unjustly. 215
 RODERIGO With naught but truth. I have wasted my- 216
 self out of my means. The jewels you have had 217
 from me to deliver 〈to〉 Desdemona would half have 218
 corrupted a votaress. You have told me she hath 219
 received them, and returned me expectations and 220
comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance, but I 221
 find none. 222
 IAGO Well, go to! Very well. 223
 RODERIGO “Very well.” “Go to!” I cannot go to, man, 224
 nor 'tis not very well! 〈By this hand, I say 'tis very〉 225
 scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it. 226
 IAGO Very well. 227
 RODERIGO I tell you 'tis not very well! I will make 228
 myself known to Desdemona. If she will return me 229
 my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my 230
 unlawful solicitation. If not, assure yourself I will 231
 seek satisfaction of you. 232
 IAGO You have said now. 233
 RODERIGO Ay, and said nothing but what I protest 234
intendment of doing. 235
 IAGO Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even 236
 from this instant do build on thee a better opinion 237
 than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo. 238
 Thou hast taken against me a most just exception, 239

but yet I protest I have dealt most directly in thy 240
 affair. 241

RODERIGO It hath not appeared. 242

IAGO I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your 243
 suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, 244
 Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed which I 245
 have greater reason to believe now than ever—I 246
 mean purpose, courage, and valor—this night show 247
 it. If thou the next night following enjoy not Desde- 248
 mona, take me from this world with treachery and 249
 devise engines for my life. 250

RODERIGO Well, what is it? Is it within reason and 251
compass? 252

IAGO Sir, there is especial commission come from 253
 Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place. 254

RODERIGO Is that true? Why, then, Othello and Desde- 255
 mona return again to Venice. 256

IAGO O, no. He goes into Mauritania and ⟨takes⟩ away 257
 with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be 258
lingered here by some accident—wherein none 259
can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio. 260

RODERIGO How do you mean, removing him? 261

IAGO Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's 262
 place: knocking out his brains. 263

RODERIGO And that you would have me to do? 264

IAGO Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He 265
 sups tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to 266
 him. He knows not yet of his honorable fortune. If 267
 you will watch his going thence (which I will 268
 fashion to fall out between twelve and one), you may 269
 take him at your pleasure. I will be near to second 270
 your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, 271
 stand not amazed at it, but go along with me. I will 272
 show you such a necessity in his death that you shall 273

think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high 274
supper time, and the night grows to waste. About it! 275

RODERIGO I will hear further reason for this. 276

IAGO And you shall be satisfied. 277

They exit.

Scene 3

Enter Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and Attendants.

LODOVICO
I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further. 1

OTHELLO
O, pardon me, 'twill do me good to walk. 2

LODOVICO
Madam, good night. I humbly thank your Ladyship. 3

DESDEMONA Your Honor is most welcome. 4

OTHELLO
Will you walk, sir?—O, Desdemona— 5

DESDEMONA My lord? 6

OTHELLO Get you to bed on th' instant. I will be 7
returned forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there. 8

Look 't be done. 9

DESDEMONA I will, my lord. 10

†All but Desdemona and Emilia† exit.

EMILIA
How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did. 11

DESDEMONA
He says he will return incontinent, 12
And hath commanded me to go to bed, 13
And ‹bade› me to dismiss you. 14

EMILIA Dismiss me? 15

DESDEMONA
It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia, 16
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu. 17

	We must not now displease him.	18
EMILIA	I <u>would</u> you had never seen him.	19
DESDEMONA		
	So would not I. My love doth so <u>approve</u> him	20
	That even his <u>stubbornness</u> , his <u>checks</u> , his frowns—	21
	Prithee, <u>unpin me—have grace and favor <in them.></u>	22
EMILIA		
	I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.	23
DESDEMONA		
	<u>All's one</u> . Good <faith,> how foolish are our minds!	24
	If I do die before <thee,> prithee, shroud me	25
	In one of <those> same sheets.	26
EMILIA	Come, come, you talk!	27
DESDEMONA		
	My mother had a maid called Barbary.	28
	She was in love, and he she loved proved mad	29
	And did forsake her. She had a song of willow,	30
	An old thing 'twas, but it expressed <u>her fortune</u> ,	31
	And she died singing it. That song tonight	32
	Will not go from my mind. [<u>I have much to do,</u>	33
	<u>But to go hang</u> my head all at one side	34
	And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.	35
EMILIA	Shall I go fetch your nightgown?	36
DESDEMONA	No, unpin me here.	37
	This Lodovico is a <u>proper</u> man.	38
EMILIA	A very handsome man.	39
DESDEMONA	He speaks well.	40
EMILIA	I know a lady in Venice <u>would</u> have walked	41
	barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his <u>nether</u> lip.	42
DESDEMONA,	<i>「singing」</i>	
	<i>The poor soul sat 「sighing」 by a sycamore tree,</i>	43
	<i>Sing all a green <u>willow</u>.</i>	44
	<i>Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,</i>	45
	<i>Sing willow, willow, willow.</i>	46
	<i>The fresh streams ran by her and murmured her</i>	47

<i>moans,</i>	48
<i>Sing willow, willow, willow;</i>	49
<i>Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the</i>	50
<i>stones—</i>	51
<i><u>Lay by these.</u></i>	52
<i>Sing willow, willow, willow.</i>	53
Prithee <i><u>hie thee!</u></i> He'll come <i><u>anon.</u></i>	54
<i>Sing all a green willow must be my garland.</i>	55
<i>Let nobody blame him, his scorn I <u>approve.</u></i>	56
Nay, that's not next.] Hark, who is 't that knocks?	57
EMILIA It's the wind.	58
DESDEMONA	
<i>[I called my love false love, but what said he then?</i>	59
<i>Sing willow, willow, willow.</i>	60
<i>If I court more women, you'll <u>couch</u> with more</i>	61
<i>men.]—</i>	62
So, get thee gone. Good night. Mine eyes do itch;	63
Doth that <i><u>bode</u></i> weeping?	64
EMILIA 'Tis neither here nor there.	65
[DESDEMONA	
I have heard it said so. O these men, these men!	66
Dost thou in conscience think—tell me, Emilia—	67
That there be women do <i><u>abuse</u></i> their husbands	68
<i><u>In such gross kind?</u></i>	69
EMILIA There be some such, no	70
question.]	71
DESDEMONA	
Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?	72
EMILIA	
Why, would not you?	73
DESDEMONA No, <i><u>by this heavenly light!</u></i>	74
EMILIA	
Nor I neither, by this heavenly light.	75
I might do 't as well i' th' dark.	76
DESDEMONA	

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?	77
EMILIA The world's a huge thing. It is a great <u>price</u>	78
for a small <u>vice</u> .	79
DESDEMONA In troth, I think thou wouldst not.	80
EMILIA In troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I	81
had done <it.> <u>Marry</u> , I would not do such a thing for	82
a <u>joint ring</u> , nor for <u>measures of lawn</u> , nor for	83
gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any <u>petty exhibi-</u>	84
<u>tion</u> . But for the whole world—<'Uds pity!> Who	85
would not make her husband a cuckold to make	86
him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for 't.	87
DESDEMONA Beshrew me if I would do such a wrong	88
for the whole world!	89
EMILIA Why, the wrong is but a wrong i' th' world;	90
and, <u>having</u> the world <u>for</u> your labor, 'tis a wrong in	91
your own world, and you <u>might</u> quickly make it	92
right.	93
DESDEMONA I do not think there is any such woman.	94
EMILIA Yes, a dozen; and as many <u>to th' vantage</u> as	95
would <u>store</u> the world they <u>played</u> for.	96
[But I do think it is their husbands' faults	97
If wives do fall. Say that <u>they slack</u> their <u>duties</u> ,	98
And pour our treasures into foreign laps;	99
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,	100
<u>Throwing</u> restraint upon us. Or say they strike us,	101
Or <u>scant</u> our former <u>having in despite</u> .	102
Why, we have <u>galls</u> , and though we have some <u>grace</u> ,	103
Yet have we some <u>revenge</u> . Let husbands know	104
Their wives have <u>sense</u> like them. <u>They</u> see, and	105
smell,	106
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,	107
As husbands have. What is it that <u>they</u> do	108
When they <u>change</u> us for others? Is it <u>sport</u> ?	109
I think it is. And doth <u>affection</u> breed it?	110

I think it doth. Is 't frailty that thus errs? 111

It is so too. And have not we affections, 112

Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have? 113

Then let them use us well. Else let them know, 114

The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.] 115

DESDEMONA

Good night, good night. ⟨God⟩ me such uses send, 116

Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend. 117

They exit.



The Tragedy of
OTHELLO,
The Moor of Venice

ACT 5



ACT 5

Scene 1

Enter Iago and Roderigo.

IAGO

Here, stand behind this bulk. Straight will he
come. 1 2

Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home. 3

Quick, quick! Fear nothing. I'll be at thy elbow. 4

It makes us or it mars us—think on that, 5

And fix most firm thy resolution. 6

RODERIGO

Be near at hand. I may miscarry in 't. 7

IAGO

Here, at thy hand. Be bold and take thy stand. 8

「He moves aside.」

RODERIGO

I have no great devotion to the deed, 9

And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons. 10

'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword! He dies. 11

「He draws his sword.」

IAGO, *「aside」*

I have rubbed this young quat almost to the sense, 12

And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio, 13

Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other, 14

Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo, 15

He calls me to a restitution large 16

Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him 17

As gifts to Desdemona. 18

It must not be. If Cassio do remain, 19
He hath a daily beauty in his life 20
That makes me ugly. And besides, the Moor 21
May unfold me to him. There stand I in much peril. 22
No, he must die. <Be 't> so. I <hear> him coming. 23

Enter Cassio.

RODERIGO

I know his gait. 'Tis he!—Villain, thou diest! 24
「*He thrusts at Cassio.*」

CASSIO

That thrust had been mine enemy indeed 25
But that my coat is better than thou know'st. 26
I will make proof of thine. 27
「*He draws, and stabs Roderigo.*」

RODERIGO

O, I am slain! 28

「*Roderigo falls.*」

Iago stabs Cassio in the leg, and exits.」

CASSIO

I am maimed forever! Help, ho! Murder, murder! 29

Enter Othello.

OTHELLO

The voice of Cassio! Iago keeps his word. 30

RODERIGO O, villain that I am! 31

OTHELLO, 「*aside*」 It is even so. 32

CASSIO O, help ho! Light! A surgeon! 33

OTHELLO, 「*aside*」

'Tis he! O brave Iago, honest and just, 34

That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong! 35

Thou teachest me.—Minion, your dear lies dead, 36

And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come. 37

<Forth> of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are 38

blotted. 39

Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be 40

spotted.	41
<i>Othello exits.</i>	
<i>Enter Lodovico and Gratiano.</i>	
CASSIO	
What ho! No <u>watch</u> ? No <u>passage</u> ? Murder, murder!	42
GRATIANO	
<u>'Tis some mischance</u> . The voice is very direful.	43
CASSIO O, help!	44
LODOVICO Hark!	45
RODERIGO O wretched villain!	46
LODOVICO	
Two or three groan. 'Tis <u>heavy</u> night.	47
These may be counterfeits. Let's think 't unsafe	48
To come <u>in to</u> the cry without more help.	49
RODERIGO	
Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.	50
<i>Enter Iago (with a light.)</i>	
LODOVICO Hark!	51
GRATIANO	
Here's <u>one</u> comes <u>in his shirt</u> , with light and	52
weapons.	53
IAGO	
Who's there? Whose noise is this that <u>cries on</u>	54
murder?	55
LODOVICO	
We do not know.	56
IAGO (Did) not you hear a cry?	57
Here, here! For (heaven's) sake, help me!	58
IAGO What's the matter?	59
GRATIANO, (to Lodovico)	
This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.	60
LODOVICO	
The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.	61
IAGO, (to Cassio)	

<u>What</u> are you here that cry so grievously?	62
CASSIO	
Iago? O, I am <u>spoiled, undone</u> by villains.	63
Give me some help!	64
IAGO	
O me, lieutenant! What villains have done this?	65
CASSIO	
I think that one of them is hereabout	66
And cannot <u>make</u> away.	67
IAGO	O treacherous villains!
「 <i>To Lodovico and Gratiano.</i> 」 What are you there?	68
Come in, and give some help.	69
RODERIGO O, help me 〈here!〉	70
CASSIO	
That's one of them.	71
IAGO, 「 <i>to Roderigo</i> 」 O murd'rous slave! O villain!	72
	「 <i>He stabs Roderigo.</i> 」
RODERIGO	
O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!	73
IAGO	
Kill men i' th' dark?—Where be these bloody	74
thieves?	75
How silent is this town! Ho, murder, murder!—	76
What may you be? Are you of good or evil?	77
LODOVICO	
As you shall <u>prove us, praise</u> us.	78
IAGO	Signior Lodovico?
LODOVICO He, sir.	79
IAGO	
<u>I cry you mercy.</u> Here's Cassio hurt by villains.	80
GRATIANO Cassio?	81
IAGO	
How is 't, brother?	82
CASSIO	My leg is cut in two.
IAGO Marry, heaven forbid!	83
	84
	85
	86

Light, gentlemen. I'll bind it with my shirt.	87	
<i>Enter Bianca.</i>		
BIANCA		
What is the matter, ho? Who is 't that cried?	88	
IAGO		
Who is 't that cried?	89	
BIANCA	O, my dear Cassio,	90
	My sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!	91
IAGO		
	O <u>notable</u> strumpet! Cassio, <u>may you suspect</u>	92
	<u>Who they should be</u> that have thus mangled you?	93
CASSIO	No.	94
GRATIANO		
	I am sorry to find you thus; I have been to seek you.	95
[IAGO		
	Lend me a garter. So.—O for a <u>chair</u>	96
	To bear him easily hence!]	97
BIANCA		
	Alas, he faints. O, Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!	98
IAGO		
	Gentlemen all, I do suspect this <u>trash</u>	99
	To be a party in this injury.—	100
	Patience awhile, good Cassio.—Come, come;	101
	Lend me a light. 「 <i>Peering at Roderigo.</i> 」 Know we this	102
	face or no?	103
	Alas, my friend and my dear countryman	104
	Roderigo? No! Yes, sure. 〈O heaven,〉 Roderigo!	105
GRATIANO	What, of Venice?	106
IAGO	Even he, sir. Did you know him?	107
GRATIANO	Know him? Ay.	108
IAGO		
	Signior Gratiano? I cry your gentle pardon.	109
	These bloody <u>accidents</u> must excuse my manners	110
	That so neglected you.	111

GRATIANO	I am glad to see you.	112
IAGO		
	How do you, Cassio?—O, <u>a chair</u> , a chair!	113
GRATIANO	Roderigo?	114
IAGO		
	He, he, 'tis he! 「 <i>A chair is brought in.</i> 」 O, that's well	115
	<u>said</u> ; the chair.—	116
	Some good man bear him carefully from hence.	117
	I'll fetch the General's surgeon.— <u>For</u> you, mistress,	118
	<u>Save you your labor</u> .—He that lies slain here,	119
	Cassio,	120
	Was my dear friend. What malice was between you?	121
CASSIO		
	None in the world. Nor do I know the man.	122
IAGO, 「 <i>to Bianca</i> 」		
	What, look you pale?—O, bear him 〈out〉 o' th' air.	123
	「 <i>Cassio, in the chair, and Roderigo are carried off.</i> 」	
	「 <i>To Gratiano and Lodovico.</i> 」 Stay you, good	124
	gentlemen.—Look you pale, mistress?—	125
	Do you perceive the <u>gastness</u> of her eye?—	126
	Nay, if you <u>stare</u> , we shall hear more anon.—	127
	Behold her well. I pray you, look upon her.	128
	Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness will speak	129
	Though tongues were <u>out of use</u> .	130
	〈 <i>Enter Emilia.</i> 〉	
EMILIA		
	Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter,	131
	husband?	132
IAGO		
	Cassio hath here been set on in the dark	133
	By Roderigo and fellows that are scaped.	134
	He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.	135
EMILIA		
	Alas, good gentleman! Alas, good Cassio!	136

IAGO

This is the fruits of whoring. Prithee, Emilia, 137

Go know of Cassio where he supped tonight. 138

「*To Bianca.*」 What, do you shake at that? 139

BIANCA

He supped at my house, but I therefore shake not. 140

IAGO

O, did he so? I charge you go with me. 141

EMILIA O fie upon thee, strumpet! 142

BIANCA

I am no strumpet, but of life as honest 143

As you that thus abuse me. 144

EMILIA As I? 〈Faugh!〉 Fie upon thee! 145

IAGO

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.— 146

Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.— 147

Emilia, run you to the citadel 148

And tell my lord and lady what hath happed.— 149

Will you go on afore? 「*Aside.*」 This is the night 150

That either makes me or fordoes me quite. 151

They exit 「in different directions.」

Scene 2

Enter Othello 〈with a light,〉 and Desdemona in her bed.

OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul. 1

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars. 2

It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood, 3

Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow, 4

And smooth as monumental alabaster. 5

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men. 6

Put out the light, and then put out the light. 7

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister, 8

I can again thy former light restore	9
<u>Should I</u> repent me. <u>But once</u> put out thy light,	10
Thou <u>cunning'st</u> pattern of <u>excelling</u> nature,	11
I know not where is that <u>Promethean heat</u>	12
That can thy light <u>relume</u> . When I have plucked <the>	13
rose,	14
I cannot give it vital growth again.	15
It needs must wither. I'll smell <it> on the tree.	16
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade	17
<u>Justice</u> to break her sword! 「 <i>He kisses her.</i> 」 One	18
more, one more.	19
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee	20
And love thee after. One more, and <this> the last.	21
	<i><He kisses her.></i>
So sweet was ne'er so <u>fatal</u> . I must weep,	22
But they are <u>cruel tears</u> . This sorrow's heavenly:	23
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.	24
DESDEMONA	
Who's there? Othello?	25
OTHELLO	Ay, Desdemona.
DESDEMONA	Will you come to bed, my lord?
OTHELLO	
Have you prayed tonight, Desdemon?	28
DESDEMONA	Ay, my lord.
OTHELLO	
If you <u>bethink yourself</u> of any <u>crime</u>	30
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,	31
<u>Solicit for it straight.</u>	32
DESDEMONA	<u>Alack</u> , my lord,
What may you mean by that?	34
OTHELLO	
Well, do it, and be brief. I will <u>walk by</u> .	35
I <u>would not</u> kill thy unprepared spirit.	36
No, <heaven> <u>forfend</u> ! I <u>would not</u> kill thy soul.	37
DESDEMONA	Talk you of killing?
	38

OTHELLO		
Ay, I do.		39
DESDEMONA	Then heaven have mercy on me.	40
OTHELLO	Amen, with all my heart.	41
DESDEMONA		
If you say <so,> I hope you will not kill me.		42
OTHELLO	Humh.	43
DESDEMONA		
And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then		44
When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know		45
not,		46
Since guiltiness I know not, but yet I feel I fear.		47
OTHELLO		
Think on thy sins.		48
DESDEMONA	They are loves I bear to you.	49
OTHELLO	Ay, and for that thou diest.	50
DESDEMONA		
That death's unnatural that kills for loving.		51
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?		52
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.		53
These are <u>portents</u> , but yet I hope, I hope		54
They do not <u>point on me</u> .		55
OTHELLO	Peace, and be still.	56
DESDEMONA		
I will so. What's the matter?		57
OTHELLO	That handkerchief	58
Which I so loved, and gave thee, thou gav'st to		59
Cassio.		60
DESDEMONA		
No, by my life and soul! Send for the man		61
And ask him.		62
OTHELLO		
Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury.		63
Thou art on thy deathbed.		64
DESDEMONA		
Ay, but not yet to die.		65

OTHELLO	〈Yes,〉 <u>presently</u> .	66
	Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin.	67
	For to deny <u>each article</u> with oath	68
	Cannot remove nor choke the strong <u>conception</u>	69
	That I do <u>groan withal</u> . Thou art to die.	70
DESDEMONA		
	〈Then Lord〉 have mercy on me!	71
OTHELLO	I say “Amen.”	72
DESDEMONA		
	And have you mercy, too. I never did	73
	<u>Offend</u> you in my life, never loved Cassio	74
	But <u>with such general warranty of heaven</u>	75
	<u>As I might love</u> . I never gave him <u>token</u> .	76
OTHELLO		
	By heaven, I saw my handkerchief <u>in ’s</u> hand!	77
	O perjured woman, thou dost <u>stone my heart</u>	78
	And 〈mak’st〉 me call what I intend to do	79
	A murder, which I thought a sacrifice!	80
	I saw the handkerchief!	81
DESDEMONA	He found it, then.	82
	I never gave it him. Send for him hither.	83
	Let him <u>confess</u> a truth.	84
OTHELLO	He hath <u>confessed</u> .	85
DESDEMONA	What, my lord?	86
OTHELLO		
	That he hath <u>used</u> thee.	87
DESDEMONA	How? Unlawfully?	88
OTHELLO	Ay.	89
DESDEMONA		
	He will not say so.	90
OTHELLO	No. His mouth is stopped.	91
	Honest Iago hath <u>ta’en order for ’t</u> .	92
DESDEMONA		
	O, my fear interprets. What, is he dead?	93
OTHELLO		

Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge	94
Had <u>stomach</u> for them all.	95
DESDEMONA	
Alas, he is betrayed, and I <u>undone</u> .	96
	「 <i>She weeps.</i> 」
OTHELLO	
Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?	97
DESDEMONA	
O banish me, my lord, but kill me not!	98
OTHELLO Down, strumpet!	99
DESDEMONA	
Kill me tomorrow, let me live tonight.	100
OTHELLO Nay, if you strive—	101
DESDEMONA	
But half an hour!	102
[OTHELLO Being done, there is no pause.]	103
DESDEMONA	
But while I say one prayer!	104
OTHELLO It is too late.	105
	⟨ <i>He</i> ⟩ <i>smothers her.</i>
EMILIA, 「 <u>within</u> 」	
My lord, my lord? What ho! My lord, my lord!	106
OTHELLO	
What noise is this?—Not dead? Not yet quite dead?	107
I that am cruel am yet merciful.	108
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.	109
So, so.	110
EMILIA, <i>within</i> What, ho! My lord, my lord!	111
OTHELLO Who's	112
there?	113
EMILIA, 「 <i>within</i> 」	
O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you.	114
OTHELLO	
Yes. 'Tis Emilia.— <u>By and by</u> .—She's dead.	115
<u>'Tis like she comes</u> to speak of Cassio's death.	116

The noise was <here.> Ha, no more moving? 117
 Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were 't good? 118
 I think she stirs again. No. What's best to do? 119
 If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife. 120
 My wife, my wife! What wife? I have no wife. 121
 O insupportable! O heavy hour! 122
 Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse 123
 Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe 124
 <Should> yawn at alteration. 125
 EMILIA, 「*within*」 I do beseech you 126
 That I may speak with you. O, good my lord— 127
 OTHELLO
 I had forgot thee. O, come in, Emilia.— 128
Soft, by and by, let me the curtains draw.— 129
 Where art thou? 130

Enter Emilia.
 What's the matter with thee now? 131
 EMILIA
 O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done. 132
 OTHELLO What? Now? 133
 EMILIA But now, my lord. 134
 OTHELLO
 It is the very error of the moon. 135
 She comes more nearer Earth than she was wont 136
 And makes men mad. 137
 EMILIA Cassio, my lord, hath killed 138
 A young Venetian called Roderigo. 139
 OTHELLO
 Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed? 140
 EMILIA No, Cassio is not killed. 141
 OTHELLO
 Not Cassio killed? Then murder's out of tune, 142
 And sweet revenge grows harsh. 143
 DESDEMONA O falsely, falsely murdered. 144

EMILIA
 〈O Lord,〉 what cry is that? 145

OTHELLO That? What? 146

EMILIA
Out, and alas, that was my lady's voice! 147
Help! Help ho! Help! O lady, speak again! 148
 Sweet Desdemona, O sweet mistress, speak! 149

DESDEMONA A guiltless death I die. 150

EMILIA O, who hath done this deed? 151

DESDEMONA Nobody. I myself. Farewell. 152
 Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell. 153

〈She dies.〉

OTHELLO
 Why, how should she be murdered? 154

EMILIA Alas, who 155
 knows? 156

OTHELLO
 You 〈heard〉 her say herself, it was not I. 157

EMILIA
 She said so. I must needs report the truth. 158

OTHELLO
 She's like a liar gone to burning hell! 159
 'Twas I that killed her. 160

EMILIA
 O, the more angel she, and you the blacker devil! 161

OTHELLO
 She turned to folly, and she was a whore. 162

EMILIA
 Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil! 163

OTHELLO She was false as water. 164

EMILIA Thou art rash as fire to say 165
 That she was false. O, she was heavenly true! 166

OTHELLO
 Cassio did top her. Ask thy husband else. 167
 O, I were damned beneath all depth in hell 168
But that I did proceed upon just grounds 169

To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.	170
EMILIA My husband?	171
OTHELLO Thy husband.	172
EMILIA That she was false to wedlock?	173
OTHELLO	
Ay, with Cassio. Had she been true,	174
If heaven would make me such another world	175
Of one entire and perfect <u>chrysolite</u> ,	176
I'd not have sold her for it.	177
EMILIA My husband?	178
OTHELLO	
Ay, 'twas he that <u>told me on</u> her first.	179
An honest man he is, and hates the slime	180
That sticks on filthy deeds.	181
EMILIA My husband?	182
OTHELLO	
What needs this <u>iterance</u> , woman? I say, thy	183
husband.	184
[EMILIA	
O mistress, villainy hath <u>made mocks with</u> love!—	185
My husband say she was false?	186
OTHELLO	
He, woman.	187
I say thy husband. Dost understand the word?	188
My friend, thy husband; honest, honest Iago.]	189
EMILIA	
If he say so, may his pernicious soul	190
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th' heart!	191
She was too fond of her most filthy <u>bargain</u> .	192
	<i>「He draws his sword.」</i>
OTHELLO Hah?	193
EMILIA Do thy worst!	194
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven	195
Than thou wast worthy her.	196
OTHELLO	
<u>Peace, you were best!</u>	197
EMILIA	

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm 198
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt, 199
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed— 200
I care not for thy sword. I'll make thee known, 201
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! Help, ho! Help! 202
The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder! 203

Enter Montano, Gratiano, and Iago.

MONTANO

What is the matter? How now, general? 204

EMILIA

O, are you come, Iago? You have done well, 205

That men must lay their murders on your neck. 206

GRATIANO What is the matter? 207

EMILIA, *to Iago*

Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man. 208

He says thou told'st him that his wife was false. 209

I know thou didst not. Thou'rt not such a villain. 210

Speak, for my heart is full. 211

IAGO

I told him what I thought, and told no more 212

Than what he found himself was apt and true. 213

EMILIA

But did you ever tell him she was false? 214

IAGO I did. 215

EMILIA

You told a lie, an odious, damnèd lie! 216

Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie! 217

She false with Cassio? Did you say with Cassio? 218

IAGO

With Cassio, mistress. Go to! Charm your tongue. 219

EMILIA

I will not charm my tongue. I am bound to speak. 220

[My mistress here lies murdered in her bed. 221

ALL O heavens forfend! 222

EMILIA, 「*to Iago*」
 And your reports have set the murder on! 223

OTHELLO
 Nay, stare not, masters; it is true indeed. 224

GRATIANO 'Tis a strange truth. 225

MONTANO
 O monstrous act! 226

EMILIA Villainy, villainy, villainy! 227
 I think upon 't, I think! I smell 't! O villainy! 228
 I thought so then. I'll kill myself for grief! 229
 O villainy! Villainy!] 230

IAGO
 What, are you mad? I charge you get you home. 231

EMILIA
 Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak. 232
 'Tis proper I obey him, but not now. 233
 Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home. 234

OTHELLO
 O, O, O! 235

(Othello falls on the bed.)

EMILIA Nay, lay thee down, and roar! 236
 For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent 237
 That e'er did lift up eye. 238

OTHELLO, 「*standing*」 O, she was foul!— 239
 I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece, 240
 Whose breath indeed these hands have newly 241
 stopped. 242
 I know this act shows horrible and grim. 243

GRATIANO
 Poor Desdemon, I am glad thy father's dead. 244
 Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief 245
Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now, 246
 This sight would make him do a desperate turn, 247
 Yea, curse his better angel from his side, 248
 And fall to reprobance. 249

OTHELLO

'Tis pitiful. But yet Iago knows 250
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame 251
A thousand times committed. Cassio confessed it, 252
And she did gratify his amorous works 253
With that recognizance and pledge of love 254
Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand. 255
It was a handkerchief, an antique token 256
My father gave my mother. 257

EMILIA O 〈God!〉 O heavenly 〈God!〉 258

OTHELLO

〈Zounds,〉 hold your peace! 259

EMILIA 'Twill out, 'twill out. I peace? 260

No, I will speak as liberal as the north. 261

Let heaven and men and devils, let them all, 262

All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak. 263

IAGO Be wise, and get you home. 264

「He draws his sword.」

EMILIA

I will not. 265

GRATIANO Fie, your sword upon a woman! 266

EMILIA

O thou dull Moor, that handkerchief thou speak'st 267

of 268

I found by fortune, and did give my husband— 269

For often, with a solemn earnestness 270

(More than indeed belonged to such a trifle), 271

He begged of me to steal 't. 272

IAGO Villainous whore! 273

EMILIA

She give it Cassio? No, alas, I found it, 274

And I did give 't my husband. 275

IAGO Filth, thou liest! 276

EMILIA

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen! 277

「To Othello.」 O murd'rous <u>coxcomb</u> , what should	278
such a fool	279
Do with so good a wife?	280
OTHELLO <u>Are there no stones in heaven</u>	281
<u>But what serves for the thunder?</u> — <u>Precious</u> villain!	282
<i>〈The Moor runs at Iago 「but is disarmed.」</i>	
<i>Iago kills his wife.〉</i>	
GRATIANO	
The woman falls! Sure he hath killed his wife.	283
EMILIA	
Ay, ay! O, lay me by my mistress' side.	284
	<i>〈Iago exits.〉</i>
GRATIANO He's gone, but his wife's killed.	285
MONTANO	
'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon	286
Which I have <i>〈here〉</i> <u>recovered</u> from the Moor.	287
Come, guard the door <u>without</u> . Let <u>him</u> not pass,	288
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,	289
For 'tis a damnèd slave.	290
	<i>〈Montano and Gratiano〉 exit.</i>
OTHELLO I am not valiant neither,	291
But every puny <u>whipster</u> gets my sword.	292
But why should <u>honor outlive honesty?</u>	293
Let it go all.	294
[EMILIA What did thy song <u>bode</u> , lady?	295
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will <u>play the swan</u>	296
<u>And die in music.</u>	297
「She sings.」 <i>Willow, willow, willow.</i>]	298
Moor, she was chaste. She loved thee, cruel Moor.	299
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.	300
So speaking as I think, alas, I die.	301
	<i>〈She dies.〉</i>
OTHELLO	
I have another weapon in this chamber.	302
It <i>〈is〉</i> a sword of Spain, <u>the ice brook's temper.</u>	303

O, here it is.—Uncle, I must come forth. 304

GRATIANO, *⟨within⟩*

If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear; 305

Thou hast no weapon and perforce must suffer. 306

OTHELLO

Look in upon me, then, and speak with me, 307

Or naked as I am I will assault thee. 308

「Enter Gratiano.」

GRATIANO

What is the matter? 309

OTHELLO Behold, I have a weapon. 310

A better never did itself sustain 311

Upon a soldier's thigh. I have seen the day 312

That with this little arm and this good sword, 313

I have made my way through more impediments 314

Than twenty times your stop. But—O vain boast!— 315

Who can control his fate? 'Tis not so now. 316

[Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed. 317

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt 318

And very sea-mark of my utmost sail. 319

Do you go back dismayed? 'Tis a lost fear. 320

Man but a rush against Othello's breast, 321

And he retires. Where should Othello go? 322

「He looks toward the bed.」

Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starred wench,] 323

Pale as thy smock, when we shall meet at compt, 324

This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven, 325

And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl? 326

Even like thy chastity.—O cursèd, cursèd slave!— 327

Whip me, you devils, 328

From the possession of this heavenly sight! 329

Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulfur, 330

Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire! 331

O Desdemon! Dead, Desdemon! Dead! O, O! 332

Enter Lodovico, Cassio (in a chair,) Montano, and Iago, with Officers.

LODOVICO

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man? 333

OTHELLO

That's he that was Othello. Here I am. 334

LODOVICO

Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth. 335

「Iago is brought forward.」

OTHELLO

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.— 336

If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee. 337

「He stabs Iago.」

LODOVICO Wrench his sword from him. 338

「Othello is disarmed.」

IAGO I bleed, sir, but not killed. 339

OTHELLO

I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live, 340

For in my sense 'tis happiness to die. 341

LODOVICO

O thou Othello, that (wert) once so good, 342

Fall'n in the practice of a (damned) slave, 343

What shall be said to thee? 344

OTHELLO Why, anything. 345

An honorable murderer, if you will, 346

For naught I did in hate, but all in honor. 347

LODOVICO

This wretch hath part confessed his villainy. 348

Did you and he consent in Cassio's death? 349

OTHELLO Ay. 350

CASSIO

Dear general, I never gave you cause. 351

OTHELLO

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon. 352

Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil 353

Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body? 354

IAGO	
Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.	355
From this time forth I never will speak word.	356
LODOVICO What? Not to pray?	357
GRATIANO Torments will ope your lips.	358
OTHELLO Well, thou dost best.	359
LODOVICO Sir,	360
You shall understand what hath <u>befall'n</u> ,	361
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter	362
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,	363
And here another. 「 <i>He shows papers.</i> 」 The one of	364
them <u>imports</u>	365
The death of Cassio, to be undertook	366
By Roderigo.	367
OTHELLO	
O villain!	368
CASSIO Most heathenish and most <u>gross</u> .	369
LODOVICO	
Now here's another <u>discontented paper</u>	370
Found in his pocket, too; and this it seems	371
Roderigo meant t' have sent this damnèd villain,	372
But that, <u>belike</u> , Iago in the interim	373
Came in and satisfied him.	374
OTHELLO O, thou pernicious <u>caitiff</u> !—	375
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief	376
That was my wife's?	377
CASSIO I found it in my chamber.	378
And he himself confessed it but <u>even</u> now,	379
That there he dropped it for a special purpose	380
Which <u>wrought to his desire</u> .	381
OTHELLO O fool, fool, fool!	382
CASSIO	
There is besides, in Roderigo's letter,	383
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him	384
<u>Brave</u> me upon the watch, <u>whereon</u> it came	385

That I was <u>cast</u> . And even but now <u>he</u> spake,	386
After long seeming dead: Iago hurt him,	387
Iago <u>set him on</u> .	388
LODOVICO, 「to Othello」	
You must forsake this room and go with us.	389
Your power and your command is taken off,	390
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. <u>For</u> this slave,	391
If there be any cunning cruelty	392
That can torment him much and <u>hold him</u> long,	393
It shall be his. You shall <u>close prisoner rest</u> ,	394
<u>Till that</u> the nature of your fault be known	395
To the Venetian state.—Come, bring away.	396
OTHELLO	
<u>Soft you</u> . A word or two before you go.	397
I have done the state some service, and they	398
know 't.	399
No more of that. I pray you in your letters,	400
When you shall these <u>unlucky</u> deeds relate,	401
Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,	402
Nor set down <u>ought</u> in malice. Then must you speak	403
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;	404
Of one not easily jealous, but <u>being wrought</u> ,	405
<u>Perplexed</u> in the extreme; of one whose hand,	406
Like the <u>base Judean</u> , threw a pearl away	407
<u>Richer</u> than all his tribe; of one whose <u>subdued</u>	408
eyes,	409
Albeit unused to the melting mood,	410
Drops tears as fast as the <u>Arabian trees</u>	411
Their <u>medicinal</u> gum. Set you down this.	412
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,	413
Where a <u>malignant</u> and a turbanned Turk	414
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,	415
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog,	416
And smote him, thus.	417

⟨*He stabs himself.*⟩

LODOVICO O bloody period! 418

GRATIANO All that is spoke is marred. 419

OTHELLO, 「*to Desdemona*」

I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this, 420

Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. 421

⟨*He*⟩ *dies.*

CASSIO

This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon, 422

For he was great of heart. 423

LODOVICO, 「*to Iago*」 O Spartan dog, 424

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea, 425

Look on the tragic loading of this bed. 426

This is thy work.—The object poisons sight. 427

Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house, 428

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor, 429

For they succeed on you. 「*To Cassio.*」 To you, lord 430

governor, 431

Remains the censure of this hellish villain. 432

The time, the place, the torture, O, enforce it. 433

Myself will straight aboard, and to the state 434

This heavy act with heavy heart relate. 435

They exit.

Longer Notes

1.1.72. thick-lips: In the first act of this play, Shakespeare gives Iago and Roderigo language that marks them as obvious racists. Before we even meet Othello, we hear them refer to him in terms that disparage his looks (“thick-lips,” [1.1.72](#)) and that play on white fears of black male sexuality (“Even now . . . an old black ram / Is tugging your white ewe,” [1.1.97](#)–98; “you’ll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse,” [1.1.124](#)–25; “your fair daughter, / . . . Transported . . . / To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor” [1.1.137](#)–41). Soon after we meet Othello, Shakespeare has Brabantio join in the racist attacks, claiming that only if she were bound in chains of magic would Desdemona, “t’ incur a general mock, / Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou—to fear, not to delight!” ([1.2.88](#)–90), a racist charge that he reiterates before the Senate, claiming that for Desdemona to love the black Othello is unnatural: “For nature so prepost’rously to err— / Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense— / Sans witchcraft could not” ([1.3.75](#)–77). Even the Venetian Duke, who is represented as wise and as an admirer of Othello, reassures Brabantio with a slightly veiled racism of his own: “If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black” ([1.3.330](#)–31). In the early parts of the play, Othello seems impervious to these crude assessments of him as a black man. When, however, in Act 3 he turns on himself under Iago’s torments (“Haply, for I am black / . . . She’s gone,” [3.3.304](#)–8; “Her name, that was as fresh / As Dian’s visage, is now begrimed and black / As mine own face” [3.3.441](#)–43),

the reader/audience realizes the impact a racist world has had on his own self-image.

1.1.177 SD. **nightgown:** The phrase “*in his nightgown*,” which is found in the Quarto, must be in error, since Brabantio has dressed himself to go outside to call up his friends and to have Othello arrested. The gown he puts on is, in fact, the one he wears to the Senate House in 1.3. The *Oxford English Dictionary* makes it clear that a **nightgown** was “a loose gown specially used for putting on at (or during the) night in place of the ordinary clothes; a dressing-gown.”

1.3.57. **general enemy Ottoman:** By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the time when *Othello* was presumably written, the enmity between the Christian world and the Ottoman Empire was already some centuries old. During the sixteenth century, more than one war had been waged between Venice and the Ottoman Empire, with each of these two powerful states struggling for dominance on the sea. In the Ottoman war against Venice launched shortly after the death of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566, the Ottoman Empire’s chief aim was to capture Cyprus, which had been under Venetian rule since 1479. Venice succeeded in holding onto the island but, in 1573, surrendered it to the Ottomans in order to secure peace.

1.3.283. **I love:** Almost all editions (including our 1993 edition of this play) include in this line a word from the Quarto that smooths out the iambic pentameter line: “That I did love the Moor to live with him.” However, this additional word is not necessary to create a strong line; emphasis on the words **That, love, Moor, live, him**, with a bit of a pause on **love**, creates a powerful line. Omitting the

Quarto's additional word takes Desdemona's love out of the past (when she "did love" him) and makes it her current and ongoing state of being.

2.3.72–76. And . . . drink: W. H. Auden classified this song among those he called "impromptu songs" in Shakespeare's plays: "The impromptu singer stops speaking and breaks into song . . . to relieve his feelings . . . or to help him in some action" ("Music in Shakespeare . . .," *Encounter* [December, 1957]: 31–44). Iago is here using the song to encourage Cassio to take a drink. The one stanza given in the text has been persuasively linked to a now-lost song "A Soldier's Life," for which William Byrd wrote music. Several of Shakespeare's impromptu songs are songs that were already popular in London.

3.3.142. close dilations: This phrase has been much debated over the years, in part because some editors have found the Quarto variant, "close denotements," a more attractive reading, while yet other editors have proposed that the phrase should read "close delations" (with *delations* meaning "accusations"). In 1985, Patricia Parker brought the phrase into prominence by arguing that in the word *dilation* we have a "crossing of rhetorical, judicial, and temporal" language. While *dilation* was a rhetorical term for "amplification of a topic," it also meant "the act of delaying." *Delation*, its cognate (both a spelling variant and a legal term), meant both "accusation" and "the provision of a narrative in response to interrogation." Thus *dilations* is an incredibly rich word, simultaneously meaning "amplification, accusation, and delay." Parker argues that Samuel Johnson's proposal that "close dilations" could mean "secret and occult [i.e., hidden, concealed] accusations"

should not be dismissed, as scholars over the years have done. [Patricia Parker, “Shakespeare and Rhetoric: ‘dilation’ and ‘delation’ in *Othello*,” in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (1985), pp. 54–74.]

3.3.197. cuckold: The word *cuckold* comes from the name of the cuckoo, a bird which does not build a nest but instead leaves its eggs in other birds’ nests for the other birds to hatch and feed. The association of cuckolds with horns growing from the man’s forehead goes back to ancient times and may originate with the early and prevalent practice of “grafting the spurs of a castrated cock on the root of the excised comb, where they grew and became horns, sometimes of several inches long” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, “horn” 7a).

Textual Notes

The reading of the present text appears to the left of the bracket. Unless otherwise stated, this reading is from the First Folio (**F**). The earliest sources of readings not in **F** are indicated as follows: **Q** is the First Quarto of 1622; **Q2** is the Second Quarto of 1630; **Ed.** is an earlier editor of Shakespeare, beginning with the anonymous editor of the Second Folio of 1632. No sources are given for emendations of punctuation or for corrections of obvious typographical errors, like turned letters, that produce no known word. Other symbols: **SD** means stage direction; **SP** means speech prefix; *uncorr.* means the first or uncorrected state of **F** or **Q**; *corr.* means the second or corrected state of **F** or **Q**; ~ stands in place of a word already quoted before the bracket; ^ indicates the omission of a punctuation mark.

1.1 1. Tush] **Q**; *omit* **F** 2. thou] you **Q** 2. hast] has **Q** 4. 'Sblood] **Q**; *omit* **F** 11. Off-capped] Oft capt **Q** 16. And in conclusion,] **Q**; *omit* **F** 18. chose] chosen **Q** 26. togèd] **Q**; Tongued **F** 30. other] **Q**; others **F** 31. Christened] Christian **Q** 31. beleed] led **Q** 33. creditor.] ~, **Q** 35. God] **Q**; *omit* **F** 35. Moorship's] Worships **Q** 37. Why] But **Q** 39. And] *omit* **Q** 39. by old] by the olde **Q** 41. affined] assign'd **Q** 46. all be] be all **Q** 59. These] Those **Q** 71. daws] Doues **Q** 72. full] **Q**; fall **F** 72. thicklips] **Q** (thicklips); Thicks-lips **F** 73. carry 't] carry'et **Q** 76. streets,] streete **Q** 79. chances] changes **Q** 79. on 't] out **Q** 85. Signior] Siginor **F** 86. Thieves, thieves] Theeues, theeues, theeues **Q** 87. your daughter] you Daughter

Q 88. SD *Enter Brabantio, above*] “*Bra. Aboue.*” as SP F; Brabantio *at a window*. Q 92. your doors locked] all doore lockts Q 94. Zounds,] Q; *omit* F 97. now, now, very] now, very Q 106. worser] worse Q 109. thee.] ~, Q 111. bravery] Q; knauerie F 115. spirit] Q; spirits F 115. them] Q; their F 122. Zounds,] Q; *omit* F 124. and]; *omit* Q 129. comes] come Q 130. now] Q; *omit* F 136–52. If ’t . . . yourself.] *omit* Q 155. thus deluding you] this delusion Q 162. place] F *corr.*; dlace F *uncorr.*; pate Q 163. producted] produc’d Q 165. However] F, Q *uncorr.*: Now euer Q *corr.* 169. none] not Q 171. hell] hells Q 171. pains] Q; apines F 177. SD *with Servants and Torches*] *and seruants with Torches* Q 184. she deceives] thou deceiuest Q 194. maidhood] manhood Q 197. Yes, sir, I have indeed] I haue sir Q 198. would] that Q 199. you] yon Q 203. Pray you lead on] Pray leade me on Q 205. night] Q; might F

1.2 0. SD *Iago, Attendants*] Iago, *and attendants* Q 2. stuff] stuf Q 2. o’ th’] of Q 2. conscience] ~. Q 4. Sometimes] Q; Sometime F 12. you] *omit* Q 13. Be assured] For be sure Q 17. restraint or] restraint and Q 18. The] That Q 19. Will] Weele Q 23. Which, when I know] *omit* Q 24. promulgate)^] promulgate. F; provulgate, Q 25. siege] height Q 32. yond] yonder Q 33. Those] These Q 37. Is it] it is Q 38. SD *Six lines earlier in F; six and a half lines earlier in Q as “Enter Cassio with lights, Officers, and torches.”* 39. Duke] Q; Dukes F 40. you] your Q 44. Even] Q; Enen F 48. sequent] frequent Q 54. hath] *omit* Q 54. about] aboue Q 57. but] *omit* Q 67. Have with you] Ha, with who? Q 68. comes another] F *corr.* (come sanother), Q; come another F *uncorr.* 68. SD *3 lines earlier in Q as “Enters Brabantio, Roderigo, and others with lights and weapons.”* 75. Roderigo! Come] Ed.; Rodorigo,

come F *uncorr.*, Q; *Rodorigoc?* Cme F *corr.* [83](#). things] thing Q [84](#). If . . . bound,] *omit* Q [87](#). darlings] Q; Deareling F [91](#)–96. Judge . . . thee] *omit* Q 97. For] Such Q [104](#). Whither] where Q [105](#). To] And Q [109](#). I] Q; *omit* F [113](#). bring] beare Q [119](#). not an idle] F *corr.*, Q; nota n idle F *uncorr.*

1.3 0. SD F; *Enter Duke and Senators, set at a Table with lights and Attendants.* Q [1](#). these] Q; this F [5](#). hundred forty] hundred and forty Q [8](#). the aim] they aym'd Q [12](#). in] to Q [13](#). article] Articles Q [15](#). SP SAILOR] One Q [15](#). SD *1 line earlier in Q as "Enter a Messenger."* [16](#). SP OFFICER] Sailor Q [16](#). galleys] Galley Q [17](#). what's] *omit* Q [20](#). By . . . Angelo] *omit* Q [25](#). Turk,] ~: Q; ~; F [29](#)–36. For . . . profitless.] *omit* Q [37](#). Nay] And Q [38](#). SD *a Messenger*] a 2. Messenger Q [41](#). them] *omit* Q [42](#). FIRST SENATOR Ay . . . guess?] *omit* Q [43](#). restem] reterine Q [51](#). he] here Q [53](#). to] wish Q [55](#). SD *1 line earlier in Q as "Enter Brabantio, Othello, Roderigo, Iago, Cassio, Desdemona, and Officers."* [60](#). lacked] lacke Q [62](#). nor] Q; hor F [65](#). hold on] any hold of Q [65](#). grief] griefes Q [67](#). and] snd F [71](#). SP FIRST SENATOR] Sen. F; All Q [76](#). Being . . . sense] *omit* Q [77](#). Sans] F, Q *corr.* (Saunce); Since Q *uncorr.* [82](#). your] its Q [82](#). yea] *omit* Q [89](#). your] yonr F [97](#). soft] set Q [102](#). feats] feate Q [102](#). broil] Q; Broiles F [106](#). unvarnished tale] vn-varnish'd u Tale F [110](#). proceeding I am] proceedings am I Q [114](#). herself.] ~: Q; ~, F [117](#). maimed] F (main'd) [117](#). imperfect^] ~. F [118](#). could] would Q [124](#). wrought upon] wtought vp on F [125](#). SP DUKE] Q; *omit* F [125](#). vouch] youth Q [126](#). wider] certaine Q [126](#). overt] Q; ouer F [127](#). Than these] These are Q [128](#). seeming do] seemings, you Q [129](#). SP FIRST SENATOR] Q; Sen. F [138](#). The trust . . . you,] *omit* Q [142](#). SD *Iago and Attendants exit.*] Ed.; *Exit two or three.* Q *1 line earlier* [143](#).

till] Q; tell F [143](#). truly] faithfull Q [144](#). I do . . . blood,]
omit Q [151](#). battles] Q; Battaile F [151](#). fortunes] Q;
 Fortune F [155](#). spoke] spake Q [156](#). accidents by]
 accident of Q [160](#). of] and Q [161](#). portance in] with it all
 Q [161](#). traveler's] trauells Q [163](#). and] Q; *omit* F [163](#).
 heads] Q; head F [165](#). my process] the processe Q [166](#).
 other] Q; others F [168](#). Do grow] Q; Grew F [168](#). These
 things] this Q [171](#). thence] Q; hence F [172](#). Which] And
 Q [178](#). parcels] parcell Q [179](#). intently] Q; instinctiue]
 F [181](#). distressful] distressed Q [183](#). sighs] Q; kisses
 F [184](#). in] I Q [192](#). hint] heate Q [196](#). SD *Attendants*]
and the rest Q [204](#). on my head] lite on me Q [212](#). the lord
 of] Lord of all my Q [224](#). Which . . . heart] *omit* Q [231](#).
 Into your favor.] Q; *omit* F [235](#). new] more Q [236](#).
 preserved] presern'd F [250](#). piercèd] Q; pierc'd F [251](#). ear]
 Q; eares F [252](#). I humbly beseech you, proceed] Beseech
 you now, Q [252](#)–53. of state] of the state Q [254](#). a] *omit*
 Q [257](#)–58. a sovereign] Q; a more soueraigne F [262](#).
 grave] great Q [263](#). couch] Ed.; Coach F, Cooch Q [265](#).
 alacrity] Alacartie F [266](#). do] would Q [270](#). reference]
 reuerence Q [271](#). With] Which Q [273](#). Why] If you please,
 bee't Q [276](#). would I] I, I would not Q [276](#). reside] recide
 F [278](#). gracious] Gracious F [279](#). your prosperous] a
 gracious Q [281](#). T' assist] And if Q [282](#). Desdemona]
 speake Q [283](#). love] did loue Q [284](#). storm] scorne
 Q [286](#). very quality] vtmost pleasure Q [292](#). why] which
 Q [295](#)–96. Let her have your voice. / Vouch with me,
 heaven] Your voyces Lords: beseech you let her will, / Haue
 a free way Q [298](#). heat (] Ed.; ~ ^ F; ~, Q [299](#). me] Ed.;
 my F, Q [300](#). to her] of her Q [302](#). great] good Q [303](#).
 For] Q; When F [304](#). Of] And Q [304](#). seel] foyles Q [305](#).
 officed] actiue Q [305](#). instruments] Q; Instrument F [309](#).
 estimation] reputation Q [311](#). her] *omit* Q [311](#). affair

cries] affaires cry Q [312](#). it] *omit* Q [313](#). SP FIRST SENATOR] Ed.; Sen. F [313](#). away] hence Q [313](#)–14. tonight. OTHELLO With] tonight. *Desd.* To night my Lord? *Du.* This night. *Oth* With Q [316](#). nine] ten Q [319](#). With] Q; And F [319](#). and] or Q [320](#). import] concerne Q [321](#). So] *omit* Q [332](#). SP FIRST] Q; *omit* F [333](#). if thou hast eyes] haue a quicke eye Q [334](#). and may] may doe Q [334](#). SD *He exits.*] *Exeunt.* Q [339](#). them] her Q [341](#). worldly matters] Q; wordly matter F [342](#). the] the the F [342](#). SD *Othello*] *Moore* Q; *omit* F [348](#). If] Well, if Q [348](#). after. Why] after it. Why Q [350](#). is torment] is a torment Q [351](#). have we] we haue Q [353](#). O, villainous!] *omit* Q [355](#). betwixt] betweene Q [355](#)–56. found man] found a man Q [362](#). are our gardens] are gardens Q [368](#). balance] Q; braine F [373](#). our] Q; or F [379](#). have professed] professe Q [383](#). thou the] these Q [385](#). be that] Q; be long that F [385](#). long] Q; *omit* F [386](#). to] vnto Q [387](#). his] *omit* Q [387](#)–88. in her] *omit* Q [392](#). bitter as] acerbe as the Q [393](#). She . . . youth.] *omit* Q [394](#). error] Q; errors F [394](#)–95. choice. Therefore] choyce; shee must haue change, shee must. Therefore Q [399](#). a] Q; *omit* F [401](#). thyself] *omit* Q [405](#)–6. if . . . issue] *omit* Q [408](#). retell] tell Q [410](#). conjunctive] communicatiue Q [412](#). pleasure, me] pleasure, and me Q [420](#)–24. RODERIGO What say you . . . purse.] Q; *omit* F [425](#). RODERIGO I'll . . . land.] *omit* Q [425](#). SD 2 lines earlier in Q (*Exit Roderigo.*) [428](#). a] Q; *omit* F [428](#). snipe] Snpe F [431](#). 'Has] Q; She ha's F [432](#). But] Yet Q [436](#). his] this Q [436](#). plume] make Q [437](#). Let's] let me Q [438](#). ear] Q; eares F [442](#). is of] *omit* Q [442](#). nature] nature too Q [443](#). seem] seemes Q

2.1 0. SD *Enter . . . Gentlemen.*] *Enter* Montanio, *Gouernor of Cypres, with two other Gentlemen.*] Q [3](#). heaven] hauen Q [5](#). hath spoke] does speake Q [8](#).

mountains melt on them] the huge mountaine mes lt Q [11](#).
 foaming] banning Q [12](#). chidden] chiding Q [16](#). ever-
 fixèd] euer fired Q [21](#). to] they Q [21](#). SD *third*] Q; *omit*
 F [22](#). lads! Our] Lords, your Q [23](#). Turks] *Turke* Q [24](#). A
 noble] Another Q [26](#). their] the Q [28–29](#). in, / A Veronesa.]
 Ed.; ~: ~ ~, F, Q [31](#). on shore] ashore Q [36](#). prays] Q;
 praye F [38](#). heaven] Q; Heauens F [43–44](#). Even . . .
 regard.] *omit* Q [43](#). aerial] Ed.; Eriall F [45](#). SP THIRD
GENTLEMAN] Q; *Gent.* F [47](#). arrivance] Q; Arriuancie F [48](#).
 you] to Q [48](#). this] Q; the F [48](#). warlike] worthy Q [49](#). O]
 and Q [50](#). the] their Q [56](#). SD *within*.] *Mess.* Q [56](#). SD
Enter . . .] Q (1 line earlier); *omit* F [58](#). SP MESSENGER] Q;
Gent. F [60](#). Governor] guernement Q [60](#). SD *2 lines later*
in Q; *omit* F [61](#), [65](#), [73](#). SP SECOND GENTLEMAN] Q; *Gent.* F [61](#).
 their] the Q [62](#). friends] friend Q [69](#). quirks of] *omit*
 Q [71](#). tire the ingener] Ed.; tyre the Ingeniuer F; beare all
 excellency Q [72](#). How] *omit* Q [74](#). SP CASSIO] *omit* Q [74](#).
 'Has] He has Q [75](#). high] by Q [77](#). ensteeped] enscerped
 Q [77](#). clog] Q; enclogge F [79](#). mortal] common Q [82](#).
 spake] spoke Q [88](#). Make love's quick pants in] And swiftly
 come to Q [90](#). And . . . comfort!] Q; *omit* F [90](#). SD *2 lines*
earlier in Q [92](#). on shore] ashore Q [98](#). tell of] tell me of
 Q [102](#). of sea] of the sea Q [103](#). SD *Within* . . . sail] *one-*
half line later in F; *2 lines earlier in* Q [105](#). SP SECOND
GENTLEMAN] Q; *Gent.* F [105](#). their] Q; this F [107](#). See . . .
 news.] So speakes this voyce: Q [112](#). Sir,] For Q [113](#). oft
 bestows] has bestowed Q [116](#). In faith] I know Q [117](#).
 still] I; for Q [117](#). list] Q; leaue F [119](#). her tongue] het
 tongue F [122](#). of door] adores Q [126](#). SP *omit* Q [127](#).
 true, . . . Turk.] Ed. ~: . . . ~, F [131](#). wouldst write] wouldst
 thou write Q [133](#). to 't] too, t F [142](#). brains] braine
 Q [145](#). *useth*] vsing Q [148](#). *hit*] Q; *fit* F [152](#). *an heir*] a
 haire Q [153](#). fond] *omit* Q [158](#). Thou praisest] that praises

Q [160](#)–61. authority] Q; authorithy F [161](#). merit] merrits
 Q [172](#). *See . . . behind,*] *omit* Q [173](#). wight] Q; wightes
 F [183](#). With] *omit* Q [183](#). I] *omit* Q [184](#). fly] Flee
 Q [185](#). gyve] Ed.; giue F; catch Q [185](#). thee] you Q [185](#).
 thine] your Q [185](#). courtship] courtesies Q [188](#). kissed]
 rist Q [189](#). Very] *omit* Q [190](#). an] Q; and F [191](#). to] at
 Q [192](#). clyster] Q (Clister); Cluster F [192](#). SD *1 line later in*
Q; omit F [196](#). SD *3 lines earlier in* Q [201](#). calms]
 calmenesse Q [213](#). powers] power Q [215](#). SD *1 line later*
in Q; *omit* F [216](#). discords] discord Q [224](#). does my] doe
 our Q [224](#). this] the Q [228](#). own] one Q [233](#). SD *All . . .*
exit.] *Exit Othello and Desdemona.* F; *Exit.* Q [235](#). harbor]
 Habour Q [235](#). hither] Q; thither F [239](#). must] will
 Q [239](#)–40. thee^ this:] ~, ~^ Q [245](#). And will she] Q; To
 F [246](#). thy] the Q [246](#). it] so Q [249](#). again] Q; a game
 F [249](#). to give] giue Q [250](#). appetite,] Ed.; ~. F, Q [250](#).
 loveliness] Loue lines Q [255](#). in] to Q [258](#). eminent]
 eminently Q [259](#). fortune] Fortune F [260](#). further] farder
 Q [261](#). humane seeming] hand-seeming Q [262](#).
 compassing] Q; compasse F [262](#). most] *omit* Q [262](#). loose]
omit Q [263](#). affection] affections Q [263](#). Why . . . none]
omit Q [263](#)–64. slipper and subtle] subtle slippery Q [264](#).
 finder-out of occasions] Q; a finder of occasion F [264](#). has]
 Q; he's F [265](#)–66. advantages, though true advantage] the
 true aduantages Q [266](#). itself] themselues Q [266](#). a
 devilish knave] *omit* Q [275](#). Blessed pudding!]
omit Q [276](#)–77. Didst not mark that?]
omit Q [278](#). that I did]
omit Q [279](#). obscure] *omit* Q [282](#). Villainous thoughts,
 Roderigo!]
omit Q [283](#). mutualities] Q; mutabilities
 F [283](#)–84. hard at] hand at Q [284](#). master and] *omit*
 Q [285](#). Pish!]
omit Q [287](#). the] your Q [291](#). course] cause
 Q [295](#). haply may] haply with his Trunchen may Q [298](#).
 taste again] trust again't Q [301](#). the] *omit* Q [303](#). you] I

Q [311](#). loving, noble] noble, louing Q [317](#). lusty] lustfull
Q [320](#). or] nor Q [321](#). evened] euen Q [321](#). for wife] for
wift F [325](#). trace] crush Q [328](#). rank] Q; right F [329](#).
nightcap] Q; Night-Cape F

2.2 0. SD *Othello's Herald with*] F (*Othello's, Herald*); a
Gentleman reading Q [1](#). SP HERALD] *omit* Q [2](#). general,] Q;
~. F [3–4](#). fleet, every] Fleete; that euery Q [5](#). to make]
make Q [5](#). bonfires] bonefires Q [6](#). addition] minde Q [8](#).
nuptial] Nuptialls Q [10](#). of feasting] *omit* Q [10](#). present]
presenr F [11](#). have] hath Q [11](#). Heaven] Q; *omit* F [12](#). SD
He exits.] *omit* Q

2.3 0. SD *Enter . . . Attendants.*] *Enter* Othello, Cassio,
and Desdemona Q [2](#). that] the Q [4](#). direction] directed
Q [12](#). That . . . 'tween] The . . . twixt Q [15–16](#). o' th' clock]
aclock Q [25](#). to] of Q [28](#). is it not] tis Q [28](#). alarum]
alarme Q [29](#). She] It Q [33](#). black] the blacke Q [42](#).
unfortunate] Q; infortunate F [54](#). out] outward Q [55](#).
caroused^] ~. F [57](#). else] lads Q [58](#). honors] honour
Q [61](#). they] the Q [63](#). Am I] I am Q [63](#). to put] Q; put to
F [66](#). SD 2 lines earlier in F and 3 in Q (*Enter* Montanio,
Cassio, and others.) [67](#). God] Q; heauen F [73](#). clink]
clinke, clinke Q [75](#). O, man's] a Q [78](#). God] Q; Heauen
F [83](#). Englishman] Q (*English* man); Englishmen F [83](#).
exquisite] expert Q [93](#). and-a] a Q [100](#). Then] Q; And
F [102](#). 'Fore God] Q; Why F [105](#). to be] *omit* Q [106](#).
God's] Q; heau'ns F [107](#). souls must] soules that must
Q [107–8](#). and . . . saved] *omit* Q [112](#). too] *omit* Q [115](#).
God] Q; *omit* F [119](#). left] left hand Q [120](#). I speak] speake
Q [121](#). SP GENTLEMEN] *All* Q [122](#). Why] *omit* Q [122–23](#).
think then that] thinke that Q [130](#). puts] put Q [134](#). the]
Q; his F [140](#). Prizes] Praises Q [140](#). virtue] vertues
Q [141](#). looks] looke Q [149](#). Not] Nor Q [151](#). SD "*Help,*
help!" *within.*] Q [152](#). SD *pursuing*] *driuing in* Q [153](#).

Zounds,] Q; *omit* F [155](#). duty? I'll] duty: but I'll Q [156](#).
 twiggen] wicker Q [159](#). Nay] *omit* Q [159](#). I pray you, sir]
 pray sir Q [166](#). God's will,] Q; Alas F [167](#). sir—Montano—
 sir] Ed.; Sir *Montano*: F; Sir *Montanio*, sir, Q [168](#). SD *A bell*
is rung.] Q (*A bell rung.*) 3 lines earlier in Q [169](#). that which]
 that that Q [170](#). God's will] Q; Fie, fie F [170](#). hold] Q;
omit F [171](#). You will be shamed] Q; You'll be ashamed
 F [171](#). SD *Attendants*] *Gentlemen with weapons* Q [173](#).
 Zounds,] Q; *omit* F [175](#). He dies!] *omit* Q [177](#). Hold, ho!]
 Hold, hold Q [177](#). sir—Montano] Ed.; Sir Montano F; sir
Montanio Q [179](#). sense of place] Ed.; place of sense F,
 Q [180](#). Hold, for] hold, hold, for Q [185](#). for] forth Q [193](#).
 for] to Q [195](#). breast] Q; breastes F [199](#). Those] These
 Q [200](#). comes] came Q [200](#). are] were Q [202](#). wont be]
 Q; wont to be F [205](#). mouths] men Q [212](#). me,] Q; ~.
 F [215](#). sometimes] sometime Q [220](#). collied] coold
 Q [221](#). Zounds, if I] Q; If I once F [229](#). quarrel] quarrels
 Q [231](#). began 't] began Q [232](#). partially] partiality Q [232](#).
 leagued] Ed.; league F, Q [236](#). cut] out Q [239](#). Thus] Q;
 This F [248](#). the] Q; then F [250](#). oath] oaths Q [251](#). say]
 see Q [255](#). cannot I] can I not Q [256](#). forget.] Q (~); ~,
 F [265](#). SD *attended*] *with others* Q [268](#). dear] *omit* Q [269](#).
 now] Q; *omit* F [277](#). SD *Exit*. F; *Exit Moore, Desdemona,*
and attendants. Q, 1 line later [280](#). God] Q; Heauen F [281](#).
 Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I] Reputation,
 reputation, I Q [282](#). part of] part sir of Q [285](#). I thought]
 Q; I had thought F [286](#). sense] offence Q [291](#). are ways]
 Q; are more ways F [294](#). to affright] ro affright F [297](#).
 slight] light Q [298](#). and so indiscreet] and indiscreete
 Q [298](#)–300. Drunk . . . shadow?] *omit* Q [309](#). God] Q; *omit*
 F [311](#). pleasance, revel] Reuell, pleasure Q [319](#). and] *omit*
 Q [320](#). so] Q; *omit* F [326](#). O, strange!] *omit* Q [327](#).
 ingredient] ingredience Q [328](#). familiar] famillar F [332](#)–

33. at a time, man] at some time Q [333](#). I'll] Q; I F [336](#)–
 37. denotement] Ed.; deuotement F, Q [338](#). her help] her,
 shee'll helpe Q [339](#). of] *omit* Q [340](#). disposition she]
 disposition, that shee Q [342](#). broken joint] braule Q [345](#).
 stronger] Q; stonger F [349](#)–50. I will] will I Q [352](#). here]
 Q; *omit* F [355](#). SD *Cassio*] *omit* Q [363](#). were 't] Q; were
 F [369](#). course^] Ed.; ~, F; ~. Q [371](#). the] their Q [373](#).
 whiles] while Q [374](#). fortune] fortunes Q [382](#). SD *one-half*
line later in F [387](#). and] *omit* Q [388](#)–89. pains, and so,
 with no] paines, as that comes to, and no Q [389](#). a little
 more] with that Q [390](#). again] *omit* Q [396](#). hast] Q; hath
 F [398](#). Yet] But Q [399](#). By th' Mass] Q; Introth F [403](#). SD
omit Q [404](#). Two] Some Q [406](#). on.] Q; ~^ F [407](#). the
 while] Ed.; a while F, Q [410](#). SD *He exits.*] *Exeunt.* Q

3.1 0. SD *with Musicians*] Q2; *Musitians, and Clowne* F;
with Musitians and the Clowne Q [3](#). SD] Q2 (*They play and*
enter the Clown) [4](#). in] at Q [6](#), [8](#), [10](#), [15](#), [19](#). SP MUSICIAN] F
 (*Mus.*); Boy. Q [7](#). you] cald Q [13](#)–14. for love's sake] of all
 loues Q [20](#). up] *omit* Q [21](#). into air] *omit* Q [21](#). SD *omit*
 Q [22](#). hear] Q; heare me F [26](#). General's wife] Q (*Cenerals*
wife); Generall F [31](#). CASSIO Do . . . friend.] Q; *omit* F [31](#).
 1st SD *omit* Q [31](#). 2nd SD *one line earlier in* Q [43](#). SD *one*
line earlier in F and Q [47](#). sure] soone Q [55](#). To . . . front]
 Q; *omit* F [64](#). CASSIO I . . . you.] *omit* Q [64](#). SD] Q; *omit* F

3.2 0. SD *Iago, and Gentlemen*] *Iago, and other*
Centlemen Q [2](#). Senate] State Q [7](#). SP GENTLEMEN] Ed.;
Gent. F, Q [7](#). We] Q; Well F

3.3 3. warrant] know Q [4](#). cause] case Q [5](#). fellow!] ~:
 — Q; ~, F [11](#). I know 't] O sir Q [13](#). strangeness] strangest
 Q [16](#). That] The Q [18](#). circumstance] Q; Circumstances
 F [30](#). thy cause away] thee cause: away Q [30](#). SD *and*
Iago] *Iago, and Gentlemen* Q [35](#). purposes] purpose Q [42](#).
 steal] sneake Q [43](#). your] you Q [57](#). Yes, faith] Q; I sooth

F [58](#). grief] griefes Q [59](#). To] I Q [68](#). or] Q; on F [69](#).
 noon] morne Q [69](#). on Wednesday] or Wensday Q [71](#). In
 faith] Ifaith Q [73](#). example] examples Q [77](#). would] could
 Q [78](#). mamm'ring] muttering Q [79](#). with] Q; wirh F [82](#).
 By'r Lady] Q (Birlady); Trust me F [91](#). difficult weight]
 difficulty Q [98](#). Be as] be it as Q [106](#). you] Q; he F [108](#).
 thought] thoughts Q [112](#). oft] often Q [114](#). Ay,] *omit*
 Q [121](#). By heaven] Q; Alas F [121](#). thou echo'st] he ecchoes
 Q [121](#). me^] ~; F [122](#). thy] his Q [123](#). dost] didst
 Q [125](#). even] but Q [128](#). In] Q; Of F [132](#). conceit]
 counsell Q [137](#). giv'st them] giue em Q [139](#). fright]
 affright Q [142](#). dilations] denotements Q [145](#). be sworn]
 presume Q [147](#). what] that Q [152](#). as] *omit* Q [153](#)–54.
 thy worst of thoughts] the worst of thought Q [155](#). words]
 word Q [158](#). that all slaves are free to] Q; that: All Slaues
 are free F [162](#). that] a Q [164](#). But some] Q; Wherein
 F [165](#). sessions] Session Q [173](#). oft] Q; of F [174](#). that
 your wisdom] I intreate you then Q [175](#). conceits] coniects
 Q [176](#). Would] You'd Q [177](#). his] my Q [179](#). and] or
 Q [181](#). What . . . mean?] Zouns Q [182](#). woman] woman's
 Q [183](#). their] our Q [191](#). By heaven,] Q; *omit* F [191](#).
 thoughts] thought Q [194](#). SP OTHELLO] *omit* Q [194](#). Ha?]
omit Q [195](#). SP IAGO] *omit* Q [195](#). beware, my lord, of]
 beware Q [197](#). The] That Q [200](#). strongly] Q; soundly
 F [205](#). God] Q; Heauen F [211](#). once] Q; *omit* F [213](#).
 blown] Q; blow'd F [216](#). well] Q; *omit* F [224](#). this] it
 Q [229](#). eyes] eie Q [233](#). God] Q; Heauen F [234](#). not] *omit*
 Q [236](#). leave 't] leaue Q [236](#). keep 't] Q2; kept F, keepe
 Q [252](#). I' faith] Q; Trust me F [254](#). my] Q; your F [261](#). As
 my thoughts aim not at] Q; Which my Thoughts aym'd not
 F [261](#). worthy] trusty Q [272](#). Foh! One] Fie we Q [273](#).
 disproportion] Q; disproportions F [279](#). Farewell, farewell]
 Farewell Q [285](#). SP IAGO] *omit* Q [286](#). To] F, Q *uncorr.*; *Iag.*

To Q *corr.* [287](#). Although 'tis] Tho it be Q [289](#). hold] Q;
omit F [291](#). his] her Q [298](#). SD *He exits.*] F, Q *corr.*; *omit*
 Q *uncorr.* [300](#). qualities] Q; Quantities F [301](#). dealings]
 dealing Q [307](#). vale] valt Q [312](#). of] in Q [313](#). keep] F, Q
corr.; leepe Q *uncorr.* [313](#). the] a Q [314](#). of] Q; to F [318](#).
 Look where she] Desdemona Q [318](#). SD *2 lines later in*
 Q [319](#). false, heaven] false, O then heauen Q [319](#). mocks]
 Q; mock'd F [322](#). islanders] Ilander Q [325](#). do . . . faintly]
 is your speech so faint Q [327](#). Faith] Q; Why F [328](#). it
 hard] your head Q [329](#). well] well againe Q [333](#). SD Q (*1*
line later); *Exit* F (*1 line earlier*) [343](#). but to please] know,
 but for Q [343](#). SD *1 line earlier in* Q [346](#). You have] *omit*
 Q [348](#). wife] thing Q [350](#). handkerchief] handkercher Q
 (*throughout*) [355](#). stol'n] stole Q [356](#). faith,] Q; but
 F [365](#). Give 't me] Giue mee 't Q [367](#). acknow[n] you
 knowne Q [368](#). SD *1 line later in* Q [373](#). The Moor . . .
 poison;] *omit* Q [376](#). act] art Q [377](#). mines] mindes
 Q [377](#). SD *one-half line later in* F; *1 line earlier in* Q [383](#).
 me] me, to me Q [387](#). know 't] know Q [389](#). of] Q; in
 F [391](#). fed well] *omit* Q [401](#). troops] troope Q [407](#). rude]
 wide Q [408](#). dread clamors] great clamor Q [411](#). thou] F,
 Q *corr.*; you Q *uncorr.* [413](#). mine] mans Q [414](#). better]
 better F [427](#). forgive] defend Q [429](#). God b' wi' you. Take]
 F (God buy you: take); God buy, you take Q [429](#)–30.
 mine . . . thine] F, Q *corr.*; thine . . . mine Q *uncorr.* [430](#).
 liv'st] Q (liuest); lou'st F [434](#). sith] since Q [438](#)–45. OTHELLO
 By . . . satisfied!] *omit* Q [441](#). Her] Q2; My F [446](#). SP]
omit Q [446](#). see you] see sir, you Q [449](#). and] *omit*
 Q [451](#). supervisor] Q; super-vision F [456](#). do] did Q [465](#).
 might] may Q [466](#). reason] reason, that Q [468](#). in] into
 Q [476](#). wary] merry Q [478](#). O] out Q [478](#). creature!"
 then] F (Creature: then); creature, and then Q [480](#). then] Q;
omit F [481](#). sighed] Q; sigh F [481](#). kissed] Q; kisse F [482](#).

Cried] Q; cry F [486](#). denoted] deuoted Q [487](#). 'Tis] *Iago*
 Tis Q [488](#). SP *IAGO*] *omit* Q [491](#). but] Q; yet F [494](#), [497](#).
 wife's] F, Q (wiues) [500](#). any that was] Ed.; any, it was F,
 Q [500](#). hers,] Q; ~. F [504](#). true] time Q [507](#). the . . . hell]
 thy . . . Cell Q [511](#). Yet] Pray Q [512](#). blood, blood, blood]
 blood, *Iago*, blood Q [513](#). perhaps] Q; *omit* F [514](#)–22.
Iago . . . heaven,] *omit* Q [516](#). feels] Q2; keepes F [521](#). SD
He kneels.] Q (*placed after "be content," line 511*) [525](#). SD
Iago kneels.] Q (*2 lines later*) [529](#). execution] excellency
 Q [529](#). hands] hand Q [531](#). in me] *omit* Q [532](#). business]
 worke so Q [540](#). at your] as you Q [541](#)–42. damn her,
 damn her] dam her Q

3.4 0. SD *Clown*] *the Clowne* Q [1](#). where Lieutenant]
 where the Leiutenant Q [5](#). SP *omit* Q [5](#). me] one Q [6](#).
 'tis] is Q [8](#)–10. CLOWN To tell . . . this?] *omit* Q [12](#). here, or
 he lies] *omit* Q [13](#). mine own] my Q [19](#). on] in Q [21](#).
 man's wit] a man Q [22](#). doing it] doing of it Q [23](#). that] Q;
 the F [25](#). have lost] loose Q [34](#). SD *1 line earlier in* Q [35](#).
 till] 'Tis Q *uncorr.*; Let Q *corr.* [43](#). yet has] Q; hath F [45](#).
 Hot, hot] Not hot Q [46](#). prayer] praying Q [55](#). Come now]
 come, come Q [58](#). sorry] sullen Q [64](#). faith] Q; indeed
 F [71](#). *repeated in* Q [73](#). loathèd] lothely Q [75](#). wived]
 wiue Q [78](#). lose 't] loose Q [83](#). course] make Q [86](#).
 which] with Q [87](#). Conserved] Conserues Q [88](#). I' faith] Q;
 Indeed F [90](#). God] Q; Heauen F [92](#). rash] rashly Q [94](#).
 Heaven] Q; *omit* F [97](#). How] Ha Q [100](#). can. But] can sir,
 but Q [102](#). Pray you] I pray Q [103](#). the] that Q [108](#)–9.
 DESDEMONA. I pray . . . the handkerchief!] Q; *omit* F [114](#). I'
 faith] Q; Insooth F [115](#). Zounds!] Q; Away F [118](#).
 handkerchief] Handkerchikfe F [119](#). the] F, Q *corr.*; this Q
uncorr. [119](#). of it] *omit* Q [123](#). SD *4 lines earlier in*
 Q [131](#). office] duty Q [132](#). honor.] ~, F, Q [134](#). nor my]
 neither Q [139](#). shut] shoote Q [157](#). is he] can he be

Q [160](#). SD *one-half line earlier in F*; omit Q [166](#). their] the
 Q [168](#). a] that Q [170](#). observancy] obseruances Q [184](#).
 that] Q; the F [189](#). 1st SD *one line earlier in F*; 2 lines earlier
 in Q [194](#). I' faith] Q; Indeed F [199](#). O] No Q [201](#). leaden]
 laden Q [202](#). continue] conuenient Q [207](#). absence^] ~:
 F; ~, Q [208](#). Well, well.] omit Q [214](#). by my faith] Q; in
 good troth F [216](#). neither] sweete Q [224](#)–25. BIANCA
 Why . . . not.] omit Q [224](#). pray] ptay F [231](#). SD *They exit*
 Q; *Exeunt omnes* F

[4.1](#) [6](#), [8](#). in bed] abed Q [13](#). If] So Q [24](#). infectious]
 infected Q [33](#). Or voluntary] or by the voluntaty Q [34](#).
 Convincèd] F, Q *corr.*; Coniured Q *uncorr.* [40](#). Faith] Q;
 Why F [41](#). What? What?] But what? Q [46](#). Zounds,] Q;
 omit F [47](#)–48. Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief]
 handkerchers, Confession, handkerchers Q [48](#)–54. To
 confess . . . devil!] omit Q [51](#). instruction] Iustruction
 F [54](#). SD *He . . . trance.*] F (*Falls in a Traunce.*); *He fals*
downe. Q *corr.*; omit Q *uncorr.* [56](#). medicine, work] Q;
 Medicine workes F [60](#). SD *one-half line later in* Q [61](#).
 Cassio] C^essio F [66](#). No, forbear.] Q; omit F [75](#). you not]
 you? no Q [76](#). fortune] fortunes Q [80](#). it] omit Q [81](#).
 Good] F, Q *corr.*; God Q *uncorr.* [84](#). lie] lyes Q [87](#). couch]
 Coach Q [93](#). o'er-whelmèd] ere while, mad Q [94](#).
 unsuiting] Q *corr.*; vnfitting Q *uncorr.*; resulting F [96](#).
 'scuses] scuse Q [97](#). Bade] Bid Q [97](#). return] retire Q [98](#).
 Do] omit Q [99](#). fleers] Ieeres Q [114](#). clothes] Q; Cloath
 F [116](#). one.] ~)^F [117](#). restrain] refraine Q [118](#). SD 2
 lines earlier in Q [120](#). construe] Q (conster); conserue
 F [121](#). behaviors] behaiour Q [122](#). you, lieutenant] you
 now Leiutenant Q [126](#). power] Q; dowre F [130](#). knew
 woman] knew a woman Q [131](#). i' faith] Q; indeed F [135](#).
 o'er] on Q [135](#). well said, well said] well said Q [140](#). her]
 Q; omit F [140](#). What, a customer] omit Q [140](#). Prithee] I

prethee Q [143](#). They] *omit* Q [144](#). Faith] Q; Why F [144](#).
 that you] you shall Q [147](#). scored] stor'd Q [147](#). me? Well]
 ~^ ~ Q [151](#). beckons] Q; becomes F [153](#). the] F *corr.*, Q;
 the the F *uncorr.* [155](#). the] this Q [155](#). By . . . falls] Q; and
 falls me F [160](#). shakes] haies Q [162](#). O] *omit* Q [165](#). SD *1*
line earlier in Q [166](#). SP CASSIO] *omit* Q (*speech continues to*
Iago) [166](#). fitchew] ficho Q [172](#). the work] the whole
 worke Q [173](#). know not] not know Q [175](#). your] the
 Q [179](#). If . . . If] An . . . an Q [180](#). not, come] F *corr.*, Q; ~^
 ~ F *uncorr.* [183](#). Faith,] Q; *omit* F [183](#). streets] streete
 Q [185](#). Faith] Q; Yes F [189](#). SD Q; *omit* F [196](#)–98. IAGO
 Yours . . . whore.] *omit* Q (*The catchword "Iag." in Q at the*
bottom of the page preceding this missing speech indicates that
a speech by Iago was dropped.) [201](#). that] *omit* Q [202](#). Ay]
 And Q [211](#). so] F *corr.*, Q; fo F *uncorr.* [213](#). O . . . times] A
 thousand thousand times Q [216](#). Nay] I Q [217](#). O . . .
 Iago] the pitty Q [218](#). are] be Q [219](#). touch] touches
 Q [225](#). night.] ~^ Q [230](#). pleases. Very] F (~: ~); ~^ ~
 Q [234](#). SD *A trumpet sounds.*] Q (*A Trumpet*) *one-half line*
earlier in Q [236](#). I warrant] *omit* Q [236](#). SD *Enter*
Lodovico . . .] *Two lines earlier in F and* Q [237](#). Lodovico.
 This comes] F (*Lodouico, this, comes*); *Lodouico, / Come*
 Q [238](#). See . . . wife's] and see . . . wife is Q [239](#). God] Q;
omit F [239](#). you] the Q [241](#). the Senators] Senators
 Q [255](#). 'twixt my] betweene thy Q [257](#). atone them] F
corr., Q (*attone them*); attone, them F *uncorr.* [262](#). the
 letter] Q; thLe etter F *uncorr.*; thLetter F *corr.* [264](#).
 government] F *corr.* (*Gouernment*), Q; Gouverment F
uncorr. [265](#). By my troth] Q; Trust me F [269](#). Why] How
 Q [276](#). woman's] womens Q [280](#). an] Q; *omit* F [292](#).
 home] here Q [298](#). SD *He exits.*] F, Q *corr.*; *omit* Q
uncorr. [300](#). Is . . . nature] This the noble nature Q [307](#).
 censure^] Ed.; ~. F; ~, Q [308](#). If what] if as Q [315](#). this] Q;

his F [320](#). denote] F *corr.* (deonte), Q; deuote F *uncorr.* [322](#). And] F *corr.*, Q; An d F *uncorr.*

4.2 3. Yes, you] Yes, and you Q [10](#). gloves, her mask] mask, her gloues Q [17](#). heaven] heauens Q [19](#). their wives] her Sex Q [21](#). SD *one-half line earlier in* Q [23](#). cannot] F *corr.*, Q; cannt F *uncorr.* [27](#). you] *omit* Q [36](#). Nay] Q; May F [37](#). knees] Q; knee F [38](#). words,] Q; ~. F [39](#). But . . . words.] Q; *omit* F [44](#). seize] F (ceaze); cease Q [52](#). motive] occasion Q [52](#). these] those Q [55](#), [56](#). lost] left Q [56](#). I] Why I Q [58](#). they rained] he ram'd Q [59](#). kind] kindes Q [60](#). Steeped me] F *corr.*, Q (Steep'd me); Steed'dme F *uncorr.* [61](#). utmost] *omit* Q [62](#) place] part Q [64](#). A] Q; The F [65](#). unmoving] Q; and mouing F [65](#). finger] fingers Q [65](#). at—] at—oh, oh, Q [73](#). thou] thy Q [74](#). Ay, there] Ed.; I heere F, Q [76](#). as summer] F *corr.*; as a Sommer F *uncorr.*; as summers Q [77](#). thou weed] thou blacke weede Q [78](#). Who] why Q [78](#). and] Thou Q [80](#). ne'er] Q; neuer F [82](#). paper,] Q; ~? F [83](#). upon] on Q [84](#)–[87](#). Committed . . . committed?] *omit* Q [90](#). hollow] hallow Q [92](#). Impudent strumpet!] Q; *omit* F [97](#). other] hated Q [102](#). forgive us] forgiuenesse Q [103](#). then] *omit* Q [105](#). SD *5 lines earlier in* Q [107](#). gate of] gates in Q [107](#). you, you, ay, you] I, you, you, you Q [117](#)–[18](#). DESDEMONA Who . . . lady.] *omit* Q [120](#). answers] answer Q [121](#). But] Bnt F [122](#). my²] our Q [125](#). very meet] very well Q [127](#). least misuse] F *corr.*; least mise vse F *uncorr.*; m svse F *uncorr.*; greatest abuse Q [132](#). to] at Q [134](#). bewhored] F *corr.*, Q (bewhor'd); be whor'd F *uncorr.* [136](#). As] Q; That F [136](#). hearts] F *corr.*, Q; heart F *uncorr.* [136](#). bear] Q beare it F [140](#). said] sayes Q [141](#). “whore.” A] F *corr.* (whore: a), Q; ~^ ~ F *uncorr.* [147](#). country and] Countrey, all Q [164](#). most villainous] outragious Q [166](#). heaven] Q; Heauens F [168](#). rascals] rascall Q [170](#). door] dores Q [171](#). them]

him Q [171](#). them! Some] F *corr.* (them: some), Q; the m
some F *uncorr.* [175](#). Alas] O Good Q [178](#)–93. Here . . .
me.] *omit* Q [183](#). them in] Q2; them: or F [183](#). form,] Q2;
~. F [195](#). offense,] Q; ~. F [196](#). And . . . you.] Q; *omit*
F [198](#). warrant] warrant you Q [199](#). summon to] summon
you to Q [200](#). The messengers . . . stays the meat] And the
great Messengers . . . stay Q [201](#). SD] *Exit women* Q [207](#)–
8. now, keep'st] thou keepest Q [213](#)–14. RODERIGO Faith, I
have heard too much, and your words and] *Rodori*. I haue
heard too much: and your words and F *corr.*; A nd hell gnaw
his bones, F *uncorr.*; *Rod.* Faith I haue heard too much, for
your words, And Q [214](#). performances] performance
Q [216](#). With . . . truth.] *omit* Q [217](#). my] *omit* Q [218](#).
deliver to Desdemona] Q; deliuer *Desdemona* F [220](#).
expectations] expectation Q [221](#). acquaintance]
acquittance Q [223](#). well] good Q [225](#). nor 'tis] it is
Q [225](#). By this hand, I say 'tis very] Q; Nay I think it is
F [228](#). I . . . 'tis] I say it is Q [234](#). and said] and I haue said
Q [237](#). instant] time Q [239](#). exception] conception
Q [241](#). affair] affaires Q [245](#). in] within Q [248](#). the] rhe
F [248](#). enjoy] enioyest Q [251](#). what is it] *omit* Q [251](#).
within reason] Q; ~, ~ F [253](#). commission] command
Q [257](#). takes] Q; taketh F [261](#). removing him] remouing
of him Q [265](#). Ay, if] I, and if Q [265](#). a right] right Q [266](#).
harlotry] harlot Q

4.3 [0](#). SD *Two lines earlier in Q (after “About it!”)* [2](#).
'twill] it shall Q [8](#). Dismiss] dispatch Q [10](#). SD *one-half*
line earlier in F and Q [13](#). And] He Q [14](#). bade] Q; bid
F [19](#). I would] Q; ~, ~ F [21](#). his frowns] and frownes
Q [22](#). in them] Q; *omit* F [23](#). have^ laid] F *corr.*, Q; ~, ~ F
uncorr. [23](#). those] these Q [24](#). faith] Q; Father F [25](#).
thee] Q; *omit* F [26](#). those] Q; these F [30](#). had] has Q [33](#)–
57. I . . . next.] *omit* Q [35](#). Barbary] *Brabarie* F [42](#). nether]

F *corr.*; neither F *uncorr.* [43](#). *soul sat sighing*] Q2; *Soule sat singing* F *corr.*; *Sonle set sining* F *uncorr.* [46](#). *willow*³] *Wtllough* F [49](#), [60](#). *Sing willow, willow, willow*] F (*Sing Willough, &c*) [52](#)–[53](#). *Lay . . . willow.*] F (*Sing Willough, &c*. (*Lay by these*) *Willough, Willough.*) [57](#). *who is 't*] *who's* Q [59](#)–[62](#). *I . . . men.*] *omit* Q [59](#). *then*] F *corr.*; *theu* F *uncorr.* [63](#). *So*] *Now* Q [66](#)–[71](#). *DESDEMONA . . . question.*] *omit* Q [77](#). *Wouldst . . . deed*] *Would . . . thing* Q [80](#). *In*] *Good* Q [81](#). *In*] *By my* Q [82](#). *it*] Q; *omit* F [83](#). *ring, nor*] *ring; or* Q [84](#). *petticoats*] *or Petticotes* Q [84](#). *petty*] *such* Q [85](#). *for the*] Q; *for all the* F [85](#). *'Uds pity*] Q; *why* F [97](#)–[115](#). *But . . . so.*] *omit* Q [116](#). *God*] Q; *Heauen* F [116](#). *uses*] *vsage* Q

5.1 [1](#). *bulk*] Q *Barke* F [5](#). *on*] of Q [8](#). *stand*] *sword* Q [9](#). *deed*] *dead* Q [10](#). *hath*] *has* Q [12](#). *quat*] *gnat* Q [13](#). *angry. Now,*] *~^ ~:* Q [15](#). *gain*] *game* Q [17](#). *Of*] *For* Q [19](#). *be.*] *~,* Q [22](#). *much*] *omit* Q [23](#). *Be 't . . . hear*] Q; *But . . . heard* F [26](#). *know'st*] *think'st* Q [29](#). *Help*] *light* Q [32](#). *It is*] *Harke tis* Q [37](#). *unblest . . . hies*] *fate hies apace* Q [38](#). *Forth*] Q; *For* F [43](#). *voice*] *cry* Q [47](#). *groan*] *grones* Q [47](#). *'Tis*] *it is a* Q [49](#). *in to*] *Ed.*; *into* F, Q [52](#). *light*] *lights* Q [56](#). *We*] *I* Q [57](#). *Did*] Q; *Do* F [58](#). *heaven's*] Q; *heauen* F [65](#). *me*] *my* Q [66](#). *that*] *the* Q [71](#). *here*] Q; *there* F [74](#). *dog!*] *dog,—o, o, o.* Q [75](#). *men*] *him* Q [75](#). *these*] *those* Q [91](#). *My sweet*] *O my sweete* Q [91](#). *O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!*] *Cassio, Cassio* Q [93](#). *have thus*] *thus haue* Q [96](#)–[97](#). *IAGO Lend . . . hence!*] *omit* Q [100](#). *be a party*] *beare a part* Q [100](#). *injury*] *omit* Q [101](#). *Come, come*] *omit* Q [105](#). *O heaven*] Q; *Yes, 'tis* F [109](#). *your*] *you* Q [115](#). *He, he*] *He* Q [116](#). *the*] *a* Q [123](#). *out*] Q; *omit* F [125](#). *gentlemen*] *Gentlewoman* Q [126](#). *gastness*] *ieastures* Q [127](#). *if . . . stare*] *an . . . stirre* Q [127](#). *hear*] *haue* Q [130](#). *SD* Q; *omit* F [135](#). *Roderigo dead*] Q; *Rodorigo*

quite dead F [137](#). fruits] fruite Q [137](#). Prithee] pray Q [142](#). O fie] Fie, fie Q [145](#). Faugh!] Q; omit F [150](#). afore] I pray Q [151](#). makes] markes Q

5.2 0. SD *Enter Othello, and Desdemona in her bed* F; *Enter Othello with a light* Q [10](#). thy light] thine Q [11](#). cunning'st] cunning Q [13](#). relume] returne Q [13](#). the] Q; thy F [16](#). needs must] must needes Q [16](#). it] Q; thee F [17](#). O] A Q [17](#). dost] doth Q [18](#). Justice to] Iustice her selfe to Q [18–19](#). sword! One more, one more] sword once more Q [21](#). One] once Q [21](#). this] Q; that's F [21](#). SD Q; omit F [24](#). where] when Q [33](#). Alack] Alas Q [37](#). heaven] Q; Heauens F [42](#). so] Q; omit F [50](#). Ay] omit Q [54](#). I hope, I hope] I hope Q [66](#). Yes,] Q; omit F [69](#). conception] conceit Q [71](#). Then Lord] Q; O Heauen F [78](#). my] thy Q [79](#). mak'st] Q (makest); makes F [84](#). Let] And let Q [87](#). used thee] —vds death Q [93](#). O] omit Q [93](#). interprets. What] interprets then,—what Q [97](#). Out] O Q [101](#). if] an Q [103](#). OTHELLO Being . . . pause.] omit Q [104](#). SP omit Q [105](#). SD F; *he stifles her* Q [105–6](#). *her.* EMILIA] Ed.; *her. Emilia at the doore.* Æmil. F; *her. Des.* O Lord, Lord, Lord. Emillia calls within. Em. Q [107](#). noise] voyce Q [108](#). that am] F *corr.*, Q; am that F *uncorr.* [111](#). SD *within*] omit Q [117](#). here] Q; high F [119](#). best to do] the best Q [121](#). What] my Q [125](#). Should] Q; Did F [127](#). That] omit Q [127](#). O] omit Q [130](#). SD *1 line earlier in* Q [136](#). nearer] neere the Q [145](#). O Lord] Q; Alas F [147](#). that was] it is Q [153](#). SD omit F [157](#). heard] Q; heare F [158](#). the] a Q [165](#). art] as Q [174](#). Cassio. Had] Cassio: nay, had Q [179](#). on her] omit Q [183](#). iterance] iteration Q [185–89](#). EMILIA O . . . Iago.] omit Q [194](#). worst] wotst F [198](#). that] the Q [201](#). known] know Q [203](#). SD *Iago.*] Iago, and others. Q [206](#). murders] murder Q [207](#). SP GRATIANO] All Q [221–30](#). My mistress . . . Villainy!] omit Q [235](#). SD Q;

omit F [243](#). horrible] terrible Q [246](#). in twain] atwane
 Q [249](#). reprobance] reprobation Q [254](#). that] the Q [258](#).
 God] Q; Heauen F [258](#). God] Q; Powres F [259](#). Zounds] Q;
 Come F [260](#). 'twill out. I peace?] 'twill: I hold my peace sir,
 no Q [261](#). No . . . liberal] no, I'll be in speaking, liberall
 Q [261](#). north] ayre Q [268](#). of] on Q [274](#). give] gaue
 Q [280](#). wife] woman Q [282](#). SD 2 lines earlier in Q; *omit*
 F [284](#). SD Q; *omit* F [286](#). you this] your Q [287](#). here] Q;
omit F [290](#). SD Q; *Exit* F [295](#)–98. EMILIA What . . . willow.]
omit Q [301](#). alas, I die] I die, I die Q [301](#). SD Q; *omit*
 F [303](#). is] Q; was F [307](#). with] to Q [315](#). your] you
 Q [317](#)–23. Be . . . wench,] *omit* Q [327](#). cursèd, cursèd]
 cursed Q [332](#). Desdemon! Dead, Desdemon] *Desdemona*,
Desdemona Q [332](#). O, O] O, o, o Q [332](#). SD Enter *Lodvico*,
Cassio, *Montano* and *Iago* with *Officers*] F; Enter *Lodouico*,
Montano, *Iago*, and *Officers*, *Cassio* in a *Chaire* Q [333](#).
 unfortunate] infortunate Q [335](#). that] this Q [337](#). that]
omit Q [338](#). Wrench] Wring Q [340](#). live] F, Q *corr.*; loue Q
uncorr. [342](#). wert] Q; was F [343](#). damnèd] Q; cursed
 F [344](#). shall] should Q [347](#). I did] did I Q [351](#). never
 gave] did neuer giue Q [352](#). your] you Q [353](#). you, I pray]
 you pray Q [362](#). know not.] Q; ~ ~ ^) F [373](#). interim] nicke
 Q [375](#). thou] the Q [376](#). that] a Q [379](#). but] *omit* Q [396](#).
 bring away] bring him away Q [397](#). before you go] *omit*
 Q [402](#). me as I am] them as they are Q [407](#). Judean] F
 (Iudean); *Indian* Q [412](#). medicinable] medicinall Q [417](#).
 SD Q; *omit* F [426](#). loading] lodging Q [430](#). on] to Q [435](#).
 SD *They exit*] F (*Exeunt*); *Exeunt omnes* Q

Othello: **A Modern Perspective**

Susan Snyder

Early in Act 2 of *Othello*, the newly married Othello and Desdemona are reunited in Cyprus, having survived a storm at sea that threatened their separate ships. The meeting is rapturous, almost beyond words:

OTHELLO

I cannot speak enough of this content.

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!

(2.1.214–17)

In a film, the background music would swell at this point. These lovers, a dark-skinned Moorish general and a white Venetian lady, have triumphed over daunting obstacles: racial difference and the attendant cultural taboos; disparities of culture and of age; the angry opposition of Desdemona's father, Brabantio, urged on by Othello's malicious subordinate, Iago; the threat of the attacking Turkish fleet; and finally the raging storm that scattered the Turks and might well have swamped the Venetian ships as well. On this high note of joy, with the forces against their happiness destroyed or rendered powerless, the married life of Desdemona and Othello begins.

But less than two days later, the marriage is utterly destroyed and with it Othello and Desdemona themselves. Discords arise between them that cannot be resolved with kisses. Indeed, when we next see Othello kissing his wife ([5.2.18](#), [21](#)), it is as a nostalgic gesture before he executes her as an unfaithful wife. Even allowing for the conventional economy and foreshortening of drama, this is a precipitous breakdown of love and trust. What goes so quickly and terribly wrong with the marriage of Othello and Desdemona? In what follows, I suggest various approaches to this question; some overlap, some point in opposing directions. Neither separately nor in conjunction can they offer anything like “the whole truth.”

The most obvious and immediate answer is Iago. It is he who plots to poison Othello’s happiness, and to bring down Cassio as well by getting him first stripped of his military position and then suspected by the Moor as Desdemona’s lover. It is Iago whom everyone onstage condemns at the play’s conclusion: in the space of the last 130 lines or so, various appalled characters call him viper, devil, wretch, pernicious caitiff, Spartan dog, and (repeatedly) slave and villain. At the Cyprus reunion in [2.1](#), Iago’s malevolence already adds a jarring note to the triumphant background music. Directly after the speech quoted above—Othello’s wish that kisses be their greatest discords—Iago says, in an aside,

O, you are well tuned now,
But I’ll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

The question of what drives Iago to ruin the Othello music is one that has long been debated. To his pawn,

Roderigo, and to the audience in soliloquy, Iago speaks at one time or another of many grievances: Othello has made Cassio his lieutenant rather than Iago, who wanted, and claims to have deserved, the post; Iago suspects that his wife, Emilia, has betrayed him with the Moor; Iago wants revenge, whether by possessing Desdemona (to be “even with him, wife for wife”) or by shattering Othello’s marital happiness; Cassio is his chosen instrument because Cassio is attractive to women and an additional threat to Iago’s husbandly rights of ownership over Emilia. In spite of this wealth of inciting causes, critics have felt a disparity between the magnitude of Iago’s malevolent work and the motives he gives for it. There are too many of them, for one thing. The fears of being cuckolded, mentioned only once or twice, don’t seem to go very deep. And when Iago, after engineering Cassio’s downfall, does get the lieutenantancy at the end of Act 3, [scene 3](#), he expresses no satisfaction either then or later.

Deeper insight comes from a few glimpses Iago affords us into his feelings, apart from the occasions he cites. “I hate the Moor” is his obsessive litany: “I have told thee often, and I retell thee again and again . . .” ([1.3.407](#)–8). This may well be suspect, like anything else he says to Roderigo, but even when alone he reiterates it:

I hate the Moor,
And it is thought abroad that ’twixt my sheets
’Has done my office. ([1.3.429](#)–31)

The phrasing—“*And* it is thought,” not “*Because* it is thought”—detaches the hatred from any immediate cause, gives it a dark life of its own. Bernard Spivack pointed out this unexpected *And* and the resulting detachment. He

concluded that Iago was a descendant of the Vice character in medieval allegorical drama.¹ At times, certainly, Iago's malevolence seems too absolute for ordinary motivation, presenting rather what Melville called (in the Iago-like Claggart he created for *Billy Budd*) "the mystery of iniquity." But the reader or viewer, as well as the actor assigned to play Iago, may nevertheless find enlightenment of various kinds in human psychology. It is possible, for example, to see Iago not as an inhuman embodiment of evil but as a man who habitually feels the fine qualities and good fortunes of others as injuries to himself. He seems to point to that characteristic in himself later in the play when he tells us why Cassio has to die. As one who can expose Iago's deception to Othello, Cassio is a practical danger, but that is just an afterthought to Iago's more basic resentment of Cassio: "He hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly" (5.1.20–21).

If Iago feels himself a have-not, the graces of Cassio and Desdemona and the glamorous life and language of Othello must rankle in maddening contrast. Probing the subtext further, we may see recurring through his real and imagined grievances the anxiety of displacement. The fantasies of being dislodged from his sole rights as a husband by Othello or Cassio are problematic; more firmly based in reality, and more galling, is his displacement by Cassio as Othello's lieutenant—and intimate friend. The Moor has passed over his ensign, Iago, with all his experience in the battlefield, to choose the well-bred Cassio, courtly in behavior and schooled in "bookish theoric" (1.1.25). Iago himself is of the lower class: "honest," the label he constantly receives from others, is complimentary but also patronizing, used to pat inferiors on the head. Insecurity about his "place" in the social hierarchy blends into the specific obsession about the

military position he has failed to attain. Complaining, he sounds rather like an NCO jeering angrily at the advancement of a West Point graduate:

'Tis the curse of service.
Preferment goes by letter and affection,
And not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to th' first. (1.1.37–40)

Promotion by seniority (*gradation*) would presumably have rewarded Iago for his long service in the field, but now it is *letter and affection* that count: letters of recommendation from influential people,² and Othello's own partiality for Cassio, stronger than any regard he had for Iago. In spite of the experience he and his general shared in several campaigns, Iago is shut out from this affection, the closeness that draws Othello naturally to make his (wellborn) friend his lieutenant, the one who will act in his stead and represent him. The rejection can be seen as a double one: as Cassio appropriates Othello on the one hand, Desdemona draws him on the other, away from the bond of fellow soldiers into a new intimacy of marriage.

Iago might thus say with Hamlet, "How all occasions do inform against me": each event stirs his general sense of being put down, discounted, and excluded. His shrewd intelligence makes him all the more resentful at being subordinate to both Othello and Cassio in the army hierarchy. He exults in manipulating them, in being the one truly in command. Manipulating Cassio is easy, for the lieutenant has a defined weakness, susceptibility to drink. With Roderigo's help it is not difficult for Iago to lead Cassio on to brawling on the watch and quick demotion. Does Othello also show signs of vulnerability? For some critics,

narcissism and self-dramatization are all too apparent in the “noble Moor,” enough to destroy his marriage even without much help from Iago.³ Without so thoroughly discounting Othello’s greatness, we may well recognize in him a social insecurity that renders him open to Iago’s insinuations.

IAGO

I know our country disposition well.
In Venice they do let God see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands. Their best
conscience

Is not to leave ’t undone, but keep ’t unknown.

OTHELLO Dost thou say so? (3.3.232–37)

Othello has no knowledge of his own to counter this insider’s generalizations about Venetian wives. He knows nothing of Venice apart from the few months’ residence during which his courtship took place. A soldier since boyhood, he is unused to *any* peacetime society. Although he is a Venetian by association and allegiance, whatever he knows of the customs and assumptions of Venice is learned, not instinctive. If Iago, a native, says Venetian women are habitually unfaithful, it must be so (“Dost *thou* say so?”). Paul Robeson, whose second New York *Othello* production opened soon after the end of World War II, compared the Moor’s insecurity to what an American soldier in the occupying army in Japan might feel in courting a Japanese woman, totally ignorant of the culture and its customs and having no basis on which to disbelieve the advice offered him.

Besides denying him cultural experience, Othello’s warrior-past unfits him for his present dilemma in another way. He is decisive, as a good commander must be. He does not hesitate in doubt, and when resolved must act:

To be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved. . . .
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.
([3.3.210](#)–23)

What works for the soldier is tragic for the husband; it pushes him past the doubt he cannot tolerate to an act of closure that is irrevocable.

Between Othello's years of exclusively masculine experience in the "tented field" and Desdemona's sheltered Venetian girlhood stretches a gap that even the most loving marriage can hardly bridge. He is black, she is white. He is middle-aged, she is young. Neither this disparity in age nor Othello's unfamiliarity with Venice is in the story on which Shakespeare based his play; in that story, for example, the Moor is a longtime resident. This suggests that the playwright was deliberately accentuating this marriage as a union of opposites. The source story also has the bride and groom live together in Venice for several months after the marriage; Shakespeare, keeping his own emphasis, sends his newlyweds off immediately to the challenges of Cyprus, allowing no time to foster personal or social familiarity. Othello and Desdemona are so thoroughly deprived of common ground as to constitute a paradigm of difference in marriage. It is as if Shakespeare were directing our attention to the tragic vulnerability of love itself. Desdemona's devotion is total; and while Othello's love may be based in part on her mirroring back to him his best self ("She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity them" [[1.3.193](#)–94]), he has clearly invested his life

in their new relationship. Each is dependent on the other, yet each is necessarily separated in isolated selfhood. Beyond Othello's personal deficiencies, then, we may focus on this unresolvable contradiction and the cross-purposes and misunderstandings it breeds, inherent in any love relation but in *Othello* dramatically accented and thematized.

The play's hero as well as its villain may thus be implicated in the disaster that befalls the marriage. From a different perspective, one may see additional psychological dimensions to this tragedy, a tragedy in which social forces have determining power beyond merely individual drives and deficiencies. It is, of course, Venetian *society* that labels Othello and Iago inferior, Iago for being far down in the social hierarchy and Othello for being foreign and dark-skinned.⁴ Yet while neither Othello nor Iago is at home in the prevailing social system, they are both deeply embedded in it, like all the other characters, and are shaped by it. The play's title, as Michael Long notes, is not just *Othello* or *The Moor* but *Othello, The Moor of Venice*.⁵ The tragedy evolves from and reacts to a particular society, which is dramatized for us first in Venice itself and then, precariously maintained, in its fortified outpost, Cyprus. Venetian society is in many ways attractive, embellished by graceful accomplishments like Desdemona's singing, playing, and dancing (3.3.216), sustained by a civil order one can take for granted. Brabantio disbelieves those who claim he has been robbed: "This is Venice. My house is not a grange [i.e., a farmhouse]" (1.1.119). Act 1, scene 3 shows us a rational government whose officers deliberate carefully under pressure, hear evidence judiciously.

But if the senators do justice to the alien Moor who has married a senator's daughter, they are motivated less by

fairness than by their desperate need for General Othello to stop the Turkish “theft” of their possession, Cyprus. Brabantio charges Othello with a similar theft on a personal level ([1.2.80](#)), and even when it is plain that Desdemona married of her own accord, her father still addresses her as “jewel,” a precious possession whose “escape” is galling ([1.3.225](#), [227](#)). The Venetian value system of acquiring and possessing is clear in the frequency of commercial images in the play’s language, including other literal and metaphoric “jewels” that implicate Iago and even Othello. When Iago repeatedly advises “put money in thy purse,” Roderigo is persuaded he can win Desdemona with jewels. Good name is a jewel, Iago assures Othello—and therefore can be stolen. Iago is in fact the thief of Desdemona’s good name, just as he pockets Roderigo’s real jewels. Othello, too, shows the shaping power of this preoccupation with buying and selling, manipulating and increasing wealth, fearing theft. “Had she been true,” he says of his beautiful wife,

If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite [i.e., topaz],
I’d not have sold her for it. ([5.2.174](#)–77)

The pervasive notion of woman as property, prized indeed but more as object than as person, indicates one aspect of a deep-seated sexual pathology in Venice. Othello admires Desdemona’s skin as she sleeps, “whiter . . . than snow, / And smooth as monumental alabaster” ([5.2.4](#)–5). Besides the beauty of alabaster—yet another precious substance—its coldness and stillness are the keynotes. Earlier he had been troubled to feel her hand, “Hot, hot, and moist,” and to sense there “a young and sweating devil . . . That commonly rebels” ([3.4.45](#)–49). What he wants, it seems, is a beautiful

form with no wayward life at all. “Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee / And love thee after” (5.2.20–21).

Fear of women’s sexuality is omnipresent in *Othello*. Iago fans to flames the coals of socially induced unease in Othello, fantasizes on his own about being cuckolded by Othello and Cassio. In an ideology that can value only cloistered, desireless women, any woman who departs from this passivity will cause intense anxiety. One result is a version of the familiar “virgin/whore syndrome,” which Cassio actually enacts in the play with the two women who concern him most. He exalts “the divine Desdemona,” commanding the Cypriots to kneel to her as if to a goddess (2.1.80, 93). He resists strongly when Iago’s conversation puts her in a sexual context, refusing to speculate about the wedding night, insisting on her modesty (2.3.26–27). The woman with whom he is sexually involved, Bianca, is a strumpet—or is she? Bianca denies it, and we have no evidence from the text that she sells her favors as Iago says. The 1623 Folio list of characters which labels her “a courtesan” is most likely the work of someone in the printing house, the label being derived from the accusations of Iago, Cassio, and Emilia; but perhaps we should separate Shakespeare’s characterization of Bianca from that of these characters. Perhaps what we ought to register is not that Bianca is a slut but that Cassio treats her like a slut. If she has desired him and slept with him, she has, in his eyes, become a slut. Desdemona’s own frankly expressed desire for her husband in Act 1, [scene 3](#) contrasts significantly with his denial of such feelings for her, and after he has possessed her there are suggestions that the revulsion he feels is for his sexual bond with her as well as for her purported adultery with Cassio.⁶

This is perhaps the most insidious tragic design in *Othello*, a psychosocial web that ensnares men and women alike. It is never named. In the last scene, Emilia vows to speak out in spite of men—"Let heaven and men and devils, let them all, / All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak" (5.2.262–63). But before she can, Iago stabs her into silence. Othello tries to sum up his life before ending it, but his moving picture of "one that loved not wisely, but too well" is incomplete. In that same speech he likens Desdemona to "a pearl . . . / Richer than all his tribe," still caught in the Venetian economy of worth. Othello stops his own groping self-analysis with his sword, and Iago, still alive, refuses explanation: "What you know, you know. / From this time forth I never will speak word." And the onlookers cannot contemplate the marriage of opposites so disastrously concluded, Desdemona and Othello dead on their marriage bed. "The object poisons sight," shudders Lodovico; "Let it be hid."

1. Spivak, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 448 and more generally chs. 1 and 12.

2. Iago himself has in fact tried to wield influence of this kind, employing "three great ones of the city" to plead his case with Othello (1.1.9).

3. This view was most strongly argued by F. R. Leavis in "Diabolic Intellect and the Noble Hero: A Note on *Othello*," *Scrutiny* 6 (1937–38): 259–83. The National Theatre production of 1964, with Laurence Olivier as Othello, was based on Leavis's interpretation.

4. This shared status as outsiders may well draw Othello, when his confidence is shaken, to rely all the more on Iago.

The director Joe Dowling took this approach in his 1991 production in New York's Shakespeare in the Park series: see Richard Bernstein, "Looking Inside that Outsider, Othello the Moor," *New York Times*, June 16, 1991, pp. 5, 34.

5. Long, *The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 39.

6. Desdemona, not Othello, begs that they may pursue their married life in Cyprus: "That I 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]f I be left behind, / A moth of peace, and he go to the war, / The rites [of lovemaking] for why I love him are bereft me" (1.3.283–92). She was also the initiator in their courtship. Othello in supporting her plea disclaims the urgency of desire: "I . . . beg it not / To please the palate of my appetite, / Nor to comply with heat (the young affects / In me defunct)" (296–97). In the last scene, commanded to remember her sins, Desdemona replies, "They are loves I bear to you" (5.2.49). "Ay, and for that thou diest," responds Othello, seeming to find that loving desire for her own husband as sinful as that he imagines she has for Cassio.

Further Reading

In addition to the following books and articles, see www.folger.edu/shakespeare and www.folger.edu/online-resources.

Othello

Abbreviations: *Ant.* = *Antony and Cleopatra*, ASF = American Shakespeare Festival (Stratford, Conn.), BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation, *Cor.* = *Coriolanus*, F = First Folio, *Lear* = *King Lear*, MM = *Measure for Measure*, MV = *The Merchant of Venice*, OSF = Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Ashland), Q = First Quarto of 1622, *Romeo* = *Romeo and Juliet*, RSC = Royal Shakespeare Company, *Shrew* = *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus* = *Titus Andronicus*, *Wives* = *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, WT = *The Winter's Tale*

Altman, Joel B. *The Improbability of "Othello": Rhetorical Anthropology and Shakespearean Selfhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Altman's focus on Shakespeare's inquiry into the nature and role of probability and improbability in *Othello* leads him to rework historicist arguments about early modern selfhood and subjectivity: "As a precursor of the postmodern condition," *Othello* offers "a fundamentally rhetorical sense of self that is a condition of Renaissance humanism as it is inscribed, thematized, and enacted in the theater." The author approaches the play through the lens of "rhetorical anthropology": i.e., "a repository of lore and practices

concerning human motives, conditions of reception, techniques of self-presentation, logical formulas and fallacies graspable by the mind[,] . . . and . . . linguistic figures believed to induce emotional adhesion to the persuader's position." From the intellectual heritage of the Greek Sophists (Protagoras, Gorgias, and Isocrates), Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine through the "rhetorical poetics" of Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian to the humanists of the sixteenth century, who made classical rhetoric the "lingua franca" of the characters found in early modern drama, Altman traces the history of rhetorical anthropology to reveal "the awakening of modern consciousness—born, strangely enough, of ancient parents." While *Othello* may be "fraught . . . with improbabilities," in the words of the seventeenth-century critic Thomas Rymer, the very process of understanding the play as such is, in Altman's estimation, questioned by Shakespeare throughout the canon. From beginning to end, Shakespeare resists the seventeenth century's tendency to ground both thought and action in a "scientific or moral or aesthetic certainty"—and *Othello* is Shakespeare's most strenuous attempt to reveal that the "probable is really nothing more than the contingent." For Altman, Iago's bold declaration that he will be "acting only 'as if' he possessed the truth" (1.3.431–33) clarifies the medium in which all the actions of *Othello* unfold and opens a unique perspective on the behavior of each character: in a play filled with "peremptory leap[s] of logic," everyone speaks and acts "as if for surety," even those "we are not inclined to call villain." Altman's reading of *Othello* as a tragedy of probability leads him to conclude that "[h]umanity . . . occurs as the result of the impact of Iago on Othello, when the man who so urgently desires epistemological and ontological repose becomes aware of

the historical, improvisatory nature of identity, suffers its uncertainty, and then—in tragic refusal—denies and ends his anguish.” A prologue (“‘As If For Surety’: The Problematics of Shakespearean Probability”) and an epilogue (“‘Make Not Impossible / That Which But Seems Unlike’: The Twilight of Probability and the Dawn of Shakespearean Romance”) frame the volume’s eleven chapters. [Altman’s book incorporates revisions of “‘Preposterous Conclusions’: Eros, *Enargeia*, and the Composition of *Othello*,” *Representations*, no. 18 (Spring 1987): 129–57, and “‘Prophetic Fury’: *Othello* and the Economy of Shakespearean Reception,” *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 85–113.]

Berger, Harry, Jr. “Three’s Company: Contaminated Intimacy in *Othello*.” Part 2 of *A Fury in the Words: Love and Embarrassment in Shakespeare’s Venice*, pp. 87–211. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Desdemona’s “I understand a fury in your words, / But not the words” (4.2.38–39) sparks Berger’s study of “language as gesture.” He borrows the concept from R. P. Blackmur, who in *Language as Gesture* (1952) uses it to describe “the outward and dramatic play of inward . . . meaning [that] animates . . . [meaning so] as to make it independent of speaker or writer.” In other words, characters often say more than they mean to say, as the “inwardness” of their language “suggests the motives, desires, and anxieties speakers hide from others . . . [and] from themselves.” Focusing on this semantic and lexical inwardness, Berger attends specifically to the “affective discourse of embarrassment” in Shakespeare’s two Venetian plays, *MV* and *Othello*, whose characters “devote their energies to embarrassing one another.” He argues that embarrassment

works as a kind of ethos that the dramatic agents assume in ways analogous to their taking up the roles of “victim, villain, donor, sinner, and . . . revenger.” Pointing to the literal meaning of *embarrass* as to “‘embar’: to put up a barrier or deny access,” Berger contends that “the *bar* of *embarrassment*” may be raised in two ways: “by unpleasant experience” and “when people are denied access to things, persons, and states of being they desire or to which they feel entitled.” Like *MV*, *Othello* depicts embarrassment “not merely as a condition but as a weapon and as the wound the weapon inflicts.” As Desdemona’s “I saw Othello’s visage in his mind” (1.3.287) reveals, even when “the weapon [of embarrassment] is sheathed, it makes its presence felt. Intended as an expression of love and praise for the Moor, the line implies, among other things, that ‘she didn’t see it in his face.’” Emphasizing “the complicity of Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia with Iago,” Berger reads the Moor’s “ancient” not as “the autogenetic source of evil” he thinks he is but as one “embarrassed by redundancy,” whose “agency gets progressively hollowed out” by his “victims.” What becomes the tragedy’s “most compelling and unsettling feature” is that “Iago’s basic plan to triangulate the lovers with Cassio was embarrassingly anticipated and put into play by the lovers themselves”; the surprise nugget of information that neither the audience nor Iago is aware of until 3.3.78–81 is Cassio’s role as Othello’s proxy in the wooing of Desdemona. For most of the play, that “is the great thing of them forgot—they being Othello, Desdemona, and Cassio.” Berger organizes his close reading of *Othello* under the following headings: “Prehistory in *Othello*,” “Othello’s Embarrassment” (1.2 and 1.3), “Desdemona on Cyprus” (2.1), “The Proclamation Scenes” (2.2 and 3), “Dark Triangles in 3.3,” “Desdemona’s Greedy Ear,” “Impertinent

Trifling: Desdemona's Handkerchief," "On the Emilian Trail," "Iago's Soliloquies," and "Othello's Infidelity." The final chapter, "The Fury in Their Words," centers on the currents of embarrassment circulating from 4.2 to the "insane chiasmic justice" of Othello's "*osculum mortis*" (5.2.420–21), in which Shakespeare's Moor shows that "he understands the fury in his deeds but not the deeds."

Cavell, Stanley. "*Othello* and the Stake of the Other." In *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays by Shakespeare*, pp. 125–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. [This chapter is also included in Cavell's *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays by Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 125–42.]

In this influential study of the intersection of Shakespearean tragedy and epistemology in *Ant.*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Cor.*, *WT*, and *Macbeth*, Cavell examines the motives for and consequences of "disowning knowledge"—i.e., of the skeptical denial of truths about oneself and one's interpersonal relationships. He regards the seven dramatic texts as exemplifying "a mode of tragedy [responsive] to the crisis of knowledge inspired by . . . the unfolding of the New Science in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, [a crisis defined] by Descartes's articulation of modern skepticism." Building on the premise that "the pivot of *Othello's* interpretation of skepticism is Othello's placing of a finite woman in the place of God," Cavell suggests that the tragedy of the play lies in Othello's refusal to acknowledge Desdemona's imperfection, her finiteness as flesh and blood. Othello, whose self-image is one of perfection (1.2.36–37), casts himself as the hero of tales of romance, some of which he used to woo and win Desdemona, and "others of which he will die upon"; he sees his blackness as "the color of one

of enchanted powers . . . but above all . . . the color of one of purity, of a perfect soul.” By arousing, and being aroused by, Desdemona’s sexuality, however, Othello sees that “perfect soul” becoming stained. Dealing at length with Othello’s horror of human sexuality, in himself and in others, Cavell finds “the philosophy or the moral” of the play in the following line from Montaigne’s Essay “On Some Verses of Vergil”: “What a monstrous animal it is to be a horror to himself, to be burdened by his pleasures, to regard himself as a misfortune!” The hypothesis governing Cavell’s reading of the play’s structural dynamic is that “the thing *denied our sight*” throughout the first scene (i.e., the marital intimacy of the wedding night that Iago keeps “retouching . . . for Othello’s enchafed imagination”) is “what we are shown in [5.2], the scene of murder.” Cavell concludes that the “consequence for [Othello’s] refusal of knowledge of his other is an imagination of stone.” [The essay is a revision of “Epistemology and Tragedy: A Reading of *Othello*,” *Daedalus* 108 (1979): 27–43.] [For related studies of Othello’s sexual anxiety but from different perspectives, see Snyder’s [“Modern Perspective,”](#) [above](#), and [Greenblatt and Neill,](#) [below](#).]

Erickson, Peter. “Race Words in *Othello*.” In *Shakespeare and Immigration*, edited by Ruben Espinosa and David Ruiter, pp. 159–76. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014.

As part of a collection that “interrogates and reimagines” the role of race studies in our contemporary understanding of Shakespeare, Erickson’s analysis of *Othello*’s layered racial discourse begins with an “imaginative trajectory [that] enacts a double migration”: first, the pre-dramatic action that brought Othello and Desdemona’s mother’s maid Barbary from Africa to Venice; and second, “the

metatheatrical process that conveys the London audience . . . from the Northern to the Southern Renaissance by mapping London onto distant Venice and by using that imaginary relation as a point of entry into the wider geographical space represented by black Othello's obscure origins." Against the backdrop of the expanding slave trade in early modern Europe, which the author imagines as culturally shifting in emphasis from the migratory routes of the Black Mediterranean to those of the Black Atlantic, Erickson explores "three distinct levels of racial discourse [ranging] from blatant to unobtrusive": (1) the crude "unabashedly antiblack" language of Iago, Roderigo, and Brabantio; (2) the "more subtle, coded version of racial prejudice" found in the "blandly patronizing" Duke's tribute to Othello as "far more fair than black" ([1.3.331](#)); and (3) the seemingly unconnected and rarely attended to references to "slavery" ([1.3.160](#)), "Barbary" ([4.3.28](#), [35](#)), and "Mauritania" ([4.2.257](#)). Erickson focuses on the "embedded verbal network" of these three kinds of "race" words to "reveal the play's deeper engagement with, as well as embroilment in, migration and race." Such racial discourse, he argues, "mediated and hedged various strategies of insulation" for Shakespeare's English audiences as they engaged the "extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere" ([1.1.151](#)–52). At the close of the essay, Erickson addresses the need for more cross-historical approaches in current critical race studies of the early modern period. Because *Othello* "does not contain within the play itself an internal critical framework fully adequate to the racial issues it raises," it is imperative for us to bring "such a framework . . . to bear . . . from outside. . . . We do not need to deny Shakespeare's brilliance . . . , but the subject of race

and immigration does place us in a position where we are forced to see and set limits to his authorial genius.”

Evans, Robert C., ed. *Othello: A Critical Reader*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

This collection consists of eight new essays: Richard Harp and Steven Hrdlicka, “The Critical Backstory” (an overview of critical reactions to *Othello* spanning the seventeenth century to the end of the twentieth); Christopher Baker, “‘Let Me the Curtains Draw’: *Othello* in Performance” (a discussion of staging and performative choices made in the course of the play’s theatrical afterlife, with special emphasis on filmed versions of *Othello*); Imtiaz Habib, “*Othello*: The State of the Art” (a survey of twenty-first-century responses to the play); Matthew Steggle, “New Directions: Othello, the Moor of London: Shakespeare’s Black Britons” (an exploration of the relevance of the black presence in Shakespeare’s England to the conception and reception of *Othello*); Robert C. Evans, “New Directions: King James’s *Daemonologie* and Iago as Male Witch in Shakespeare’s *Othello*” (a reopening of the issue of Iago as a kind of “satanic character” in light of King James’s treatise on witchcraft); Raphael Falco, “New Directions: Othello, the Turks, and Cyprus” (a study focusing on James’s poem dealing with a crucial naval battle between Christians and Muslims in order to “situate the play in its initial historical contexts”); Lisa Hopkins, “New Directions: Othello and His Brothers” (an examination of the differences between the play, on the one hand, and WT and Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam*, on the other); and Alison V. Scott, “Teaching *Othello*: Materials and Approaches” (a guide to critical editions, major publications, online resources, and films/videos/DVDs). In addition to a select bibliography, the

volume contains a timeline keyed to major issues and events related to the play and a listing of major productions from 1660 to 2001 (including films and televised versions). In his introductory essay, Evans addresses the following topics: date of composition (sometime between late 1601 and late 1604), the primary source (a sixteenth-century novella from Giraldi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*), the relationship between the 1622 Quarto and the 1623 First Folio texts, early stagings and subsequent performance history, generic classification, structure, style, setting, themes, and the characters of Othello, Iago, and Desdemona. Observing that *Othello* "was the subject of more comments in the 1600s than any other Shakespearean tragedy," Evans emphasizes the tragedy's special significance today because of its "treatment of such timely issues as race, gender, homoeroticism and domestic relations."

Greenblatt, Stephen. "The Improvisation of Power." Chapter 6 in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, pp. 222–54, esp. pp. 232–54. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Dovetailing with a new meaning of "fashion" in the sixteenth century (as the forming of a self in the sense of achieving "a distinctive personality . . . [and] a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving") was an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of a human identity as a manipulable, artful process. Self-fashioning, as Greenblatt explains, "occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien[;] . . . what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence . . . any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss." In *Othello*, the focus of the chapter on

improvisation (a “central Renaissance mode of behavior”), Greenblatt detects a pattern of “submission to narrative self-fashioning,” whereby a “process of fictionalization . . . transforms a fixed symbolic structure into a flexible construct ripe for improvisational entry.” As both a conqueror and an infidel, a representative of the Christian authority dominant in Venice and an obvious outsider by virtue of his blackness, Othello is the perfect target for Iago, the arch manipulator and master of improvisation, whose narrative cunning subverts Othello’s own carefully constructed narrative self (1.3.149–96): a heroic self-image that “depends upon a constant performance . . . of his ‘story,’ a loss of his own origins, an embrace, and perpetual reiteration of the norms of another culture.” Iago enters into this narrative by playing on the Christian bias of the time against sexual pleasure and, more specifically, by fantasizing a tale of Desdemona’s lust for Cassio and a narrative of “plausible adultery” (2.1.238–40, 243–70). Like [Cavell \(see above\)](#), Greenblatt considers how Desdemona, albeit unintentionally, also subverts Othello’s heroic self-image: the moment of “erotic intensity, the frank acceptance of pleasure and submission to her spouse’s pleasure [publicly expressed in 1.3.283–94] is as much as Iago’s slander the cause of Desdemona’s death.” His sexual anxiety intensifying, Othello “must destroy [her] both for her . . . experience of pleasure and for awakening such sensations in himself.” Othello maintains his submission to narrative self-fashioning through his final speech, a reaffirmation of “the self as story, but now split suicidally between the defender of the faith and the circumcised enemy who must be destroyed.” As his life was “fashioned as a text,” so it “ended as a text”—a point made clear by Lodovico’s “bizarrely

punning response” to the speech: “O bloody period!” (5.2.418).

Hall, Kim. “*Othello*.” In *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works*, edited by Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard, 1:357–74. Boston: Blackwell, 2003.

Hall frames her essay around an encounter with a customs agent who, on hearing she was in England to research the play, asked if it was true that Othello was a Moor and therefore not “really black.” Focusing on the “problem” of Othello’s blackness, she argues that Othello’s color “is symbolically crucial” to the play and that he was meant to be portrayed with a black skin, a point underscored by the text’s dualistic language of “black” and “white”: “Even if Othello’s color or race cannot be fixed within a specific geographic location, it is apparent that a black/white imagery, which indelibly associates human bodies with cultural norms and values[,] . . . permeates [the discourse].” Hall emphasizes the “polyvalence” of the term “Moor” in the early modern period, noting how its “complex indeterminacy” could mean “non-black Muslim, black Christian, or black Muslim.” What was indisputable in the Christian Europe of Shakespeare’s time, however, was the “profound Other[ness]” of the person designated as a Moor. It seems that “rather than trying to pin down Othello to a specific geographic location, Shakespeare took advantage of the rich and at times disturbing network of allusions associated with ‘Moor.’” The essay tracks the “social conflicts and interests” inherent in critical discussions of the “color issue” since the seventeenth century, revealing (1) that criticism of *Othello* is “increasingly driven by the categories and theories associated with modern racism,” and (2) that “critics and observers of the theater habitually intermingle

the question of color with formalist questions about the quality of the tragedy,” thus making Othello’s race a “barometer” of aesthetic judgment. Hall’s review of the play’s afterlife as a “vehicle for articulating an era’s racial concerns” includes early attempts to locate Othello’s birthplace in regions of lighter skin, commentaries that questioned *Othello*’s place as tragedy in view of the contemporary social position of people of color, the views of critics who insisted not only that Othello was a Moor but also that he was a Caucasian, and the decision of the nineteenth-century actor Edmund Kean to play Othello as a “tawny” Arab. Acknowledging contemporary critical concerns that students will misread race in the play and ask whether the play is racist, Hall writes: “[O]ne can think about the play’s alignment and questioning of sexuality, evil and color without proclaiming the play either racist or anti-racist—terms not known by Shakespeare. . . . The ‘problem’ of blackness—an outsideness that interrupts desired structures of order and belonging—is not the same as, but is certainly intimately related to, the ‘problem’ that haunts Western cultures today.” Because we inhabit a world of seismic change that is similar to the one Shakespeare’s audience inhabited, “we too must make the old contend with the new. It is important to see how *Othello* is embedded in old discourses of belonging and filiation, but it is equally important to think about the ways it can help us solve the ‘problem’ of race today.”

Hampton-Reeves, Stuart. *Othello*. The Shakespeare Handbooks. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Hampton-Reeves’s performance-oriented handbook consists of six chapters: (1) “The Text and Early Performances,” (2) “Commentary,” (3) “The Play’s

Intellectual and Cultural Contexts,” (4) “Key Productions and Performances,” (5) “The Play on Screen,” and (6) “Critical Assessment.” The core of the book is a scene-by-scene commentary that encourages readers to “envisage the words unfurling in performance.” Although the first recorded performance of *Othello* is the indoor staging at court in November 1604, the author states that *Othello* would “certainly” have been played prior to this at the Globe; documentary evidence exists for performances at the private, indoor Blackfriars after 1609 and for touring productions in the early seventeenth century. Claiming that the history of *Othello* “is intimately bound up with the history of its casting”—1660 saw the first female Desdemona, 1821 the first black Othello, and 1981 what may be the last blackface Othello—Hampton-Reeves speculates on the costuming, makeup, and acting of the first actor to play Othello, Richard Burbage; on the playing of Iago by John Lowin, a rising star in the King’s Men known for “dark, comic roles”; and on the boy actor in the part of Desdemona. The “hotly debated” question of how the earliest extant texts—the 1622 Quarto and the 1623 Folio—relate to each other yields competing arguments for Q as either an earlier or a “cut” version of F, whose 160 additional lines reinforce the theme of sexual transgression, give a more prominent role to Emilia, and add to Desdemona’s pathos with the inclusion of her song in 4.3. The author thinks it likely that the two texts “represent different moments in the play’s performance history.” The chapter on intellectual and cultural contexts reprints extracts from source material (Giraldi Cinthio’s *Hecatomithi* [1565] and Geoffrey Fenton’s *Certain Tragical Discourses* [1567]), contemporary theatrical works (the anonymous *Lust’s Dominion* and Shakespeare’s own *Titus*), the play’s critical afterlife (Thomas Rymer’s 1693 “diatribe

against" *Othello*), and journals of travels in Africa (Leo Africanus's *Geographical History of Africa* [1600]). Turning to major theatrical productions, Hampton-Reeves examines (1) the "different paths" taken by Paul Robeson and Laurence Olivier as they defined the role of Othello in the modern era (Robeson emphasizing "a quiet dignity" that defied stereotypes; Olivier favoring "barn-storming theatrics" that rendered Othello "unsettlingly unpredictable"); (2) the foregrounding of politics and race in the revivals by Janet Suzman (Johannesburg Market Theatre, South Africa, 1987) and Jude Kelly (The Shakespeare Theatre, Washington, D.C., 1997); (3) the "claustrophobic intensity" of "small space" stagings such as Trevor Nunn's (RSC, The Other Place, 1989) and Michael Grandage's (Donmar Warehouse, 2007); and (4) select touring *Othellos* intended to attract younger audiences (Frantic Assembly [2008], Northern Broadsides [2009], and RSC [2009]). Among the cinematic treatments discussed are Orson Welles's "*film noir*" version (1952), Jonathan Miller's "stately, incremental study of madness" (BBC-Time/Life, 1981), Oliver Parker's "sex tragedy" (1995), and Tim Blake Nelson's adaptation, *O* (2001). The final chapter surveys questions relating to the "politics of race, sexuality, miscegenation and identity" that have haunted the play's critical landscape almost from the beginning but that have been "thoroughly reformulated with a new urgency" by modern critics, who have "seized on race and sexuality as the starting point for interpretation." With its "uncanny echoes" of current concerns, "*Othello* is not a play which can or should be divorced from the present moment of its reading and performance."

Johanyak, Debra. "'Turning Turk,' Early Modern English Orientalism, and Shakespeare's *Othello*." In *The English*

Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia, edited by Debra Johanyak and Walter S. Lim, pp. 77–95. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Central to Johanyak’s reading of the “representation . . . of race, cultural alterity, and gender politics” in *Othello* is the early modern European fear of a massive advance by the Turkish Ottoman Empire, an East–West conflict embodied in the titular character whose “cultural ancestry is Muslim but whose identity in Venice is powerfully Christian” and who, while identified as a Moor, is linked with “the Turk in the dramatic development of his destructive passions.” Where once, long before the action of the play proper, he had presumably “turned Christian,” Othello “transforms . . . to ‘Turk’” at [3.3.512](#) (“O, blood, blood, blood!”), a counterturn he formally articulates in the Aleppo speech ([5.2.412](#)–17), thereby acknowledging the deep association of the Islamic Orient with his cultural heritage. (The author defines “turning Turk” as “a euphemism meaning to convert from Christianity to Ottoman Islam or adopting a code of behavior deemed barbaric to the Christian world.”) Othello’s actions, if read in light of Qur’anic discourse on adultery and punishment, “provocatively carry Sharia resonances” that allow us to view him “as a Muslim avenger of his beleaguered honor.” Consulting a variety of early modern print materials—e.g., court records of diplomatic relations, trade negotiations, travel narratives, letters, plays, poems, and geographical literature (namely, Leo Africanus’s *Geographical History of Africa* [1600] and Richard Knowles’s *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* [1603])—Johanyak inquires into the signifying power of turning Turk to demonstrate how “contemporary popular (and biased) notions and ideas of Islam” shaped audience responses to the tragedy and informed Shakespeare’s portrayal of Othello.

Her probe of the intersection in the play between the cultural politics of Othello's assimilation and marginalization on the one hand and "the larger politics defining relations between cultures, nations, and empires" on the other leads to the following conclusion: While Shakespeare does not demonize his Moor "in a one-dimensional and overdetermined binaristic universe," neither does he ignore "East-West, Christian-Muslim, and Europe-Ottoman Empire tensions in his tragedy of the blackamoor who greatly desires and yet ultimately fails to become an intrinsic and authentic part of Venetian society. *Othello* is a tragedy that strikes a meaningful chord in Shakespeare's cultural milieu and shares our twenty-first century struggle of grappling with little understood images and ideas of the Islamic Orient."

Korda, Natasha. "The Tragedy of the Handkerchief: Female Paraphernalia and the Properties of Jealousy in *Othello*." Chapter 4 in *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England*, pp. 111–58. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Korda situates her materialist-feminist reading of *Othello* (along with analyses of *Shrew*, *Wives*, and *MM*) in relation to early modern England's "nascent consumer culture and competing conceptions of property." This period saw the housewife's managerial function assuming a new form, one increasingly concerned with "caring for the objects of everyday life . . . as if they were her own, in spite of the legal strictures governing women's property rights." In the chapter on *Othello*, Korda argues for the handkerchief as the nexus between "the discourses of under- and overvaluation . . . woven through the text." Attaching themselves to both gendered and racialized subjects, these

discourses linked women and Africans, “within the cultural imaginary, by their purportedly skewed relations to material objects”: women were “stigmatized” for an excessive attachment to “household cates” (i.e., delicacies, novel luxuries); Africans, for their “overestimation of worthless trifles” (called for the first time in the early modern period *fetissos*, or fetishes). Travel narratives of European merchants are filled with justifications of the economic exploitation of Africans, who were deemed “incapable of estimating the market value of commodities.” Such narratives helped shape Shakespeare’s depiction of Othello’s jealousy, a passion expressed “through his overvaluation of a ‘trifle’ (the handkerchief [5.2.271]) and his undervaluation of a ‘pearl’ (Desdemona [5.2.407–8]).” Korda attends closely to the early modern conception of jealousy “as an affliction arising from the institution of private property” and, consequently, becoming “embedded in contested notions of value and property.” (See, for example, the dual provenance of the handkerchief, handed down in 3.4.65–66 through the mother but in 5.2.256–57 initially from the father.) Just as Africans and women were thought to be equally guilty of misvaluing commodities, so too were they thought to be especially prone to jealousy. This mutual susceptibility serves as “the subjective correlative of their [distorted] object relations.” As both “a bit of linen” and “an amulet” or fetish, the handkerchief is pulled equally toward the domestic and familiar and toward “the exoticizing and strange.” Korda insists that “one cannot adequately account for the significance of the handkerchief . . . without taking both of these perspectives into consideration . . . and that, indeed, it is precisely the interconnection between them that produces its particular significance within the play.” Like Othello himself, the handkerchief is “caught between

competing systems of value and property and is woven together out of ideological discourses that attempt in various ways to reconcile the contradictions between them.”

Neill, Michael. “Unproper Beds: Race, Adultery, and the Hideous in *Othello*.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989): 383–412.

Neill proposes that *Othello*’s most potent theatrical image is the hidden marriage bed, “an inalienably private location, shielded, until the very last scene, from every gaze.” The bed’s “disquietingly absent presence” is introduced as early as Act 1: see the “perverted erotic stereotypes” filling the fantasy concocted by Iago for Brabantio (1.1.97–98, 124–25, 129–31); the entry of Othello and Iago “with torches” in 1.2 and Iago’s “Are you fast married?” (line 13), “implicitly a question about consummation”; and Iago’s debased contextualizing of “rites” of love (1.3.292) as an adulterous “office” between the sheets (1.3.430–31). This imaginary presence continues in subsequent passages and scenes until the denouement, where the “nuptial consummation that the play has kept as remorselessly in view as tormentingly out of sight achieves its perverse (adulterate) performance.” Neill finds the play’s preoccupation with goading the audience to speculate about offstage action “unique” in Shakespeare. The object that “poisons sight,” thus prompting Lodovico’s demand that “it be hid” (5.2.427–28), became the favorite subject of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century engravings illustrating *Othello*. Repeatedly gestured toward in its absence and in the end becoming the “place” where the action is centered, the bed functions as the focus of Iago’s fantasies, Othello’s speculations, and the audience’s voyeuristic imagination. Because of the conventional symbolic importance attached to the marriage bed, the

emphasis on the bed and its violation in *Othello* forms the basis for a whole set of ideas about racial adulteration and sexual transgression.

Newman, Karen. “‘And wash the Ethiop white’: Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*.” In *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, edited by Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O’Connor, pp. 143–62. London: Methuen, 1987.

Under the headings “Miscegenation: Blacks and the Monstrous,” “Monstrous Desire in *Othello*,” “Historical Contingency: Rereading *Othello*,” and “Colonialism and Sexual Difference,” Newman investigates the production of race and gender differences in *Othello* to argue that the black man and the desiring white woman are not polarized, as white is to black, but “identified with the monstrous, an identification that makes miscegenation doubly fearful.” She reads the play in relation to the Elizabethan traveler George Best’s *Discourse* (1578), a virtual compendium of “stock prejudices” against blacks in early modern England. Best recounts, for example, how a black Ethiopian who was brought to England married a “faire English woman,” who, despite her “good complexion” and the English climate, bore a black child, whose “blacknes proceedeth rather of some natural infection of [the father].” Such stories were assimilated into early modern drama, as evidenced by the lustful union of Tamora and Aaron that produces a black baby who is called a “devil” (*Titus* 4.2.67). Newman writes that Othello’s tales of slavery and adventure depict him as “both a speaking subject, a kind of George Best recounting his tales of conquest, and at the same time the object of his ‘Travellours historie’ [1.3.161] by virtue of his blackness, which originates with the various monstrous races he

describes” (1.3.166–68). In the end, Othello reveals “a complicitous self-loathing, for blackness is as loathsome to him as it is to George Best, or any male character in the play, or, ostensibly, to the audience.” Addressing the question “Was Shakespeare a racist who condoned the negative depiction of blacks in his culture?,” Newman claims that by making Othello a hero and depicting Desdemona’s love for him in a sympathetic vein, the playwright contests the conventional ideologies of race and gender in early modern England. Connecting *Othello* with other contemporary representations of blackness and femininity, she urges a resistant reading of Shakespeare that challenges the “hegemonic forces the plays at the same time affirm.” [The essay is reprinted in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare’s Othello*, edited by Anthony Gerard Barthelemy (New York: G. K. Hall, 1994), pp. 124–43.]

Orlin, Lena Cowen, ed. *Othello: The State of Play*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014.

Orlin’s anthology is part of a collaborative series between King’s College (London) and Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.) that seeks to discover the “state of play” in specific works by Shakespeare. The volume presents ten essays selected from among those submitted to a double-session seminar on *Othello* at the 2011 annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America: Laurie Maguire, “*Othello*, Theatre Boundaries, and Audience Cognition”; Lois Potter, “‘All’s One’: Cinthio, *Othello*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*”; Robert Hornback, “‘Speak[ing] Parrot’ and Ovidian Echoes in *Othello*: Recontextualizing Black Speech in the Global Renaissance”; Ian Smith, “Othello’s Black Handkerchief”; Ambereen Dadabhoy, “Two Faced: The Problem of Othello’s Visage”; Lynn Enterline, “Eloquent

Barbarians: *Othello* and the Critical Potential of Passionate Character”; James Siemon, “Making Ambition Virtue? *Othello*, Small Wars, and Martial Profession”; David Schalkwyk, “Othello’s Consummation”; Robert N. Watson, “Othello’s Double Diction”; and Colleen Ruth Rosenfeld, “Shakespeare’s Nobody.” In the introductory overview of the volume’s selections, Orlin underscores the play’s history of prompting strong audience response to characters and action as the play is performed, leading her to ask, “What is it about *Othello* [in contrast to *Hamlet* or *Lear*] that provokes so intense a level of audience engagement?” The essays gathered here—on sources and influences, genres, cultural anxieties relating to gender and race, diction, the play’s military pretext, the “scopic curiosity” shared by Othello and audience alike, and the possibility raised at [4.3.57](#)–58 of a “knocker . . . [who] might have entered . . . [and] intervened”—individually and collectively, “advance many ideas about the play’s ability to unsettle us.”

Potter, Lois. *Othello*. Shakespeare in Performance. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Recognizing the landmark status of Paul Robeson’s *Othello*—in London (1930); in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1942); on Broadway (1943–44, with 296 performances); and finally at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon (1959)—Potter divides her eight-chapter performance history of the play into “Before Robeson” and “After Robeson.” Focusing her first three chapters on the major roles of Othello, Desdemona, and Iago as performed by English and American actors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Potter detects three emerging emphases: “The heroic play is Othello’s, the pathetic one Desdemona’s, and the intellectual approach . . . Iago’s.”

Chapter 4 (“Interval: Alternative *Othellos* in the Modern Age”) considers departures from the established “heroic and poetic *Othello*” and the various ways in which “the poetic tradition survived . . . particularly outside the English-speaking world.” Acknowledging the powerful effect of directorial control on the interpretation of the play’s characters in the twentieth century, Potter devotes the second half of the book to the examination of productions as a whole, discussing them under the following chapter titles: “*Othello* Becomes Contemporary: Ira Aldridge and Paul Robeson,” “The Robeson Legacy I: White *Othellos* on Film, Stage and Television,” “The Robeson Legacy II: Casting *Othello*, 1960–97,” and “*Othello* at the End of the Century: Sex and Soldiers.” She discusses modern stagings by Tyrone Guthrie (Old Vic, 1938), John Dexter (Old Vic, 1964), John Barton (RSC, 1971–72), Ronald Eyre (RSC, 1979), Peter Coe (ASF, 1981–82), Terry Hands (RSC, 1985), Jude Kelly (The Shakespeare Theater, Washington, D.C., 1997), Sam Mendes (Old Vic, 1998), Michael Attenborough (RSC, 1999), and Tony Taccone (OSF, 1999). Along with Jonathan Miller’s televised *Othello* for BBC-Time/Life (1981) and a filmed version of Janet Suzman’s 1987 South African staging produced by BBC Television (1988), Potter discusses the films of Dmitri Buchowetski (1922), Orson Welles (1952), Sergei Yutkevich (1955), Franklin Melton (a 1981 video for Bard Productions), and Oliver Parker (1995). In her introduction, Potter addresses the date of composition, theatrical context, similarities to Jonsonian dramaturgy, differences between the 1622 Quarto and 1623 Folio texts, the early stage history in the Restoration and eighteenth century, and the heavily cut acting text of the late nineteenth century. As Potter makes clear, “the modern performance history of *Othello* begins with Paul Robeson, whose mere

presence transformed and re-politicized the play,” creating in the process a new “dynamic in [its history], and, in the English-speaking world, where it is now taken for granted that actor and role should be racially identical.”

Pye, Christopher. ““To throw out our eyes for brave Othello’: Shakespeare and Aesthetic Ideology.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 (2009): 425–47.

Pye brings together different theoretical perspectives—Lacanian ideas of language, deconstruction, Marxism, race theory, gender theory, and game theory—to argue that in *Othello* “the aesthetic is bound up with the emergence of modern conceptions of the political sphere”: namely, the appearance of the state as an “abstract and determining . . . space of formal law” and “the coming into being of the citizen-subject [i.e., ‘the subject as universal being’].” Pye supports his thesis with a close reading of the following passages: (1) the “triangulated addresses” and “voyeuristic auditions” of Othello’s “traveler’s history” (1.3.149–96), a tale intended as a “whole” for a male audience but that Desdemona “devour[s]” in “parcels” (1.3.174, 178); (2) the dockside episode (2.1), a “theatrical caesura” that functions as a “pure expression of the play’s limitlessness”; and (3) the final sequence beginning “Soft you. A word or two before you go” (5.2.397), which, when compared with the wooing narrative of 1.3, “move[s] now from ear to pen, from orality to writing, and specifically the record of state: ‘Set you down this’” (5.2.412). As an autonomous form transcending themes, the aesthetic is “explicitly bound up with the play’s limitlessness as a signifying formation”: i.e., the aesthetic as such emerges in relation to “those internally inscribed horizons, comparable to the vanishing point in pictorial art, through which the play seeks to embody or comprehend its

own infinitude as a representational structure.” In the dockside scene, Pye locates that vanishing point in the Moor himself, who becomes an “indistinct regard” ([line 44](#)) that dissolves into the horizon ([lines 42–44](#)). Montano’s desire “to throw out our eyes for brave Othello” ([line 42](#)) anticipates what will happen as the play moves toward the ultimate vanishing point in the “bloody period” of Othello’s suicide ([5.2.418](#)): “[One] can look so fixedly that everything becomes an ‘indistinct regard.’ You can lose the object by being too fastened on it, as Othello will do in his killing desire for ‘ocular proof’” ([3.3.412](#)). Montano’s “mastering, implicitly male, claims of the eye,” which temporarily drive Othello from view, “signal Shakespearean tragedy as constituted in relation to its ability to incorporate its own formal limit and vanishing point.” In Pye’s reading, Othello “vanishes” because his blackness fixes his being to a category of systematic color-coding that “harbors negation,” which itself is “subjectivity’s reduction to a vanishing point.” The indeterminacy of the repeated “this” in the play’s final moments ([5.2.412](#), [420](#), [422](#), [427](#)) “is a direct measure of the empowering vagueness—the ‘indistinct regard’—the play claims for itself as reflexive, illimitable form.” Pye concludes by calling attention to the difference between the early *Titus* and the late *Othello*, two plays concerned with race. The difference is the distinction “between pointing and pointing to pointing”: *Titus*, inscribed within a thematic form of revenge, points to race; *Othello*, transformed by an aesthetic ideology that “captures the two poles of limits and illimitability,” points to pointing. [Two responses follow the essay in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* issue: Julia Reinhard Lupton’s “Shakespeare’s Citizen-Subject: Distracting the Gaze, Contracting the City: A Response to Christopher Pye” (pp. 448–52) and Hugh Grady’s “Theory ‘After Theory’:

Christopher Pye's Reading of *Othello*" (pp. 453–59). Pye's *The Storm at Sea: Political Aesthetic in the Time of Shakespeare* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015) incorporates the original essay.]

Rosenberg, Marvin. *The Masks of Othello: The Search for the Identity of Othello, Iago, and Desdemona by Three Centuries of Actors and Critics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

Interested in how both actors and critics have reshaped the text for performance, Rosenberg charts the development of character images of Othello, Iago, and Desdemona on the stage and page from the seventeenth century through the first half of the twentieth. The goal of this overview is to arrive at "a synthesis" of "the best critical characterizations [and] the best acting conceptions." Rosenberg's survey includes the early Othellos of Richard Burbage and Thomas Betterton, the "explosion[s] of violence, terror, love, [and] pity" found in the Othellos of Spranger Barry and Edmund Kean (an interpretation "only dreamt of by David Garrick"), and the fury and tumult of Tomasso Salvini's "grieved soul," a standard for the late 1800s; the "finest" nineteenth-century portrayal of Iago by Edwin Booth and the "brilliant" Iagos of William Charles Macready, Edwin Fechter, and Henry Irving—Victorian actors who "curiously" fell short in their "quieter, more . . . controlled" Othellos; and the tender but sturdy Desdemonas of Sarah Siddons, Fanny Kemble, Helen Faucit, and Ellen Terry. Claiming that the twentieth century "has not been good to Othellos"—few achieving the synthesis of dignity and violence demanded by the part—Rosenberg faults an overly intellectual, often "naturalistic" approach that shrinks the character, a problem further compounded by the increasing domination of humorous Iagos who

diminish the play's tragic effect. Singling out the modern Iagos of Laurence Olivier, José Ferrer, and Alfred Drake, Rosenberg argues against a "satanic" Iago, finding the character's motivation "diffuse[,] . . . spring[ing] from sources we can more easily recognize in ourselves." The chapter titled "In Defense of Othello" includes material from interviews conducted with the modern Othellos Paul Robeson, Earle Hyman, Anthony Quayle, Abraham Sofaer, Wilfrid Walter, and Donald Wolfit. For Rosenberg, *Othello* is "the most erotic, the most sensual in language and imagery of the great tragedies. . . . [I]ts heavily sexual atmosphere, so suitable to the seventeenth century, offended later cultures: the eighteenth century tried to 'refine' it, and the nineteenth—particularly the age of Victoria—to 'refine refinement'—but the essential form of the play survived." That form and the play's complex humanity, Rosenberg argues, can be fully realized only on the stage, not through symbolic or skeptical interpretations.

Siemon, James R. "'Nay, that's not next': *Othello*, V.ii, in Performance, 1760–1900." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 37 (1986): 38–51.

Using annotated promptbooks and other performance records, Siemon explores how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "evasions, embellishments, and outright contradictions of Shakespeare's text" in performances of *Othello*'s final scene suggest "a coherence of interpretation based on particular notions of both tragedy and femininity." Referring most likely to the manner rather than the amount of violence in [5.2](#), the celebrated actress Fanny Kemble wrote in 1854 that the scene "presents technical difficulties in its adequate representation which have never yet been even partially overcome." Viewed in the context of an actor's

skepticism and a critical chorus finding the scene “dreadful” (Samuel Johnson), “revolting” (James Halliwell-Phillips), and a source of “unutterable agony” (H. H. Furness), performance accounts reveal “a culture trying to control a text that it desires to experience in the theatre but that it also strongly disapproves. . . . As a result, the theatre became a place where limits were tested, technical matters becoming the loci of contests between desire and permissibility.” Departures from the text described by Siemon include the decision to smother Desdemona with a pillow (a choice still favored in many revivals), the use of a dagger to “finish the deed,” and the exit of Iago before Othello’s “apologia,” with the consequent elimination of striking theatrical possibilities. The “most intriguing” variations concern the treatment of Othello’s suicidal stabbing and death throes (5.2.417, 420–21), which, as many of the promptbooks record, abruptly ended the play; Siemon speculates that the impulse behind this choice was to emphasize the Moor’s agony rather than “Venetian concerns with the aftermath.” The decision to leave Desdemona’s “chaste bed . . . unviolated by Othello’s own bleeding corpse”—demonstrated by most actors’ moving toward the bed but expiring before they reached it—obviously “rid[s] the scene of some of the more grossly physical elements in its mixture of eroticism and violence.” Siemon claims that “understanding the strains that the era put upon [5.2] makes us more aware of” the aesthetic and cultural notions favored during the period, “and, at the same time, directs our attention to notable features of the Shakespearean text itself.”

Smith, Ian. “We Are Othello: Speaking of Race in Early Modern Studies.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67 (2016): 104–24.

Smith's essay is part of a special issue of *Shakespeare Quarterly* guest-edited by Peter Erickson and Kim Hall and titled "Rereading Early Modern Race." Smith uses contemporary events to examine *Othello* in the hope of "initiat[ing] a dialogue about Shakespeare and race that . . . make[s the playwright] not just relevant but accessible for our time." He observes that both *Hamlet* and *Othello* end with their heroes requesting to have their stories told and their actions explained after their deaths. For the nineteenth-century William Hazlitt, "It is *we* who are Hamlet," the "we" coming to include generations of scholars for whom Hamlet's "doubt and skepticism . . . point . . . to a modern social ethos." Recent scholarship has demonstrated, however, that at the start of the twenty-first century, *Hamlet* "has ceded its place of favor to *Othello* because of global political shifts that have overtaken contemporary life," as critics and directors trace the "genealogy" of current racial conflicts to the "cultural, religious, and ethnic animosities of [*Othello's*] Mediterranean setting" (see Michael Neill, editor, Oxford *Othello* [2006], p. 1). Given this "potent political relevance," Smith asks two questions that inform his study of the play, especially his reading of Othello's penultimate speech (5.2.397–417): (1) "[W]here are the voices proclaiming, 'It is *we* who are Othello'?" and (2) What does the absence of such a claim reveal about present-day scholarly practices and the predominantly white professional field of literary criticism in general, and Shakespeare studies in particular? Stating that the current "post-racial" desire to transcend race "comes up against" the "politics of white privilege," Smith encourages critics to register Othello's blackness not simply as a superficial difference in a color-conscious society but as the representation of "a body that bears within its material

corporeality histories of domination, claims of illegitimacy, and dispossession,” a body that continues to be “subjected to various forms of physical assault and psychic brutality” (as evidenced in the numerous reports of police killings of unarmed black Americans in 2015 and 2016). Turning to the play itself, Smith observes how, at the beginning of [Act 2](#), the abrupt ending of what had promised to be a significant military crisis “forces us to recognize that conflict continues as a major issue but in the form of an internal ‘race war’ initiated by the play’s resident racist, Iago,” whose “operations . . . generate Othello’s racial anxiety and self-hate” (see, e.g., the line “Haply, for I am black” at [3.3.304](#)). As he had in the Senate scene ([1.3](#)), when confronted with a Venetian racial climate that “put [him] on the defensive,” Othello experiences another “narrative moment” in [5.2](#), but this time with a difference. Smith argues that “speaking or writing about race is central” to the “Soft you. A word or two before you go” passage ([5.2.397](#)–417): the “uncertainty” as to who will be a reliable narrator is what “drives” Othello’s request for someone to tell his story. By denying Othello his Horatio, Shakespeare leaves Othello “culturally adrift, alienated, and alone—without a firm conviction that, as a dying black man, he will receive the racially sensitive and responsible representation that he deserves.” Responding to Othello’s request to “Speak of me as I am,” Smith concludes, “‘Speaking of’ Othello, that is, speaking and writing about race within the [literary] discipline, requires unpacking one’s white positioning to reach toward new forms of racial knowledge.” In short, “To ‘speak of’ Othello demands the informed self-inquiry embedded in the assertion, ‘We are Othello.’” [Smith’s essay is an expanded version of a brief “satellite” piece included in *Shakespeare in Our Time*, a Shakespeare Association of America collection, edited by

Dympna Callaghan and Suzanne Gossett (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), pp. 118–22.]

Snyder, Susan. “Beyond Comedy: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*.” Chapter 2 in *The Comic Matrix of Shakespeare’s Tragedies*, pp. 56–90. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Given that Shakespeare had thoroughly mastered the comic genre “while he was still finding his way in tragedy,” and given the “taste for mixing comic with serious [in] his theatrical heritage,” Snyder finds it “probable that he would use . . . the world of romantic comedy . . . as a point of reference and departure in developing tragic forms.” That is the hypothesis underlying her examination of *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Lear*. In the case of *Romeo* and *Othello*, Shakespeare’s only ventures into the Italianate tragedy of love and intrigue, Snyder observes that comedy turns into tragedy in the former, while in *Othello*—where character and fate are “completely intertwined” and not “dissociated” as they are in *Romeo*—“comic success precedes tragic catastrophe.” She proposes that the tragedy of *Othello* develops from a questioning of comic assumptions about love, nature, and reasoning that “exposes the roots of tragedy.” In Iago, a sinister version of comic manipulators, the power of rationality, so easily dismissed in the comic world, is “grimly realized”: see, e.g., his accurate assessments of character ([1.3.442–45](#)), persuasive arguments from experience ([3.3.232–36](#)), and plausible hypotheses ([2.1.308–9](#)). By pitting Iago against Othello and Desdemona, Shakespeare explores and uncovers the deeply tragic dimension of the “conventional dichotomy between reason and love.” The desired merging of self and the other, so easily facilitated in comedy, is impossible in the tragic world

of Othello and Desdemona, where their differences form the basis for the destruction of their love. Snyder suggests that “the action of *Othello* moves us not only as a chain of events involving particular people as initiators and victims, but also as an acting out of the tragic implications in any love relationship.”

Snyder, Susan, ed. *Othello: Critical Essays*. New York: Garland, 1988. Reprint, New York: Routledge, 2015.

In a collection that spans the years 1747–1986, Snyder excerpts Samuel Foote’s *A Treatise on the Passions* (1747), Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare* (1849), William Hazlitt’s “Mr. Kean’s Iago” from *A View of the English Stage* (1818), Edwin Booth’s notes on the temptation scene (3.3) from both Booth’s annotated promptbook of *Othello* (early 1880s) and Edward T. Mason’s report of Salvini’s performance of the same scene from *The Othello of Tommaso Salvini* (1890), A. C. Bradley’s *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), Ellen Terry’s “Desdemona” from her *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (1932), Konstantin Stanislavsky’s *Stanislavsky Produces Othello* (1948), and John Middleton Murry’s commentary on the handkerchief from his *Shakespeare* (1936). In addition to the excerpted material, Snyder reprints the following essays: F. R. Leavis, “Diabolic Intellect and the Noble Hero: or, The Sentimentalist’s Othello” (1937); Kenneth Burke, “*Othello*: An Essay to Illustrate a Method” (1951); Helen Gardner, “The Noble Moor” (1955); Robert B. Heilman, “Wit and Witchcraft: Thematic Form in *Othello*” (1956); Alvin Kernan, “Barbarism and the City” (1963); Edward A. Snow, “Sexual Anxiety and the Male Order of Things in *Othello*” (1980); and Peter Stallybrass, “Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed” (1986). In the brief introductory overview of the

volume's contents, Snyder refers to performances by James Quin, Spranger Barry, David Garrick, Edmund Kean, Edwin Booth, Tommaso Salvini, and Henry Irving. Of Paul Robeson's *Othello* in the 1940s and '50s, she notes that "though not universally acclaimed, [it] constituted the most notable twentieth-century interpretation before [Laurence] Olivier's own controversial, brilliant *Othello* in 1964." Observing that "ours is an age of irony, not epic," Snyder comments on how modern critics and actors manifest, in the words of Helen Gardner, a "distaste for the heroic" as they develop "their own versions" of the ways in which "cultural pathology shapes the issues and passions of *Othello*." Much admired for its dramatic construction and concentration of emotion, the play is "often implicitly or explicitly" criticized for "an action that closes in rather than opens out." As a result, "a certain ambivalence has haunted *Othello* criticism."

Vaughan, Virginia M. "Shakespeare's Moor of Venice." Chapter 6 of *Performing Blackness on English Stages 1500–1800*, pp. 93–106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Vaughan argues that the "blackface performances" of early modern English actors' impersonations of black Africans "established dynamic theatrical conventions that were repeated from play to play, plot to plot, congealing over time and contributing to English audiences' construction of racial difference." Appearance, linguistic tropes, speech patterns, plot situations, and a variety of dramatic techniques (such as asides and soliloquies) were among the conventions used by playwrights to shape "the ways black characters were 'read' by white English audiences." The use of blackface in stagings of *Othello* and other plays (such as

Shakespeare's *Titus* and Thomas Southerne's eighteenth-century *Oroonoko*) functions as a "polyphonic signifier that disseminated distorted and contradictory, yet compelling, images of black Africans during the period in which England became increasingly involved in the African slave trade." In chapter 6, Vaughan focuses on "the dynamics of blackface impersonation" in *Othello*. Recognizing the play's status as an "important yet highly contested text," she extends her survey of actors in the titular role beyond those belonging to the book's designated chronology—namely, Richard Burbage, Thomas Betterton ("the Restoration's great Othello"), and the eighteenth-century James Quin and Spranger Barry—to highlight the history of black performances" by the nineteenth-century Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, Edwin Forrest, Henry Irving, and Tommaso Salvini. The survey concludes with a detailed account of the "most notable" twentieth-century rendition, that of Laurence Olivier for London's National Theatre in 1964–65. Throughout the play's acting history, even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when Othello's skin tone was lightened to suggest a "tawny Moor," performers of the role have "reified the [text's black/white] verbal imagery in visual contrasts of light and dark." Despite anecdotal references to audience confusion of the actor with his role, many memoirs and reviews underscore the "double consciousness" of a more sophisticated audience's delight in recognizing that underneath the blackface was an "actually white" actor. After discussing performances by Paul Robeson and Laurence Fishburne, Vaughan addresses the potential danger in having only black actors assume the part of Othello, the current norm: "The danger with a black actor in the title role is that with the loss of the reminders that this is *not* real but an impersonation, the enactment of Othello's

jealous rage and murder of his wife can strike audiences as the embodiment of their own stereotypes of black pathology rather than an actorly performance.” That Shakespeare exploited stereotypes of black people circulating in early modern England for theatrical effect does not make the play “racist” in our contemporary sense of the term, “because ‘race’ was not a fully developed mode of thought” at that time. But as reenacted again and again, the text has accrued “racial resonances . . . not necessarily part of the original conception but which have solidified in contemporary readings.”

Shakespeare’s Language

Abbott, E. A. *A Shakespearian Grammar*. New York: Haskell House, 1972.

This compact reference book, first published in 1870, helps with many difficulties in Shakespeare’s language. It systematically accounts for a host of differences between Shakespeare’s usage and sentence structure and our own.

Blake, Norman. *Shakespeare’s Language: An Introduction*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1983.

This general introduction to Elizabethan English discusses various aspects of the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, offering possible meanings for hundreds of ambiguous constructions.

Dobson, E. J. *English Pronunciation, 1500–1700*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

This long and technical work includes chapters on spelling (and its reformation), phonetics, stressed vowels, and consonants in early modern English.

Hope, Jonathan. *Shakespeare's Grammar*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003.

Commissioned as a replacement for Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, Hope's book is organized in terms of the two basic parts of speech, the noun and the verb. After extensive analysis of the noun phrase and the verb phrase come briefer discussions of subjects and agents, objects, complements, and adverbials.

Houston, John. *Shakespearean Sentences: A Study in Style and Syntax*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988.

Houston studies Shakespeare's stylistic choices, considering matters such as sentence length and the relative positions of subject, verb, and direct object. Examining plays throughout the canon in a roughly chronological, developmental order, he analyzes how sentence structure is used in setting tone, in characterization, and for other dramatic purposes.

Onions, C. T. *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

This revised edition updates Onions's standard, selective glossary of words and phrases in Shakespeare's plays that are now obsolete, archaic, or obscure.

Robinson, Randal. *Unlocking Shakespeare's Language: Help for the Teacher and Student*. Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1989.

Specifically designed for the high-school and undergraduate college teacher and student, Robinson's book addresses the problems that most often hinder present-day

readers of Shakespeare. Through work with his own students, Robinson found that many readers today are particularly puzzled by such stylistic characteristics as subject-verb inversion, interrupted structures, and compression. He shows how our own colloquial language contains comparable structures, and thus helps students recognize such structures when they find them in Shakespeare's plays. This book supplies worksheets—with examples from major plays—to illuminate and remedy such problems as unusual sequences of words and the separation of related parts of sentences.

Williams, Gordon. *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*. 3 vols. London: Athlone Press, 1994.

Williams provides a comprehensive list of words to which Shakespeare, his contemporaries, and later Stuart writers gave sexual meanings. He supports his identification of these meanings by extensive quotations.

Shakespeare's Life

Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakspeare's Petty School*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1943.

Baldwin here investigates the theory and practice of the petty school, the first level of education in Elizabethan England. He focuses on that educational system primarily as it is reflected in Shakespeare's art.

Baldwin, T. W. *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*. 2 vols. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944.

Baldwin attacks the view that Shakespeare was an uneducated genius—a view that had been dominant among

Shakespeareans since the eighteenth century. Instead, Baldwin shows, the educational system of Shakespeare's time would have given the playwright a strong background in the classics, and there is much in the plays that shows how Shakespeare benefited from such an education.

Beier, A. L., and Roger Finlay, eds. *London 1500–1700: The Making of the Metropolis*. New York: Longman, 1986.

Focusing on the economic and social history of early modern London, these collected essays probe aspects of metropolitan life, including “Population and Disease,” “Commerce and Manufacture,” and “Society and Change.”

Chambers, E. K. *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930.

Analyzing in great detail the scant historical data, Chambers's complex, scholarly study considers the nature of the texts in which Shakespeare's work is preserved.

Cressy, David. *Education in Tudor and Stuart England*. London: Edward Arnold, 1975.

This volume collects sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and early eighteenth-century documents detailing aspects of formal education in England, such as the curriculum, the control and organization of education, and the education of women.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Shakespeare: An Ungentle Life*. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010.

This biography, first published in 2001 under the title *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life*, sets out to look into the documents from Shakespeare's personal life—especially legal and financial records—and it finds there a man very different from the one portrayed in more traditional biographies. He is “ungentle” in being born to a

lower social class and in being a bit ruthless and more than a bit stingy. As the author notes, “three topics were formerly taboo both in polite society and in Shakespearean biography: social class, sex and money. I have been indelicate enough to give a good deal of attention to all three.” She examines “Shakespeare’s uphill struggle to achieve, or purchase, ‘gentle’ status.” She finds that “Shakespeare was strongly interested in intense relationships with well-born young men.” And she shows that he was “reluctant to divert much, if any, of his considerable wealth towards charitable, neighbourly, or altruistic ends.” She insists that his plays and poems are “great, and enduring,” and that it is in them “that the best of him is to be found.”

Dutton, Richard. *William Shakespeare: A Literary Life*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.

Not a biography in the traditional sense, Dutton’s very readable work nevertheless “follows the contours of Shakespeare’s life” as it examines Shakespeare’s career as playwright and poet, with consideration of his patrons, theatrical associations, and audience.

Honan, Park. *Shakespeare: A Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Honan’s accessible biography focuses on the various contexts of Shakespeare’s life—physical, social, political, and cultural—to place the dramatist within a lucidly described world. The biography includes detailed examinations of, for example, Stratford schooling, theatrical politics of 1590s London, and the careers of Shakespeare’s associates. The author draws on a wealth of established knowledge and on interesting new research into local records and documents;

he also engages in speculation about, for example, the possibilities that Shakespeare was a tutor in a Catholic household in the north of England in the 1580s and that he acted particular roles in his own plays, areas that reflect new, but unproven and debatable, data—though Honan is usually careful to note where a particular narrative “has not been capable of proof or disproof.”

Potter, Lois. *The Life of William Shakespeare: A Critical Biography*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

This critical biography of Shakespeare takes the playwright from cradle to grave, paying primary attention to his literary and theatrical milieu. The chapters “follow a chronological sequence,” each focusing on a handful of years in the playwright’s life. In the chapters that cover his playwriting years (5–17), each chapter focuses on events in Stratford-upon-Avon and in London (especially in the commercial theaters) while giving equal space to discussions of the plays and/or poems Shakespeare wrote during those years. Filled with information from Shakespeare’s literary and theatrical worlds, the biography also shares frequent insights into how modern productions of a given play can shed light on the play, especially in scenes that Shakespeare’s text presents ambiguously.

Schoenbaum, S. *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Schoenbaum’s evidence-based biography of Shakespeare is a compact version of his magisterial folio-size *Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). Schoenbaum structures his readable “compact” narrative around the documents that still exist which chronicle Shakespeare’s familial, theatrical, legal, and

financial existence. These documents, along with those discovered since the 1970s, form the basis of almost all Shakespeare biographies written since Schoenbaum's books appeared.

Shakespeare's Theater

Bentley, G. E. *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590–1642*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Bentley readably sets forth a wealth of evidence about performance in Shakespeare's time, with special attention to the relations between player and company, and the business of casting, managing, and touring.

Berry, Herbert. *Shakespeare's Playhouses*. New York: AMS Press, 1987.

Berry's six essays collected here discuss (with illustrations) varying aspects of the four playhouses in which Shakespeare had a financial stake: the Theatre in Shoreditch, the Blackfriars, and the first and second Globe.

Berry, Herbert, William Ingram, and Glynne Wickham, eds. *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Wickham presents the government documents designed to control professional players, their plays, and playing places. Ingram handles the professional actors, giving as representative a life of the actor Augustine Phillips, and discussing, among other topics, patrons, acting companies, costumes, props, playbooks, provincial playing, and child actors. Berry treats the twenty-three different London playhouses from 1560 to 1660 for which there are records, including four inns.

Cook, Ann Jennalie. *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Cook's work argues, on the basis of sociological, economic, and documentary evidence, that Shakespeare's audience—and the audience for English Renaissance drama generally—consisted mainly of the “privileged.”

Dutton, Richard, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Dutton divides his study of the theatrical industry of Shakespeare's time into the following sections: “Theatre Companies,” “London Playhouses,” “Other Playing Spaces,” “Social Practices,” and “Evidence of Theatrical Practices.” Each of these sections is further subdivided, with subdivisions assigned to individual experts. W. R. Streitberger treats the “Adult Playing Companies to 1583”; Sally-Beth MacLean those from 1583 to 1593; Roslyn L. Knutson, 1593–1603; Tom Rutter, 1603–1613; James J. Marino, 1613–1625; and Martin Butler, the “Adult and Boy Playing Companies 1625–1642.” Michael Shapiro is responsible for the “Early (Pre-1590) Boy Companies and Their Acting Venues,” while Mary Bly writes of “The Boy Companies 1599–1613.” David Kathman handles “Inn-Yard Playhouses”; Gabriel Egan, “The Theatre in Shoreditch 1576–1599”; Andrew Gurr, “Why the Globe Is Famous”; Ralph Alan Cohen, “The Most Convenient Place: The Second Blackfriars Theater and Its Appeal”; Mark Bayer, “The Red Bull Playhouse”; and Frances Teague, “The Phoenix and the Cockpit-in-Court Playhouses.” Turning to “Other Playing Spaces,” Suzanne Westfall describes how “‘He who pays the piper calls the tune’: Household Entertainments”; Alan H. Nelson, “The Universities and the Inns of Court”; Peter Greenfield, “Touring”; John H. Astington, “Court Theatre”;

and Anne Lancashire, "London Street Theater." For "Social Practices," Alan Somerset writes of "Not Just Sir Oliver Owlet: From Patrons to 'Patronage' of Early Modern Theatre," Dutton himself of "The Court, the Master of the Revels, and the Players," S. P. Cerasano of "Theater Entrepreneurs and Theatrical Economics," Ian W. Archer of "The City of London and the Theatre," David Kathman of "Players, Livery Companies, and Apprentices," Kathleen E. McLuskie of "Materiality and the Market: The Lady Elizabeth's Men and the Challenge of Theatre History," Heather Hirschfield of "'For the author's credit': Issues of Authorship in English Renaissance Drama," and Natasha Korda of "Women in the Theater." On "Theatrical Practices," Jacalyn Royce discusses "Early Modern Naturalistic Acting: The Role of the Globe in the Development of Personation"; Tiffany Stern, "Actors' Parts"; Alan Dessen, "Stage Directions and the Theater Historian"; R. B. Graves, "Lighting"; Lucy Munro, "Music and Sound"; Dutton himself, "Properties"; Thomas Postlewait, "Eyewitnesses to History: Visual Evidence for Theater in Early Modern England"; and Eva Griffith, "Christopher Beeston: His Property and Properties."

Greg, W. W. *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.

Greg itemizes and briefly describes almost all the play manuscripts that survive from the period 1590 to around 1660, including, among other things, players' parts. His second volume offers facsimiles of selected manuscripts.

Harbage, Alfred. *Shakespeare's Audience*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1941.

Harbage investigates the fragmentary surviving evidence to interpret the size, composition, and behavior of

Shakespeare's audience.

Keenan, Siobhan. *Acting Companies and Their Plays in Shakespeare's London*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014.

Keenan "explores how the needs, practices, resources and pressures on acting companies and playwrights informed not only the performance and publication of contemporary dramas but playwrights' writing practices." Each chapter focuses on one important factor that influenced Renaissance playwrights and players. The initial focus is on how "the nature and composition of the acting companies" influenced the playwrights who wrote for them. Then, using "the Diary of theatre manager Philip Henslowe and manuscript playbooks showing signs of theatrical use," Keenan examines the relations between acting companies and playwrights. Other influences include "the physical design and facilities of London's outdoor and indoor theatrical spaces" and the diverse audiences for plays, including royal and noble patrons.

Shapiro, Michael. *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Shapiro chronicles the history of the amateur and quasi-professional child companies that flourished in London at the end of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of James's.

The Publication of Shakespeare's Plays

Blayney, Peter W. M. *The First Folio of Shakespeare*. Hanover, Md.: Folger, 1991.

Blayney's accessible account of the printing and later life of the First Folio—an amply illustrated catalogue to a 1991 Folger Shakespeare Library exhibition—analyzes the mechanical production of the First Folio, describing how the Folio was made, by whom and for whom, how much it cost, and its ups and downs (or, rather, downs and ups) since its printing in 1623.

Hinman, Charlton. *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.

This facsimile presents a photographic reproduction of an “ideal” copy of the First Folio of Shakespeare; Hinman attempts to represent each page in its most fully corrected state. This second edition includes an important new introduction by Peter W. M. Blayney.

Hinman, Charlton. *The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

In the most arduous study of a single book ever undertaken, Hinman attempts to reconstruct how the Shakespeare First Folio of 1623 was set into type and run off the press, sheet by sheet. He also provides almost all the known variations in readings from copy to copy.

Werstine, Paul. *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Werstine examines in detail nearly two dozen texts associated with the playhouses in and around Shakespeare's time, conducting the examination against the background of the two idealized forms of manuscript that have governed the editing of Shakespeare from the twentieth into the

twenty-first century—Shakespeare’s so-called foul papers and the so-called promptbooks of his plays. By comparing the two extant texts of John Fletcher’s *Bonduca*, one in manuscript and the other printed in 1647, Werstine shows that the term “foul papers” that is found in a note in the *Bonduca* manuscript does not refer, as editors have believed, to a species of messy authorial manuscript but is instead simply a designation for a manuscript, whatever its features, that has served as the copy from which another manuscript has been made. By surveying twenty-one texts with theatrical markup, he demonstrates that the playhouses used a wide variety of different kinds of manuscripts and printed texts but did not use the highly regularized promptbooks of the eighteenth-century theaters and later. His presentation of the peculiarities of playhouse texts provides an empirical basis for inferring the nature of the manuscripts that lie behind printed Shakespeare plays.

Key to Famous Lines and Phrases

A fellow almost damned in a fair wife

[*Iago*—[1.1.22](#)]

. . . I will wear my heart upon my sleeve

[*Iago*—[1.1.70](#)]

. . . one of those that will not serve God if the devil
bid you.

[*Iago*—[1.1.122](#)–23]

She swore . . . 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange

[*Othello*—[1.3.184](#)–85]

. . . as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are.

[*Iago*—[1.3.444](#)–45]

. . . I am nothing if not critical.

[*Iago*—[2.1.134](#)]

To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

[*Iago*—[2.1.175](#)]

When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows

[*Iago*—[2.3.371](#)–72]

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.

[*Iago*—[3.3.182](#)–83]

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It is the green-eyed monster . . .

[*Iago*—[3.3.195](#)–96]

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ.

[*Iago*—[3.3.370](#)–72]

Not poppy nor mandragora
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

[*Iago*—[3.3.379](#)–82]

O, now, forever
Farewell the tranquil mind!
Othello's occupation's gone!

[*Othello*—[3.3.399](#)–409]

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

[*Othello*—[4.2.48](#)]

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.

[*Othello*—[5.2.1](#)]

She was false as water.

[*Othello*—[5.2.164](#)]

As ignorant as dirt!

[*Emilia*—[5.2.200](#)]

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.

[*Othello*—[5.2.318](#)–19]

. . . one that loved not wisely, but too well

[*Othello*—[5.2.404](#)]

Commentary

ACT 1

Scene 1

1.1 In the streets of Venice, Iago tells Roderigo of his hatred for Othello, who has given Cassio the lieutenantcy that Iago wanted and has made Iago a mere ensign. At Iago's suggestion, he and Roderigo, a former suitor to Desdemona, awake Desdemona's father to tell him that Desdemona has eloped with Othello. This news enrages Brabantio, who organizes an armed band to search out Othello.

1. Tush: an expression of impatience

2–3. who . . . thine: i.e., who have had complete access to my money **purse:** bag or pouch **strings:** i.e., the purse string that closes the pouch

4. 'Sblood: Christ's blood (a strong oath); **hear:** listen to

9. great ones of the city: Venetian nobles

10. suit: petition; **lieutenant:** i.e., lieutenant-general, Othello's second in command

11. Off-capped: i.e., removed their hats

12. price: value; **place:** position, rank

13. as loving: i.e., loving

14. **bombast:** i.e., wordy, pompous (literally, cotton padding); **circumstance:** circumlocution, circuitous narrative

15. **stuffed:** filled; **epithets of war:** military jargon

17. **Nonsuits my mediators:** i.e., frustrates my petitioners; **Certes:** certainly

19. **he:** i.e., the officer chosen by Othello

20. **Forsooth:** in truth; **arithmetician:** one skilled in working with numbers (with the implication that Cassio knows about battles only from books)

22. **almost . . . in:** cursed by being married to (the only reference in the play to Cassio's **wife**)

23. **set a squadron:** i.e., stationed even so much as a small detachment of men; **field:** i.e., battlefield

24. **division of a battle:** arrangement of a body of troops

25. **spinster:** one (usually a woman) who spins (See picture.) **unless:** except for; **theoric:** theory



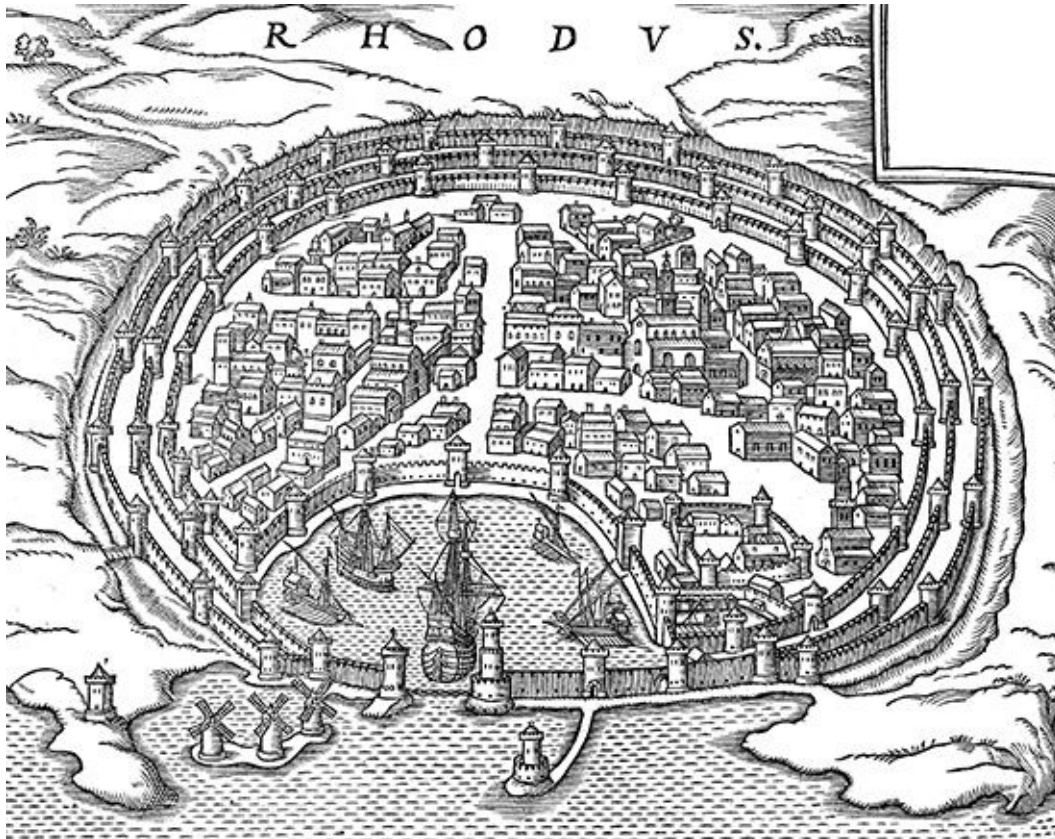
A woman spinning thread. ([1.1.25](#))

From Johann Engel, *Astrolabium* . . . (1488).

[26. togèd consuls:](#) civic officials whom Iago pictures as wearing Roman togas; **propose:** talk

[28. had th' election:](#) i.e., was the one chosen

[30. Rhodes, Cyprus:](#) embattled islands that were part of the Venetian empire (See picture.)



Rhodes. ([1.1.30](#), [1.3.18](#))

From Sebastian Münster, *La cosmographie vniuerselle* . . . (1575).

[31](#)–[32](#). **beleed and calmed**: stopped in my progress (nautical terms in which Cassio and Iago are compared to sailing ships, Cassio coming between Iago and the wind [putting Iago in the lee] and thereby stopping him)

[33](#). **By . . . creditor**: i.e., by a mere bookkeeper; **countercaster**: one who computes with tokens

[34](#). **in good time**: i.e., “to be sure”

[35](#). **God bless the mark**: an expression of impatient scorn; **his Moorship’s**: i.e., Othello’s (a sarcastic racial slur by analogy with the title “his Worship”); **ancient**: i.e., ensign, standard-bearer (the lowest-ranking commissioned officer in the infantry)

[37](#). **service**: military **service**

[38](#). **affection**: personal preference

39–40. **old gradation . . . first:** i.e., **each second** officer automatically succeeded **each first** officer

41. **affined:** i.e., bound, obliged (literally, related)

45. **serve . . . him:** i.e., use him for my own ends

47. **mark:** observe

48. **knee-crooking knave:** bowing menial

53. **Whip me:** i.e., I'd have them **whip**

54. **trimmed . . . duty:** i.e., appearing dutiful in manners and looks **trimmed:** dressed

57–58. **lined their coats:** i.e., **lined their** pockets, gotten rich

59. **Do themselves homage:** show respect to **themselves** rather than to their masters

64. **I . . . myself:** i.e., I serve only my own interest

65–66. **not I . . . seeming so:** i.e., **I do not follow him** (line 64) out of **love and duty**, though **I** seem to

66. **peculiar end:** personal goals

68. **native act and figure:** natural activity and form (i.e., the actual feelings)

69. **complement extern:** external form

69–70. **'tis . . . But:** i.e., soon afterward

71. **daws:** jackdaws, crow-like birds; **I am not what I am:** i.e., **I am not what I** seem to be (Contrast God's words in Exodus 3.14: "**I am that I am.**")

72. **thick lips:** For the careless and ugly racism of Iago and Roderigo, see longer note. **owe:** own, possess

73. **carry 't:** i.e., bring it off

74. **Call up:** i.e., arouse from bed

75. **Make after him:** i.e., go **after** Othello

76. **Proclaim him:** i.e., identify him publicly as a rebel or outlaw

77–78. **though . . . flies:** i.e., even **though he** is now fortunate (**in a fertile climate**), torment (**plague**) **him** with minor vexations

79. **chances:** possibilities

80. **color:** reason for being

82. **like timorous accent:** such dreadful sound

83. **by night and negligence:** i.e., resulting from someone's **negligence** at **night**

87. **bags:** i.e., money **bags**

88 SD. **above:** i.e., in the gallery above the stage

89. **of:** for; **terrible:** terrifying

93. **wherefore ask you:** why do **you ask**

94. **Zounds:** i.e., by Christ's wounds (a strong oath)

95. **gown:** "a loose flowing upper garment" worn by men "as an article of ordinary attire" (*Oxford English Dictionary*) See picture.



Italian citizen in a long gown. (1.1.95)

From Cesare Vecellio, *Degli habiti antichi et moderni* . . . (1590).

97. **very now:** i.e., at this **very** moment

98. **tupping:** copulating with (used, as here, in reference to sheep)

99. **snorting:** snoring

107. **charged:** ordered

110. **distemp'ring:** intoxicating

111. **Upon:** i.e., impelled by; **bravery:** impertinence, defiance

112. start my quiet: i.e., startle me from my peace

115. place: i.e., social position

119. grange: a house in the country, isolated and therefore easily robbed

121. simple: sincere, honest

125. have . . . horse: i.e., allow your daughter to couple with an animal (“Covered,” like “tupping,” [**line 98**] refers to the copulation of animals; “Barbary” is a region of Africa, and thus suggests Othello’s homeland.)

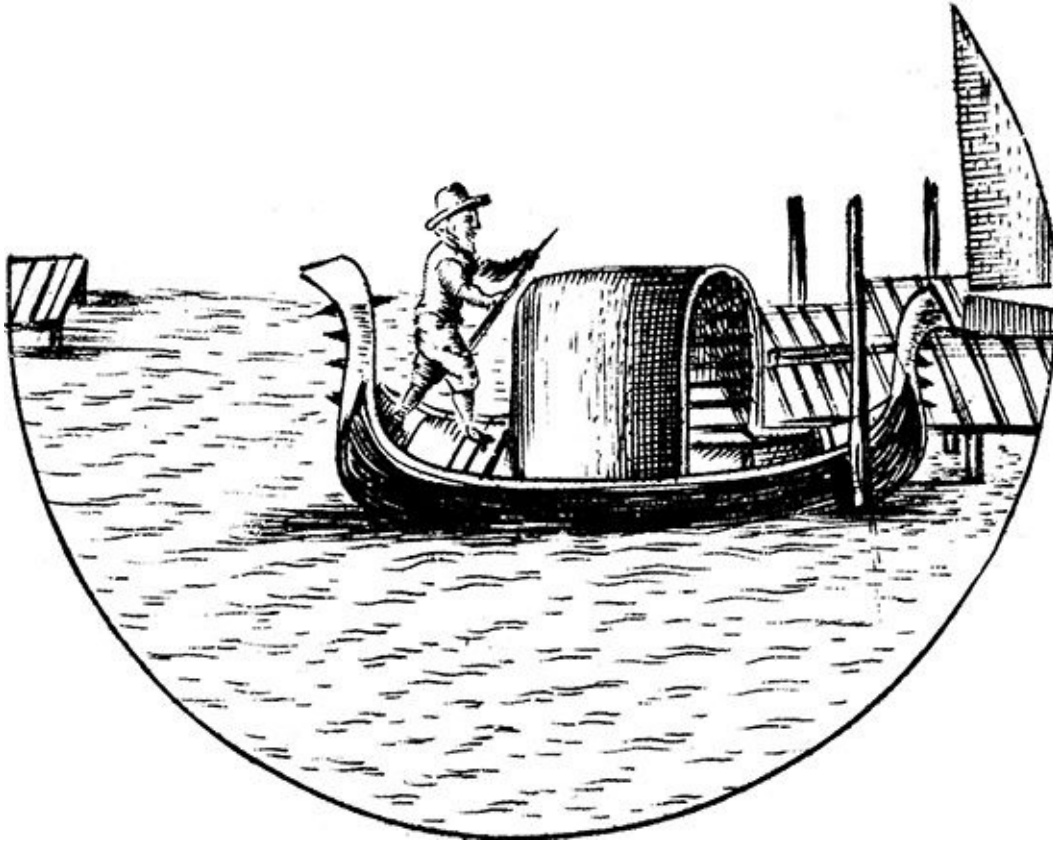
126–27. nephews, cousins, germans: all terms for close relatives, here grandchildren; **coursers:** stallions; **jennets:** small Spanish horses

128. profane: foul-mouthed

134. answer: i.e., answer for

138. odd-even . . . night: around midnight—no longer night, strictly speaking, and not yet morning (hence **odd-even**) **dull:** i.e., sleeping **watch o’ th’ night:** nighttime

140. But with: i.e., than; **knave of common hire:** a servant offering himself for **hire** to anyone; **gondolier:** See picture.



A gondolier. (1.1.140)

From Giovanni Ferro, *Teatro d'imprese* . . . (1623).

142. your allowance: i.e., if **you** allowed **this**

143. saucy: insolent

144. manners: i.e., knowledge of accepted standards of propriety

146. from: i.e., contrary to

149. gross: great

150. wit: understanding, intellect

151. In: i.e., to; **extravagant and wheeling:** wandering, rootless (with perhaps an implication also of unrestrained, self-indulgent, changeable)

152. Straight satisfy yourself: i.e., inform **yourself** at once of the true state of affairs

156. **Strike . . . tinder:** i.e., start a spark or flame (to light a candle)

157. **taper:** wax candle

158. **accident:** disaster

162. **not meet . . . place:** not proper or “healthy” for someone in my position (as Othello’s ensign)

163. **producted:** produced, brought forward

165. **gall:** irritate, annoy; **check:** (1) rebuke; (2) restraint

166. **cast:** dismiss

166–67. **embarked . . . to:** i.e., involved . . . in **loud:** clamorous, urgent

168. **stands in act:** is happening or about to happen; **for their souls:** i.e., even if they were to offer **their souls** in payment

169. **of his fathom:** i.e., with his capacity (as a military leader)

172. **life:** livelihood

174. **That:** i.e., in order **that**

176. **Sagittary:** the name of an inn, whose sign was Sagittarius, a centaur (See picture.); **search:** search party



Sagittarius. ([1.1.176](#))

From Dirck Pietersz Pers, *Bellerophon, of Lust tot wysheyt* . . . (n.d.).

[177](#) SD. **nightgown**: presumably the gown called for by Iago at line [1.1.95](#) (See [longer note](#).)

[179](#). **my despisèd time**: the rest of my now-hated life

[186](#). **thought**: comprehension

[188](#). **Raise**: awake

[191](#). **treason of the blood**: (1) betrayal of her father and family; (2) rebellion of the passions

[192](#). **from hence**: from now on

[193](#). **Is there not charms**: Singular verb with plural subject is not uncommon with Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

[194](#). **property**: character, nature

[195](#). **abused**: deceived; violated; perverted

201. **discover:** find

204. **I may . . . most:** i.e., I am so well respected **at most** houses that I can get help for the asking

205. **special officers of night:** i.e., **officers** who guard the city at night

206. **deserve:** i.e., requite, reward

ACT 1

Scene 2

1.2 Iago warns Othello about Brabantio's anger, but Othello is confident in his own strength and in his love for Desdemona. Cassio arrives with orders for Othello: Othello is to meet with the duke and senators of Venice about a Turkish invasion of the Venetian colony of Cyprus. Brabantio and his armed band come to seize Othello, who persuades Brabantio to accompany him to the duke, where Othello has been summoned and where Brabantio can present his case against Othello for his "theft" of Desdemona.

2. **stuff . . . conscience:** substance of which **conscience** is made

5. **yerked:** i.e., jabbed

9. **scurvy:** insulting

12. **full hard:** with great difficulty; **forbear him:** keep myself from injuring him

13. **fast:** securely

14. **magnifico:** magnate, high magistrate

15–16. **hath in his effect . . . Duke's:** perhaps, has power and influence twice that of any other citizen and equal to the duke's

17. **grievance:** oppression

18. **might to enforce it on:** i.e., power **to enforce it** to its full extent

19. **cable:** i.e., scope (in modern slang, “rope”)

21. **signiory:** Venice’s governing body

22. **’Tis yet to know:** i.e., it is not **yet** known

25. **siege:** a seat for a person of rank

25–27. **my demerits . . . reached:** my meritorious acts give me a social status comparable to Desdemona’s family’s

28. **But:** except

29. **unhousèd:** unconfined

30. **circumscription and confine:** restraint and confinement

31. **sea’s worth:** i.e., all the treasure in the sea

33. **raisèd:** perhaps, awakened from sleep, or, perhaps, aroused to action

36. **parts:** qualities; **perfect:** i.e., guiltless

38. **Janus:** Roman god with two faces (See picture.)



Janus. ([1.2.38](#))

From Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata* . . . (1583).

[38](#) SD. **Torches:** men carrying torches

[43](#). **haste-post-haste:** i.e., immediate

[44](#). **on the instant:** instantly

[47](#). **heat:** urgency

[48](#). **sequent:** successive

[50](#). **Consuls:** i.e., senators

51. **hotly:** urgently

54. **sent about:** sent out; **several:** separate

59. **what makes he:** i.e., **what** is **he** doing

60. **boarded:** gone aboard and captured (with a sexual meaning);
carrack: galleon, a great ship with a rich cargo

61. **prize:** booty

65. **Marry:** i.e., indeed (originally an oath on the name of the Virgin Mary)

67. **Have with you:** I'll join you

69. **advised:** wary

70. **to:** with

71. **stand:** halt

75. **I am for you:** Iago pretends to challenge Roderigo.

76. **Keep up:** i.e., sheathe; **bright:** shiny and unmarked, because unused

82. **enchanted:** cast a spell on

83. **refer me:** entrust my case; **things of sense:** evidence plain to the senses

85. **tender:** young; **fair:** beautiful, but also light-skinned; **happy:** fortunate; contented

88. **a general mock:** everyone's mockery

89. **guardage:** perhaps, her protected situation (or, **her guardage:** i.e., my guardianship of her)

90. **fear:** frighten

91. **Judge me the world:** i.e., let **the world** be my judge; **gross in sense:** self-evident

92. **practiced on her:** tricked her

93. **minerals:** poisons

94. **motion:** impulse, inclination; **disputed on:** i.e., argued in court

96. **attach:** arrest

98. **arts . . . warrant:** i.e., black magic, forbidden by law (See picture.)



“A practicer of arts inhibited.” (1.2.97–98)

From Christopher Marlowe, *The tragicall historie of . . . Doctor Faustus . . .* (1631).

101. **Hold:** i.e., **hold** back

102. **you of my inclining:** i.e., my followers

104. **Whither will you:** i.e., where do you wish

106–8. **till . . . answer:** i.e., until the court is next in **session**

112. **present:** immediate

119. **idle:** frivolous

ACT 1

Scene 3

1.3 The duke and the senators discuss the movements of the Turkish fleet and conclude that its target is, indeed, Cyprus. When Brabantio and Othello arrive, the duke insists on evidence to support the old man’s charge that Othello has bewitched Desdemona. At Othello’s suggestion, the duke sends for Desdemona. Othello describes his courtship of Desdemona, who, when she enters, tells her father and the senators that she has married Othello because she loves him. She thereby vindicates Othello before the senate. The duke orders Othello immediately to Cyprus and grants Desdemona her wish to join him there. Othello gives Iago the duty of conveying Desdemona to Cyprus. Alone with Iago, Roderigo, now in despair of winning Desdemona’s love, threatens suicide, but Iago persuades him instead to sell his lands for ready cash and to pursue Desdemona to Cyprus. Iago begins to plot to himself how he may use Othello’s marriage to get back at Othello and to get Cassio’s place as lieutenant.

1. composition: consistency; **these news:** these reports (**News** is sometimes treated as plural.)

2. **credit:** credibility

3. **disproportioned:** inconsistent

7. **jump not:** do not completely agree; **just account:** exact count

8. **aim:** estimate

12. **I do not . . . error:** i.e., the inconsistency does not reassure me

13–14. **But . . . sense: I do** believe—and fear—**the main** item of information **approve:** confirm

15 SD. **within:** offstage

18. **preparation:** fleet prepared for war

21. **How . . . by:** i.e., what do **you say** about

23. **By no assay:** i.e., according to any test; **pageant:** a show designed to deceive us

24. **in false gaze:** i.e., looking the wrong way

26. **but:** only

27. **it:** i.e., Cyprus (line 25)

28. **may he . . . bear it:** i.e., the Turk can **more** easily take Cyprus **question:** dispute, contest **bear it:** carry it, capture it

29. **For that:** because; **brace:** state of defense

31. **dressed in:** equipped with

34. **latest:** until last

39. **Ottomites:** Ottoman Turks; **Reverend and Gracious:** addressed to the duke

41. **injoined them:** joined; **after:** i.e., second

43–44. **restem . . . course:** i.e., retrace **their course**

47. **servitor:** servant

48. **recommends:** informs

51. **Marcus . . . town?: Is not Marcus Luccicos in town?**

54. **Post-post-haste:** i.e., instantly; **Dispatch:** hurry

56. **straight:** straightway, immediately

57. **general enemy Ottoman:** i.e., the Turks, the enemy of all Christendom (See longer note.)

58. **gentle:** noble (a title of respect)

62. **place:** official position; **aught:** i.e., anything

65. **particular:** personal

66. **floodgate:** torrential

67. **engluts:** devours

73. **abused:** See note to 1.1.195, above

74. **mountebanks:** wandering quacks

75–77. **nature . . . not:** i.e., **nature** could not **err so** preposterously without (**sans**) witchcraft **nature:** i.e., Desdemona's nature

79. **beguiled:** fraudulently deprived

80–82. **the bloody book . . . sense:** i.e., **you shall** be judge and pass sentence according to **your own** interpretation of the harshest terms of the law, which provides for the death penalty (for witchcraft) **bloody:** i.e., lethal (in calling for capital punishment) **in the bitter letter:** in the cruelest terms of the document

82. **proper:** own

83. **Stood . . . action:** i.e., were the one charged

89. **in your own part:** i.e., on behalf of yourself

90. **but:** except

92. **approved good:** i.e., demonstrably **good** in my experience

95. **The very head . . . offending:** i.e., the foremost, or chief, of my offenses **front:** forehead

96. **Rude:** unrefined, unpolished

98. **pith:** strength

99. **now . . . wasted:** i.e., **nine** months ago

100. **dearest:** most valuable; **tented field:** i.e., battlefield (on which armies also pitched their tents) (See picture.)



A “tented field.” (1.3.100)

From Jacobus a. Bruck, *Emblemata* . . . (1615).

106. **round:** straightforward

110. **withal:** i.e., with

113–14. **her motion . . . herself:** i.e., her own natural impulses made her blush

115. **credit:** reputation

119. **must be driven:** i.e., judgment is forced

120. **practices . . . hell:** i.e., **cunning** hellish plots

121. **Why:** i.e., to explain **why**

122. **blood:** passions, sensual appetites

123. **dram . . . effect:** small quantity of liquid magically created for this purpose

124. **wrought upon:** worked on, manipulated

126. **more wider . . . test:** fuller and clearer evidence

127. **thin habits:** i.e., insubstantial accusations (literally, light clothing); **likelihoods:** hypotheses

128. **modern:** ordinary, commonplace; **seeming:** perhaps, appearance; **prefer:** produce

130. **indirect . . . courses:** devious and violent procedures

132. **it:** i.e., Desdemona’s affection; **question:** interchange, talk

133. **affordeth:** naturally yields

136. **before:** in the presence of

144. **vices of my blood:** my sins

145. **justly:** truly, exactly

150. **Still:** continually; **the story:** i.e., about **the story**

152. **passed:** experienced, endured

156. **moving accidents:** stirring events or disasters

157–58. **imminent deadly breach:** a death-threatening gap in fortifications

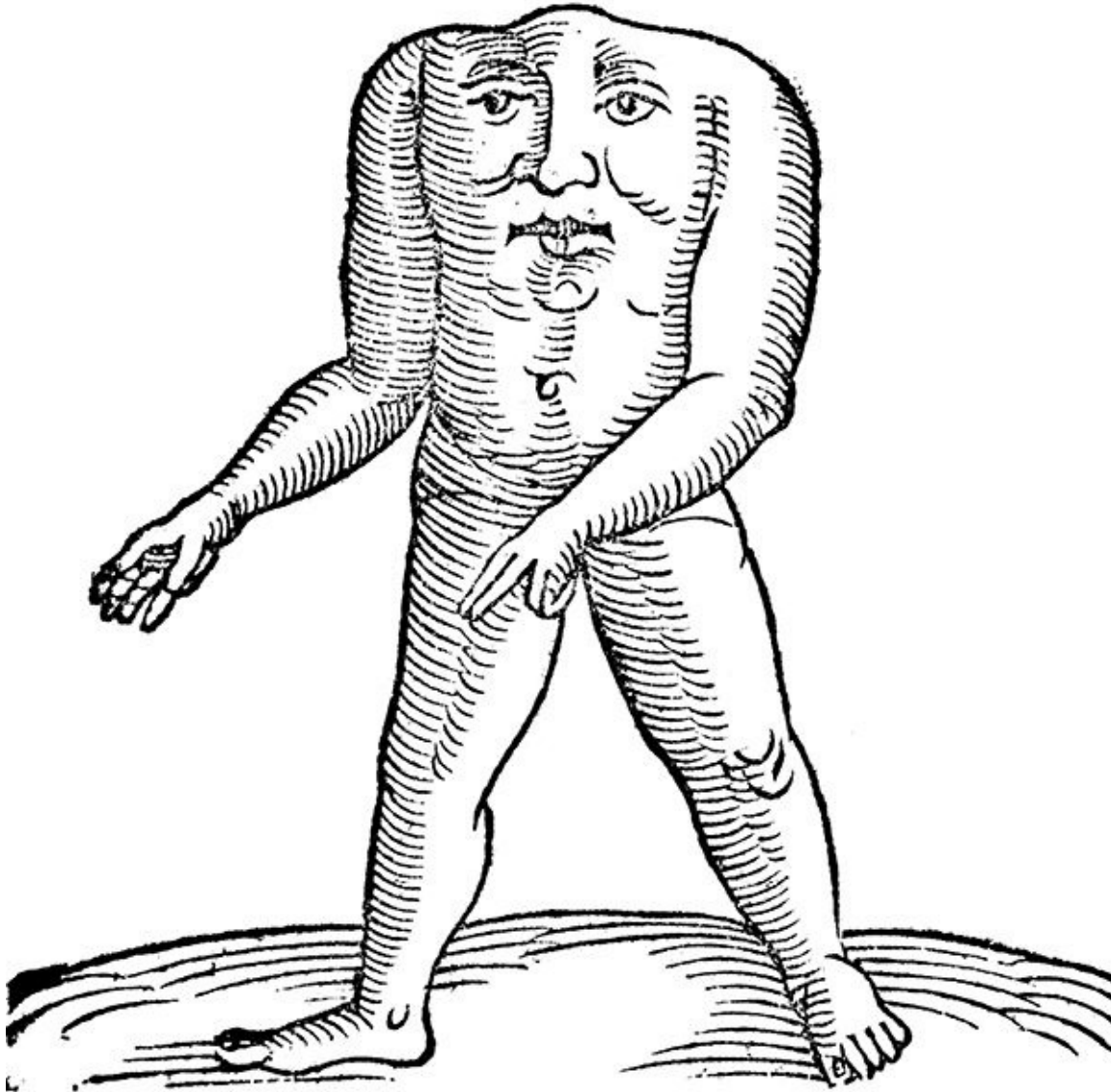
160. **redemption:** being ransomed

161. **portance in:** conduct during

162. **antres:** caves; **idle:** empty

165. **hint:** occasion, opportunity; **process:** narrative

167. **Anthropophagi:** a race of cannibals mentioned in travelers' tales



One of the “men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.”
([1.3.167](#)–68)

From Conrad Lycosthenes, *Prodigiorum* . . . (1557).

[177](#). **dilate**: relate in detail, expand upon

[178](#). **by parcels**: in pieces

[179](#). **intently**: (1) attentively; (2) intently

[184](#). **in faith**: a mild oath; **passing**: surpassingly

[191](#). **but**: simply

194. **that she:** because she

196. **witness:** bear witness to

199. **Take . . . best:** make the **best** of **this** bad business (proverbial)

204. **Destruction . . . head:** i.e., let **destruction** fall **on my head**

210. **bound:** obliged; **education:** upbringing

211. **learn:** teach

212. **lord of duty:** i.e., the one to whom I owe obedience

217. **challenge:** claim

219. **have done:** i.e., am finished

220. **Please it:** i.e., if it **please**

221. **get:** beget, father

223. **here do give thee:** It is possible that at this point Brabantio joins their hands.

224. **but . . . already:** i.e., if you did not already have

225. **For your sake, jewel:** i.e., on account of you, Desdemona

227. **For:** because; **escape:** i.e., elopement

228. **clogs:** weights attached to animals or people to prevent their escape (See picture.)



Weighed down by a clog. ([1.3.228](#))

From Geoffrey Whitney, *A choice of emblemes* . . . (1586).

[229](#). **lay a sentence:** i.e., pronounce a maxim (Latin *sententia*)

[230](#). **grise:** i.e., step

[232](#)–40. **When remedies . . . grief:** These sayings of the duke are involved and unclear, but each generally expands the proverb “What is past help should be past tears.”

[234](#). **mischief:** misfortune

[235](#). **next:** nearest, quickest

[237](#). **Patience . . . makes:** i.e., **patience makes a mockery of fortune’s damage**

238. **The robbed:** i.e., the victim of robbery

240. **spends a bootless:** indulges in a profitless

243–46. **He . . . borrow:** Brabantio makes a distinction between someone, like the duke, who, free of sorrow, delivers platitudes, and someone, like himself, who, already grieving, must draw on his already exhausted patience to put up with these platitudes.

247. **gall:** bitterness

250. **piercèd:** lanced and thereby cured

254. **preparation:** See note to 1.3.18, above

255. **fortitude:** strength

257. **substitute:** deputy; **allowed:** acknowledged

257–58. **a sovereign . . . effects:** i.e., which has a powerful influence over what we do

258–59. **throws . . . you:** i.e., says **you** are **a safer** person for the position

260. **slubber:** sully

261. **stubborn and boist'rous:** painfully rough

262–64. **custom . . . down:** i.e., habit has made the hard beds **of war** seem soft to me **thrice-driven bed of down:** i.e., an exceedingly soft **bed** (The feathers, that is, have been winnowed [**driven**] three times so that only the smallest and softest remain.)

264. **agnize:** acknowledge

266. **hardness:** hardship

267. **wars:** i.e., war

268. **state:** rank and power

269. **fit disposition:** appropriate arrangements

270. **Due . . . exhibition:** i.e., assignment to her of a proper (**due**) residence and maintenance

271. **besort:** suitable company

272. **levels . . . breeding:** is consistent with her rank

279. **unfolding:** explanation; **prosperous:** favorable

280. **charter:** privilege, immunity

281. **simpleness:** innocence; insufficiencies

282. **would you:** i.e., do you wish

283. **I love:** See longer note.

284. **My . . . fortunes:** i.e., the openly vehement way in which I took by **storm** the future (**fortunes**)

286. **quality:** i.e., that which makes him what he is

288. **parts:** qualities

291. **moth:** idle, unimportant creature

293. **heavy:** sorrowful; tedious

293–94. **support / By:** i.e., undergo during

295. **voice:** approval

296. **Vouch:** declare

298. **heat:** sexual desire, which Othello may be associating with his past youth (**young affects**)

299. **In . . . satisfaction:** In the early printed texts, this line reads “In my defunct, and proper satisfaction.”

300. **free and bounteous:** noble and liberal

301. **heaven . . . think:** i.e., **heaven** prevent **you good souls** from thinking **that**

302. **scant:** neglect

303. **For:** because

304. **feathered Cupid:** Roman god of love, usually depicted as a winged infant (hence **light-winged toys, toys** here meaning erotic pleasures) See picture. **seel:** close (literally, sew up); **wanton:** lustful



“Feathered Cupid.” (1.3.304)
From Francesco Petrarca, *Opera* . . . (1508).

305. **speculative . . . instruments:** i.e., eyes, and also eyes of the mind **officed:** given an office or function

306. **That:** i.e., so **that;** **disports:** amusements

307. **helm:** helmet

308. **indign:** disgraceful

309. **Make head . . . estimation:** collect as an army to attack my reputation

319. **of quality and respect:** i.e., **of** such kind and importance

320. **As . . . you:** i.e., that they matter to you

323. **honesty:** Throughout the play, Iago is lauded for his **honesty**, a term that, when applied to men, means truthfulness, integrity, and honorable behavior. When applied to women, it means chastity and female virtue.

324. **conveyance:** escort

330. **delighted:** i.e., delightful

333. **Look to:** watch

335. **My . . . faith:** i.e., I would stake **my life** on her fidelity to me

336. **Honest:** often, as here, used as a condescending epithet addressed to or about a social inferior

339. **advantage:** opportunity

341. **worldly . . . direction:** i.e., perhaps, domestic or financial instructions

347. **incontinently:** immediately

357. **guinea hen:** i.e., female **guinea** fowl (Iago's contemptuous reference to Desdemona)

358. **change:** i.e., exchange

360. **fond**: doting; **virtue**: power

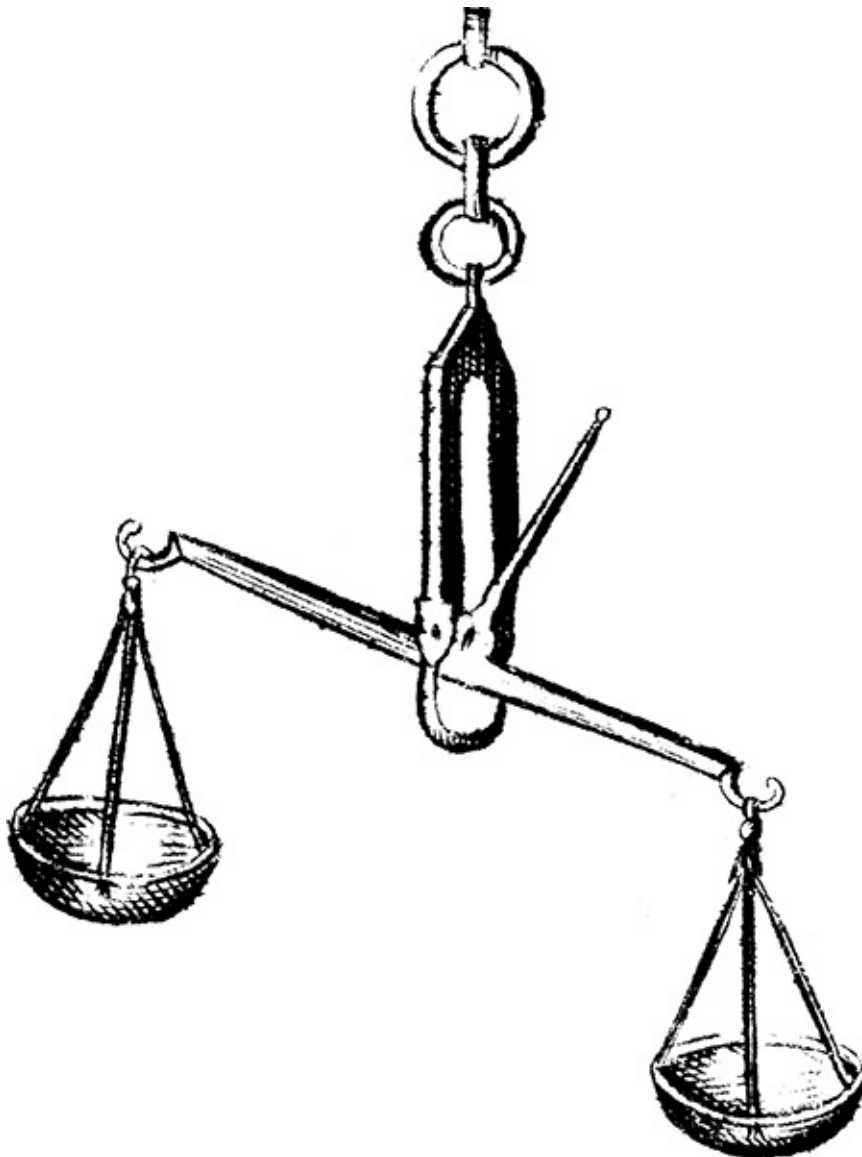
361. **fig**: term of contempt (To “give the **fig**” is to make an obscene gesture with the thumb.)

365. **gender**: kind

365–66. **distract it with**: i.e., divide it among

367–68. **corrigible**: corrective

368. **balance**: a weighing device with **scales** (See picture.)



A balance. (1.3.368)

From Silvestro Pietrasanta, *Symbola heroica* . . . (1682).

369. **poise**: counterbalance

370. **blood**: passions

373. **motions**: emotions, impulses; **carnal stings**: sexual impulses; **unbitted**: i.e., uncontrolled, like horses without bits in their mouths

374–75. **sect, or scion**: cutting or shoot

382. **Put money . . . purse**: In this and the next speech, Iago urges Roderigo to turn his land and other material possessions into ready cash.

383. **defeat thy favor**: i.e., disguise your face

388. **answerable sequestration**: comparable separation

390. **wills**: desires

391. **locusts**: This seems to be an allusion to the “**locusts** and wild honey” that fed John the Baptist in the wilderness (Matthew 3.4). It is possible that for both Matthew and Iago, **locusts** are the pods of the carob tree (called “locust beans” because of their resemblance to the insect). However, the Geneva Bible (1560), in its marginal note on Matthew 3.4, glosses the word *locusts* as “grasshoppers.”

392. **coliquintida**: a bitter drug

393. **change for youth**: i.e., exchange (Othello) for a young man

395–96. **wilt needs**: must

397. **Make . . . money**: i.e., raise as much ready cash as

397–98. **sanctimony**: sanctity

398. **erring**: wandering

401. **A pox of**: a plague on

402. **clean . . . way**: entirely beside the point

403. **compassing:** achieving
405. **fast:** steadfast
407. **Thou . . . me:** i.e., you can trust me
409. **hearted:** fixed in my heart
410. **be conjunctive:** i.e., unite
414. **Traverse:** i.e., march
418. **betimes:** early
419. **Go to:** an expression of impatience
427. **profane:** misuse
428. **snipe:** woodcock (a notoriously stupid bird)
431. **'Has:** i.e., he has; **my office:** i.e., my sexual duty as a husband
432. **in that kind: in that** regard
433. **as if for surety:** i.e., **as if** I were sure of it; **holds:** esteems
435. **proper:** attractive
436. **his place:** Cassio's position; **plume up:** i.e., embellish, enhance (literally, adorn with plumes)
439. **he:** i.e., Cassio; **his:** i.e., Othello's
440. **He:** i.e., Cassio; **dispose:** manner
442. **free:** sincere, straightforward
443. **honest:** See note on *honesty*, 1.3.323. **that but:** who only
444. **tenderly:** easily, readily
446. **engendered:** conceived

ACT 2

Scene 1

2.1 The Turkish fleet is destroyed in a storm, while Cassio and then Desdemona, Emilia, and Iago arrive safely at Cyprus. Desdemona anxiously waits for Othello. When his ship arrives, he and Desdemona joyfully greet each other. Iago, putting his plot into action, persuades Roderigo that Desdemona is in love with Cassio and that Roderigo should help get Cassio dismissed from the lieutenancy.

2. high-wrought flood: agitated sea

3. main: open sea

7. ruffianed: blustered, raged

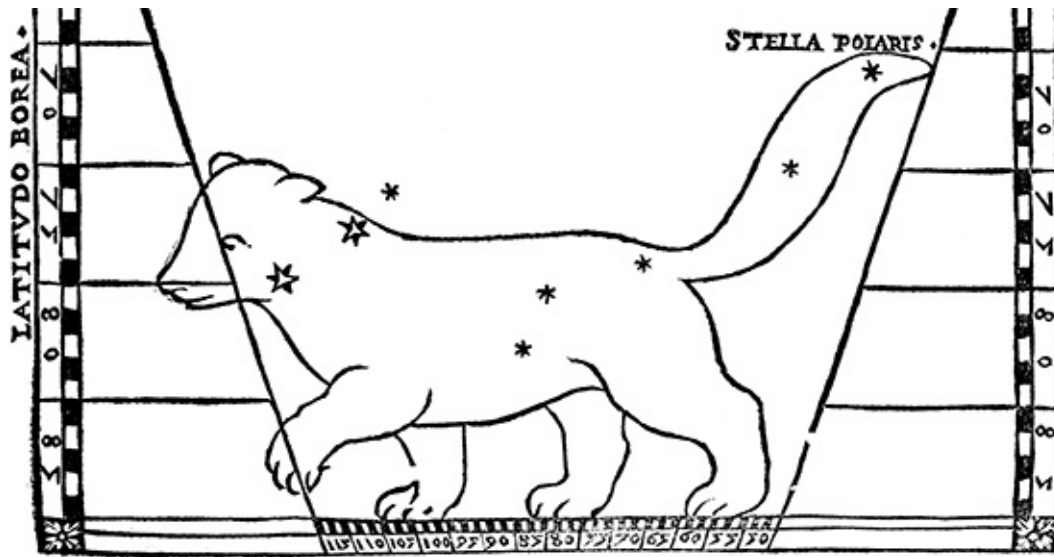
8. ribs of oak: ship's framing timber made of **oak**; **mountains:** i.e., mountainous waves

9. hold the mortise: i.e., **hold** together where they are joined

10. segregation: breaking up, scattering

12. chidden billow: i.e., the wave, which seems **chidden** (driven, rebuked) by the wind

15–16. Seems . . . pole: i.e., **seems** to deluge the stars (The constellation Ursa Minor [the Little **Bear**] contains two bright stars that are considered the **guards** of the polestar. See picture.)



“The burning Bear.” (2.1.15)

From Giovanni Paolo Gallucci, *Coelestium corporum . . . explicatio . . .* (1605).

17. **like molestation:** similar disturbance

18. **enchafèd flood:** raging sea

21. **bear it out:** i.e., endure the storm

24. **designment halts:** plan is crippled

25. **wrack and sufferance:** shipwreck and damage

27. **How:** i.e., what

28. **put in:** i.e., put into harbor

29. **A Veronesa:** i.e., a ship from Verona in the Venetian navy

32. **full commission:** complete authority

35. **Touching:** regarding

40. **full:** complete

43–44. **we . . . regard:** i.e., we can no longer see the difference between sea and sky

53. **bark:** ship

54. **Of . . . allowance:** i.e., reputed (or allowed) to be **very expert and experienced**

55–56. **my hopes . . . cure:** i.e., I am hopeful (about Othello's safety) **surfeited:** made sick through excess **Stand in bold cure:** i.e., are not beyond recovery

60. **My . . . for:** i.e., I hope that it is

61. **shot of courtesy:** courteous salute or volley

67. **achieved:** won

68. **paragons:** surpasses

69. **quirks:** figures of speech; **blazoning pens:** i.e., poets who itemize the beauties of a woman

70–71. **in . . . ingener:** i.e., in her natural beauty (she) would **tire** out any artist who would try to represent her **ingener:** contriver, artist (accent on first syllable)

74. **'Has:** i.e., he has; **happy:** fortunate

76. **guttered:** furrowed, jagged; **congregated:** massed

77. **ensteeped:** submerged

78. **As:** i.e., as if; **do omit:** i.e., **do** not act in accordance with

79. **mortal:** deadly

83. **conduct:** escort

84. **footing:** landing

85. **sennight's:** week's; **Jove:** king of the Roman gods (See picture.)



“Great Jove.” ([2.1.85](#); [2.3.19](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini* . . . (1615).

[89](#). **extincted:** (1) extinguished; (2) dull (having lost their color or tincture)

[93](#). **let . . . knees:** i.e., kneel to her

[101](#). **How . . . company?:** i.e., **how** were **you** and Othello parted?

[103](#) SD. **Within:** offstage

[105](#). **their greeting:** i.e., the **shot** ([line 103 SD](#))

110. **extend my manners:** i.e., **extend my** greeting to include a kiss

112. **would she:** i.e., if **she would**

115. **has no speech:** i.e., says nothing

117. **still:** always; **have list to:** want to

118. **Marry:** a mild oath; **before:** i.e., in the presence of

120. **with thinking:** i.e., silently

122. **You:** i.e., women; **pictures:** i.e., (1) beautiful; (2) silent; (3) painted (i.e., wearing cosmetics); **out of door:** in public

123. **bells:** i.e., noisy, jangling, clanging; **wildcats:** perhaps, fiercely territorial

125. **huswifery:** skilled household management; **huswives:** (1) housewives; (2) hussies

135. **assay:** try; **There's one gone:** i.e., has someone **gone**

137. **beguile:** divert (my) attention (and others') from

138. **The thing I am:** i.e., my anxiety

140. **about it:** i.e., trying to do it; **my invention:** i.e., what I am devising

141. **birdlime:** a sticky substance applied to bushes to catch birds; **frieze:** coarse woolen stuff (from which it would be hard to remove birdlime)

142. **muse:** The Muses were deities believed to inspire poets to write. (See picture.) **labors:** (1) works hard; (2) strains to give birth



The Muses. (2.1.142)

From Natale Conti, *Natalis Comitit Mythologiae* . . . (1616).

143. is delivered: gives birth

144. fair: (1) light in complexion and therefore, by the standards of Shakespeare's day, (2) beautiful; **wit:** wisdom

145. for use: i.e., made to be used

146. black: dark in complexion and therefore, by the standards of Shakespeare's day, unattractive; **witty:** clever

147. thereto have: i.e., also has

148. white: (1) fair love; (2) wight (pronounced "white" and meaning "man"); (3) the bull's-eye in a target, which an archer tries to **hit** (See picture.)



Aiming at “the blank.” (3.4.147)

From Gilles Corrozet, *Hecatographie* . . . (1543).

152. folly: (1) foolishness; (2) wantonness

153. fond: foolish

155. foul: ugly

156. thereunto: besides

157. foul: shameful, vile

158. heavy: profound

160–61. authority of her merit: her moral supremacy

161. justly: rightly, properly

161–62. put on . . . itself: i.e., demand the approval even of entirely malicious people

163. ever: always

164. Had tongue at will: perhaps, always knew what to say; or, perhaps, could speak when she wished

165. **gay:** i.e., gorgeously dressed

166. **Fled . . . may:** i.e., restrained her desires though she had power to satisfy them

168. **Bade . . . fly:** i.e., endured **her** injury (**wrong**) with patience **Bade:** ordered

170. **change . . . tail:** i.e., perhaps, exchange one worthless thing for another (Obscene meanings of **head** and **tail** may apply here, but the meaning of the line is debated.)

173. **wight:** person

175. **suckle . . . beer:** i.e., nurse babies and keep household accounts **small beer:** light beer

177. **of:** i.e., from

178. **How say you:** i.e., what do you say

179. **profane:** irreverent, wicked; **liberal:** dissolute

180. **home:** i.e., bluntly

181. **in:** i.e., in the role of

185. **gyve . . . courtship:** i.e., shackle you with your own manners

188. **kissed . . . fingers:** a courtly gesture

189. **the sir:** the fine gentleman

192. **clyster pipes:** tubes used for enemas

204. **Olympus:** the mountain in Greece where, according to mythology, the gods lived

205. **If . . . die:** i.e., **if I were to die** this minute

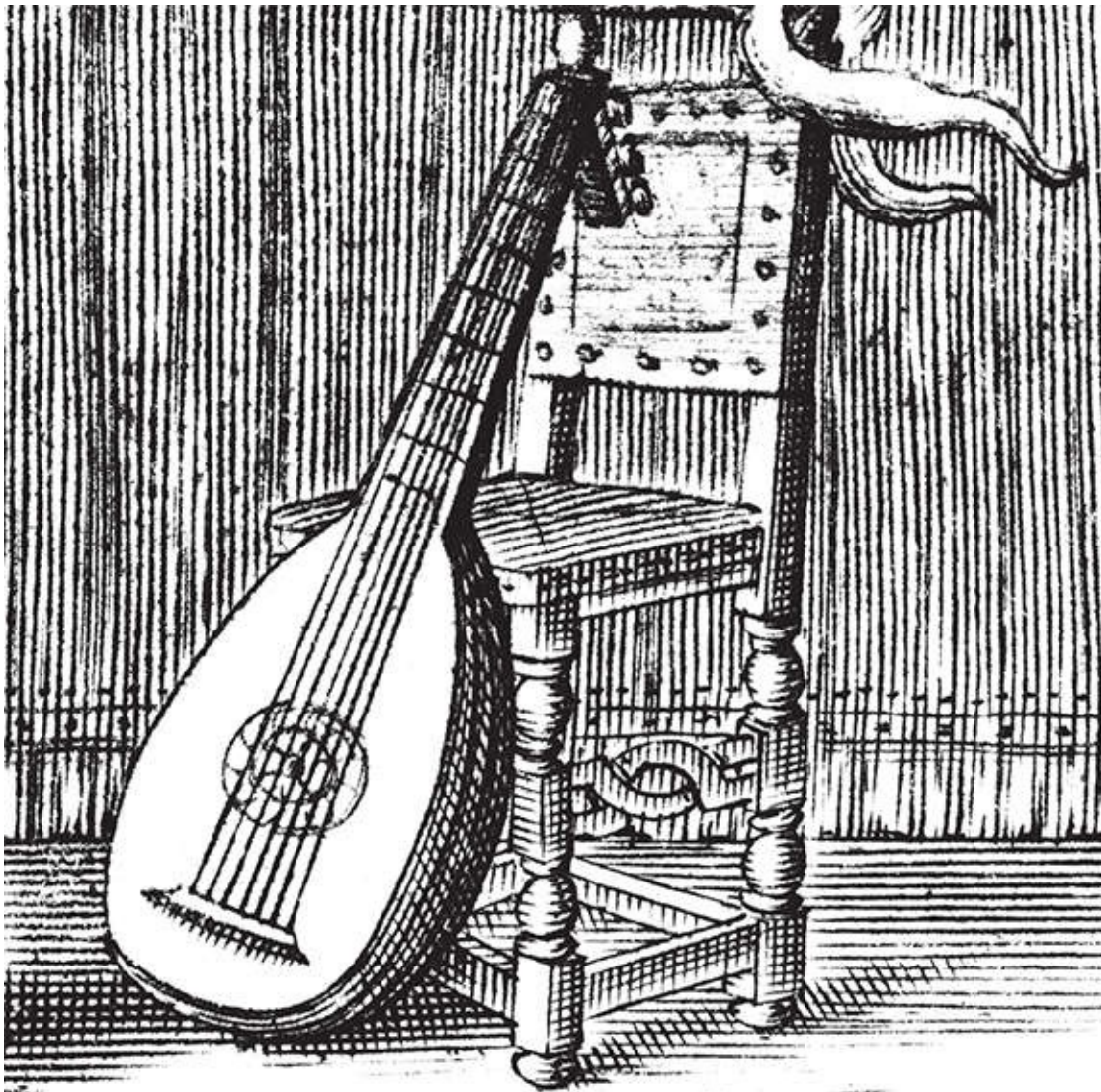
207. **hath . . . absolute:** i.e., is so perfectly content

208. **comfort:** delight

209. Succeeds: follows; **unknown fate:** i.e., what is destined to happen in the **unknown** future

218. well tuned: Iago picks up the musical image in Othello's reference to **discords** ([line 216](#)).

219. set down . . . music: i.e., destroy your harmony (Loosening **the pegs** of a stringed instrument slackens the strings and puts it out of tune. See picture of a stringed instrument.)



A lute. ([2.1.219](#))

From Silvestro Pietrasanta, *Symbola heroica* . . . (1682).

220. **As . . . I am:** i.e., in all my reputed “honesty”

225. **well desired:** much loved

227. **out of fashion:** inappropriately

229. **coffers:** chests, including strongboxes

230. **master:** i.e., ship’s commander

232. **challenge:** claim, deserve

236. **base:** cowardly, worthless

238. **list:** listen to

239. **watches:** i.e., stands watch; **the court of guard:** either the body of soldiers on **guard** duty or the guardhouse where they stand watch

240. **directly:** completely

242. **thus:** presumably, on your lips (i.e., keep silent)

243. **Mark me:** notice

244. **but:** only

245. **still:** always, forever; **prating:** mere talk

246. **discreet:** judicious

248. **blood:** sexual appetite; **act of sport:** i.e., lovemaking

250. **favor:** appearance; **sympathy:** agreement

252–53. **required conveniences:** necessary points of agreement

254. **abused:** violated; **heave the gorge:** i.e., become ill, vomit;
disrelish: have a distaste for

255. **Very nature:** i.e., nature itself

257. **pregnant:** obvious

258–59. **stands . . . fortune as:** i.e., is most likely to benefit than **eminent in the degree:** i.e., high on the ladder

259. **voluble:** inconstant; glib

261. **civil and humane:** polite and courteous

262. **compassing of:** attaining; **salt . . . loose:** lecherous

263. **slipper:** slippery

264. **knave:** villain

265. **stamp . . . advantages:** coin (or fraudulently manufacture) opportunities

268. **green:** unripe, inexperienced

269. **look after:** demand; **pestilent:** plaguey, confoundedly

272. **condition:** character, disposition

273–74. **wine . . . grapes:** i.e., she's just like the rest of us

275. **Blessed pudding:** Like **Blessed fig's end**, (line 273) this oath shows contempt for the one who is being called "**blessed.**" **pudding:** a kind of sausage

276. **paddle with:** i.e., play with her fingers on; **his:** i.e., Cassio's

279–80. **index . . . history:** i.e., the prefatory matter to the real story **index:** table of contents

283. **mutualities:** exchange of intimacies; **marshal the way:** clear and point out **the way**

283–84. **hard at hand:** immediately

284. **master and main exercise:** principal act

285. **incorporate:** i.e., corporal, bodily, carnal; **Pish:** term of disgust or contempt

286. **Watch you:** i.e., stand watch

287. **For . . . upon you:** Neill (Oxford *Othello*) points out the ambiguity of this sentence, which could mean (1) I'll arrange for you to be appointed; (2) I'll give you the orders; or (3) As for you taking the lead, that's up to you.

290. **tainting:** disparaging, mocking

292. **minister:** provide

294. **choler:** anger

295. **haply:** perhaps

297. **mutiny:** riot

297–98. **whose qualification . . . but by:** i.e., who will not be appeased except by **qualification:** appeasement

298. **displanting:** displacement, supplanting

300. **prefer:** promote

301. **impediment:** i.e., Cassio

303–4. **bring . . . opportunity:** i.e., arrange **any opportunity** for me

305. **warrant:** assure

306. **his:** i.e., Othello's

309. **apt:** likely; **of . . . credit:** i.e., very believable

310. **howbeit that:** even though

314. **absolute:** mere

315. **accountant:** i.e., accountable

316. **diet:** feed

317. **For that:** because

318. leaped . . . seat: i.e., sexually mounted my wife **leaped:** “of certain beasts: to spring upon (the female) in copulation” (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

319. inwards: “innards,” inner parts

322. yet that: until

324. judgment: i.e., Othello’s reason

325–26. If . . . on: i.e., if Roderigo can carry out what I need **whom I trace . . . hunting:** i.e., whose steps I pursue in order to make him hunt more quickly **the putting on:** that which I’ve put him up to

327. have . . . on the hip: i.e., have **Cassio** at a disadvantage (a wrestling term [See picture.])



“I’ll have our Michael Cassio on the hip.” (2.1.327)

From Romein de Hooghe, *L’Académie de l’admirable art de la lutte* . . . (1712).

328. Abuse: slander, revile; **the rank garb:** i.e., language that makes him look coarse or lecherous

332. practicing upon: plotting against, destroying

333. ’Tis . . . confused: i.e., I have a plan, though the details are unclear

ACT 2

Scene 2

2.2 Othello proclaims a public celebration.

3. importing: making known; **mere perdition:** total destruction

4. triumph: festivity

6. addition: rank

7. these beneficial news: i.e., this welcome **news**

9. offices: kitchens (from which food and drink could be obtained)

11. have told: i.e., has struck

ACT 2

Scene 3

2.3 Iago gets Cassio drunk, making it easy for Roderigo to provoke Cassio into a brawl, first with Roderigo, then with Montano, whom he wounds. Othello, called from his bed by the noise, stops the brawl and strips Cassio of his lieutenantcy. Iago advises Cassio to seek Desdemona's help in getting reinstated. The next step in Iago's plan is to tell Othello that Desdemona supports Cassio because Cassio is her lover.

1. look you to: attend to, take care of

2. stop: check, self-restraint

3. outsport: i.e., celebrate past the point of

8. with your earliest: i.e., at **your earliest** convenience

11. **purchase:** i.e., marriage; **fruits:** i.e., consummation

15. **Not this hour:** i.e., **not** for an **hour**

16. **cast:** dismissed

19. **sport:** a plaything; **Jove:** famous for his sexual exploits with mortal women (See picture.)

21. **game:** amorous play

22. **fresh:** youthful

24–25. **sounds . . . provocation:** i.e., sends out a summons to sexual excitement **sounds:** literally, issues a trumpet call **parley:** a meeting between opposing forces before a battle. The erotic military metaphors continue with **alarum** [line 28], meaning a signal to join in battle.

26. **right:** very

31. **stoup:** a large drinking vessel; **without:** outside

32. **brace:** pair

32–33. **fain have a measure:** i.e., gladly drink a toast

35. **unhappy:** unfortunate

36–37. **entertainment:** manner of social behavior; action of treating a guest; reception of persons

38. **But:** only

41. **qualified:** diluted; **innovation:** change

48. **dislikes:** displeases

51. **offense:** i.e., inclination to take **offense**

52. **my young mistress' dog:** i.e., a young girl's (spoiled) pet

55–56. **caroused . . . pottle-deep:** i.e., drunk up two-quart potfuls of drink **pottle:** vessel holding two quarts

57. **else:** i.e., others (Many editions substitute the Quarto's "lads" for the Folio's "else.")

58. **That . . . distance:** i.e., who are anxious (and aggressive) about preserving their personal honor

59. **The very . . . isle:** i.e., **the very** ingredients that make **this** a **warlike isle**

60. **flustered:** i.e., made flush and excited

65. **If . . . dream:** i.e., **if** the future confirms **my** hopes

67. **rouse:** a deep drink

72–76. **And . . . drink:** See longer note. **cannikin:** little can **span:** short time

75. **span:** short time

80. **potting:** i.e., drinking; **Your Dane:** i.e., a typical **Dane**

81. **swag-bellied:** pot-bellied

83. **exquisite:** skilled

85. **drinks you:** i.e., **drinks**

86–87. **He sweats not . . . Almain:** i.e., it takes little effort for him to outdrink a typical German



“He gives your Hollander a vomit.” (2.3.87)

From Jean Jacques Boissard, *Theatrum vitae humanae* . . . (1596).

90–91. I’ll do you justice: i.e., I’ll drink as much as you do

93–100. King Stephen . . . thee: stanza seven of a well-known ballad of the period titled “Bell My Wife” lown: rogue wight: person degree: rank auld: old

105. place: social position, rank

111. quality: rank

124. platform: gun platform; set the watch: mount guard

128. just equinox: i.e., exact equivalent

129. pity of: i.e., a pity about

131. **On . . . infirmity:** i.e., at **some time** or another when he is the victim of **his** weakness

135–36. **watch . . . cradle:** i.e., be awake all night as well as all day if he doesn't drink himself to sleep **horologe:** clock, hourglass

145. **second: second** in command, lieutenant

146. **engrafted infirmity:** a weakness that has grown to be part of him in the same way a shoot becomes part of the plant to which it is grafted

151 SD. **within:** i.e., offstage

153. **Zounds:** i.e., Christ's wounds (a strong oath)

156. **twiggen bottle:** a bottle encased in woven twigs or wicker work

159–60. **hold your hand:** i.e., do not strike

162. **mazard:** slang for "head"

165. **mutiny:** riot

166. **God's will:** a strong oath

168. **goodly:** fine, splendid

169. **bell:** i.e., alarm **bell; Diablo:** i.e., the devil

170. **rise:** rebel, riot; **hold:** i.e., stop

182–83. **to ourselves . . . Ottomites:** i.e., bring ourselves to the destruction that divine providence (**heaven**), by wrecking the Turkish fleet, has prevented **the Turks** from bringing down on us

184. **put by:** i.e., give up

185. **to carve . . . rage:** i.e., to indulge **his rage** ("To carve for oneself" was proverbial for "To please oneself.")

186. **Holds . . . light:** regards . . . as of little value

188. **propriety:** i.e., proper condition
190. **On . . . thee:** i.e., by your **love** for me, **I** order you (to speak)
192. **In quarter and in terms:** i.e., in relation to each other
194. **As if . . . men:** i.e., **as if** the influence of **some planet had** driven them mad
195. **tilting one at other's:** i.e., charging or thrusting at one another's
196. **speak:** i.e., **speak** of
197. **odds:** strife
198. **would:** i.e., I wish
200. **you . . . forgot:** i.e., that you have so forgotten yourself
202. **were wont be:** used to **be**
203. **gravity and stillness:** i.e., dignified manner
204. **name:** reputation
205. **censure:** judgment
206. **unlace:** undo
207. **spend your rich opinion:** i.e., squander your valuable reputation
209. **hurt to danger:** i.e., dangerously injured
211. **something . . . offends:** i.e., because of my wounds, speaking is painful **something:** somewhat **offends:** hurts
214. **By me . . . amiss:** i.e., that I **said** or did wrong
215. **self-charity:** i.e., care of oneself
219. **My blood . . . to rule:** i.e., my passion (anger) is overcoming my reason and judgment

220. **collied**: darkened (literally, blackened with coal)
221. **Assays**: tries
224. **rout**: uproar, disturbance
225. **approved in**: i.e., proved to be guilty of
227. **lose me**: i.e., **lose** my favor; **town of war**: fortified place
228. **Yet**: still
229. **manage**: engage in
230. **on . . . safety**: i.e., in the chief guardhouse and while on duty
232. **partially affined**: i.e., partial, biased
235. **Touch . . . near**: i.e., there's no need to allude to what concerns me so closely (my soldiership)
237. **offense**: harm
243. **execute upon**: i.e., use against
246. **fell out**: happened
248. **the rather**: all the more quickly
249. **For that**: because; **fall**: downward stroke
253. **even**: just
256. **men . . . forgot**: Proverbial: "**Men are** but **men**," and "**The best** go astray."
257. **him**: i.e., Montano
260. **strange indignity**: i.e., unusual insult
261. **pass**: i.e., allow to **pass**
263. **mince**: extenuate or make light of

275. **distracted:** perplexed, bewildered

280. **Marry:** i.e., indeed

286. **sense:** (1) feeling; (2) reason (for being concerned)

288. **imposition:** ascription, something put on someone by others

291. **recover:** win back

292. **cast in his mood:** i.e., dismissed because he is angry

292–93. **a punishment . . . malice:** i.e., **a punishment** imposed for political motives (i.e., perhaps, to placate the Cypriots), rather than out of personal ill-feeling toward Cassio

293. **even so as:** just as

293–95. **one would beat . . . lion:** i.e., punish the weak in order to scare the strong (Iago refers to the proverb “**Beat** the **dog** in the presence of the **lion**.”)

295. **Sue to:** petition

298–99. **speak parrot:** i.e., **speak** without knowing what one is saying

299–300. **discourse fustian:** i.e., speak bombastic rant

308. **nothing wherefore:** i.e., not the cause of it **wherefore:** why

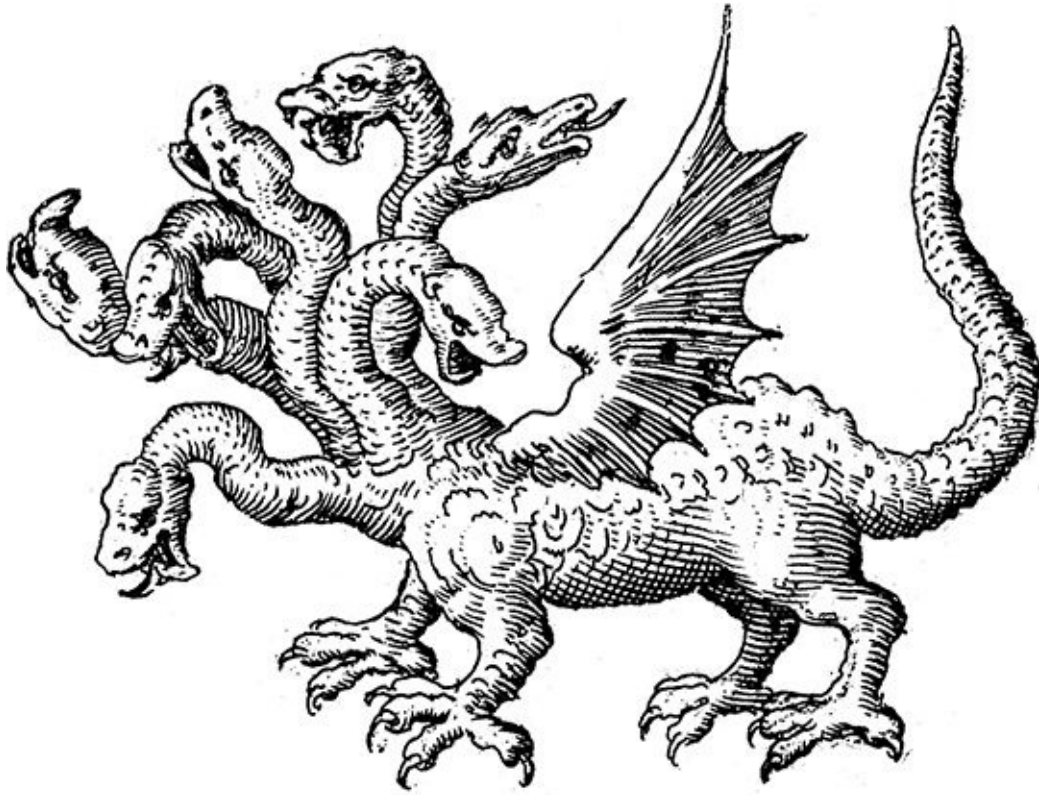
311. **pleasance:** pleasure

316. **unperfectness:** imperfection

318. **moraler:** moralizer

322. **my place:** i.e., as Othello’s lieutenant

324. **Hydra:** a many-headed monster in Greek mythology (See picture.); **stop:** i.e., silence



Hydra. ([2.3.324](#))

From Jacob Typot, *Symbola diuina* . . . (1652).

[325](#). **by and by**: i.e., the next moment; **presently**: immediately

[328](#)–29. **familiar creature**: i.e., not a devil (as Cassio calls it) but a spirit (a **familiar**) that is serviceable to its master

[331](#). **approved it**: tested it and found it true

[335](#). **for that**: because

[336](#). **mark**: i.e., observation

[336](#)–37. **denotement**: description

[337](#). **parts**: accomplishments; **graces**: attractive qualities

[339](#). **free**: noble; **apt**: ready (to help)

[343](#). **splinter**: set with splints; **my fortunes** . . . **lay**: i.e., I will bet all my possessions against any stake (**lay**)

344–45. **this crack . . . stronger:** It was proverbial that a broken bone, when healed, was stronger than before, if it was well set.

349. **I think it freely:** i.e., I entirely believe it; **betimes:** early

351. **desperate:** in despair

351–52. **check me here:** hold me back now

357. **free:** honorable

358. **Probal to thinking:** i.e., probable

360. **inclining:** i.e., always inclined to help; **subdue:** prevail upon

361. **suit:** petition; **framed:** created; **fruitful:** productive (of good works)

363. **win:** persuade; **were 't:** i.e., even if she were to ask him

364. **seals . . . sin:** In Christianity, **baptism** (line 363) and the other sacraments are both the guarantees (**seals**) and the outward manifestations (**symbols**) that humankind may be redeemed, or ransomed, from **sin**.

365. **enfettered:** enslaved

366. **list:** likes

367. **her appetite:** her fancy; or, his desire for her

368. **weak function:** i.e., his intellectual and moral powers, diminished by his attachment to Desdemona

369–70. **this parallel . . . good:** i.e., **this course** that parallels exactly the one that would lead to **his good**

370. **Divinity of hell:** i.e., the kind of argument one would expect from Satan **Divinity:** theology

371. **put on:** i.e., urge, incite

372. **suggest:** i.e., tempt; **shows:** appearances

374. **Plies:** repeatedly and forcefully begs

376. **pestilence:** i.e., poison

377. **repeals him:** i.e., wishes to have him recalled (as if from banishment)

379. **undo . . . Moor:** i.e., destroy Othello's confidence in her

380. **pitch:** Pitch is black, malodorous, and extremely sticky; it is thus the perfect substance for Iago to imagine as helping him **enmesh** his victims (line 382).

384. **chase:** hunt

384–85. **not . . . cry:** i.e., **not** one of the hounds following the scent **but** merely **one** at the back of the pack adding his voice to **the cry** (The **cry** can be either the yelping of the hounds or the pack itself.)

387. **issue:** result

388. **so much:** i.e., a certain amount of

389. **wit:** good sense

393. **wit:** intelligence

396. **cashiered:** i.e., gotten (him) dismissed

397–98. **Though . . . ripe:** These lines sound like proverbs used to persuade Roderigo of Iago's wisdom, but analogy of Roderigo's beating to blossoming fruit and the false logic of the lines also reveal Iago's contempt for Roderigo's thinking powers.

405. **move . . . mistress:** i.e., intercede with Desdemona on Cassio's behalf

408. **jump when:** i.e., at exactly the moment **when**

410. **device:** ingenious plot; **coldness:** i.e., slowness to act

ACT 3

Scene 1

3.1 Cassio arrives with musicians to honor Othello and Desdemona. As Iago has recommended, Cassio asks Emilia to arrange a meeting with Desdemona, even though Emilia assures him that Desdemona is already urging Othello to reinstate him.

1. content your pains: i.e., reward your efforts

2. morrow: morning (By employing musicians to awaken Othello and Desdemona after their wedding night, Cassio is following Renaissance custom.)

3 SD. Clown: comic servant

4–5. have . . . nose thus: The Clown probably alludes to “the Neopolitan disease,” one of the names by which syphilis was known, and to the disease’s destruction of the nose. He accuses the **instruments** of producing music with a nasal sound.

9. tail: wordplay on **tail/tale** ([line 10](#)) and on **wind instrument** ([line 11](#)) as the anus. (It has been suggested that by **tail** the Clown means the penis.)

22. mine: i.e., my

24. Prithee . . . quilleys: i.e., I pray you to put away your quibbles

27–28. a . . . speech: i.e., the favor of **a little** conversation

30. seem to notify unto: i.e., tell (The Clown mockingly affects extravagantly courtly language.)

32. In happy time: i.e., at just the right **time**

36. send in: i.e., **send** a message; **suit:** petition

38. access: accent on the second syllable

39. **presently:** immediately

40. **a mean:** i.e., some means

45. **A Florentine:** Cassio, a citizen of Florence (a **Florentine**), comments that Iago is as kind and honest as one of Cassio's own townsmen.

47. **displeasure:** unhappiness, trouble

51. **affinity:** kindred, connections

52. **might not but:** i.e., could only

54. **suitor:** petitioner

55. **occasion:** opportunity; **front:** forelock (Proverbial: "Seize **occasion** by the forelock.")

56. **bring . . . again:** i.e., restore you to your position

58. **or that:** i.e., and if

62. **bestow:** place; **time:** i.e., the chance

63. **bosom:** i.e., your innermost thoughts

ACT 3

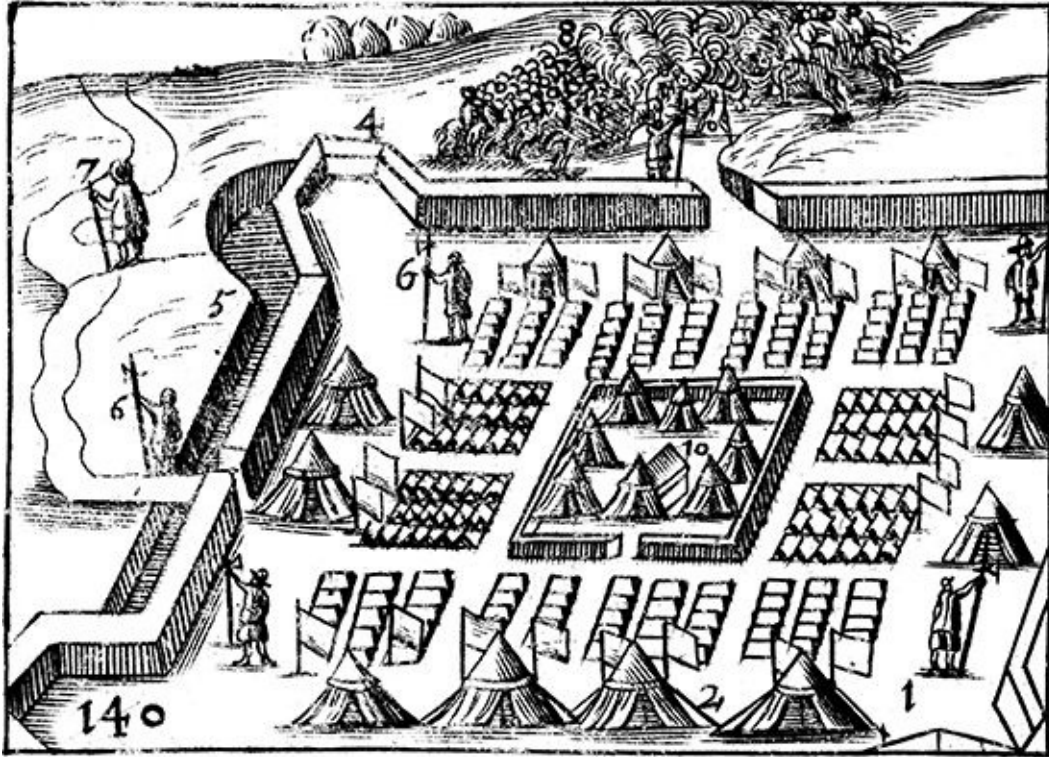
Scene 2

3.2 Othello prepares to tour Cyprus's fortifications.

1. **pilot:** presumably **the pilot** of the ship that bore Othello to Cyprus

2. **by him:** i.e., through his agency; **do my duties:** i.e., pay my respects

3. **works:** fortifications (See picture.)



“Works,” or fortified walls. (3.2.3)

From Johann Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus* . . . (1685).

4. Repair: make your way, come

7. wait upon: attend upon

ACT 3

Scene 3

3.3 Desdemona’s interview with Cassio is cut short by the arrival of Othello. Cassio leaves hastily in order to avoid speaking with Othello. Desdemona pleads to Othello on Cassio’s behalf. When she exits, Iago says that Cassio’s avoidance of Othello is suspicious and that Cassio may not be honorable, all the while insinuating that he, Iago, knows more than he is willing to say. He warns Othello against becoming jealous of Desdemona. (Scene heading continues.)

2. All my abilities: i.e., **all** I can

13–14. in strangeness . . . distance: i.e., **stand** aloof from you only so far as is politically expedient

16–20. That policy . . . service: “He may either of himself think it politic to keep me out of office so long, or he may be satisfied with such slight reasons, or so many accidents may make him think my re-admission at that time improper, that I may be quite forgotten” (Samuel Johnson, 1765). **nice:** fastidious **waterish:** thin, diluted **supplied:** filled

21. doubt: fear; **Before:** in the presence of

22. give thee warrant of: i.e., guarantee you; **thy place:** i.e., your position (as lieutenant); **Assure thee:** rest assured

23. a friendship: i.e., an act of **friendship**

25. watch him tame: i.e., keep him awake at night until he is agreeable (a method of taming falcons)

26. his board a shrift: i.e., his table (shall seem) a confessional

30. give thy cause away: abandon your case; or, lose your case

36. do: i.e., act according to

46. suitor: petitioner

50. grace: favor in your eyes; **move:** persuade

51. His present reconciliation take: i.e., effect his immediate restoration to your favor

53. in cunning: deliberately

54. in: i.e., of

57. faith: i.e., in **faith** (a very mild oath)

65. dinner: the midday meal

72. in our common reason: i.e., according to ordinary judgment

73. Save: i.e., except

73–74. the wars . . . best: i.e., the military profession **must** punish (and thus **make** examples of) even its **best** men (**Her** refers to **the wars**, which is considered a singular noun.)

74. not almost: i.e., scarcely

75. a private check: i.e., even an unofficial censure

78. mamm'ring on: i.e., dithering about

82. bring him in: i.e., restore him to office; **By'r Lady:** an oath on the name of the Virgin Mary

85. boon: favor

86. as: i.e., as if

88. a peculiar profit: something advantageous to yourself (**To your own person** [[line 89](#)] repeats, and thus insists on, this notion.)

89. suit: petition

90. touch: put to the test

91. poise: gravity, significance

94. Whereon: i.e., in return for what I have just said

97. straight: straightaway, at once

98. fancies: inclinations, wishes

100. wretch: apparently a term of affection

101. But: unless

101–2. when . . . again: In classical mythology, only Love prevents the universe from falling back into primordial **chaos**. Neill (Oxford *Othello*) points out parallel lines in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*:

“For, he being dead, with him is beauty slain, / And, beauty dead, black chaos comes again” (lines 1019–20).

115. **honest:** honorable

126. **didst:** i.e., **didst** thou

127. **of my counsel:** i.e., in my confidence

132. **conceit:** conception, idea

136. **for:** i.e., because; **honesty:** See note to 1.3.323.

139. **stops:** pauses, hesitations in your speaking

141. **tricks of custom:** i.e., usual or habitual **tricks**

142. **close dilations:** perhaps, accusations the speaker tries to hide (See longer note.)

143. **That passion cannot rule:** i.e., **that** is not controlled by the emotions

144. **For:** i.e., as **for**

149. **Certain:** i.e., certainly

158. **that all slaves are free to:** i.e., **that** which even **slaves are free** with respect to

161. **whereinto:** into which

164. **uncleanly apprehensions:** impure thoughts

165. **Keep . . . days:** i.e., hold court **leets:** courts held by lords of the manor **law days:** **days** on which courts were in session

165–66. **in sessions . . . With:** i.e., **sit** together **with**

171. **vicious:** imperfect, defective, mistaken

173. **jealousy:** suspiciousness

174. **Shapes:** imagines

174–76. **that your wisdom . . . notice:** i.e., **that** you therefore, in **your wisdom, would take no notice** of **one** who **so** mistakenly imagines things

177. **observance:** observation

178. **It were not for:** i.e., **it** is **not** in the interest of

182–83. **Good . . . souls:** proverbial **immediate:** nearest, i.e., most precious

184. **purse:** money

192. **if:** i.e., even if

196–97. **doth mock . . . feeds on:** i.e., toys with its victim (as a cat plays with a mouse)

197. **cuckold:** a man whose wife is unfaithful (See longer note and picture.)



“A hornèd man,” or cuckold. ([3.3.197](#); [4.1.77](#))

From *The Bagford Ballads* (printed in 1878).

[198](#). **certain . . . fate:** i.e., knowing that his wife is unfaithful; **his wronger:** i.e., his unfaithful wife

[199](#). **tells he o’er:** i.e., does he count

[202](#). **Poor:** i.e., the person who is **poor**

[203](#). **fineless:** unlimited

[204](#). **ever:** always

209. **still**: continually

211. **once . . . resolved**: (1) at **once** to find out the truth; (2) to have decided on action **once** and for all

213. **exsufflicate and blown**: perhaps, inflated; or, perhaps, spat out and flyblown **exsufflicate**: Since this is the only recorded use of the word, its meaning is uncertain. (In Latin *exsufflare* means “to blow away.”)

214. **Matching thy inference**: i.e., corresponding to your description of a jealous man

215. **fair**: beautiful; **feeds**: eats

217. **Where . . . virtuous**: i.e., when a woman is **virtuous**, **these are virtuous** accomplishments

219. **doubt of her revolt**: i.e., suspicion **of her** inconstancy

221. **prove**: i.e., put my **doubt** [line 219] to the test

222. **on the proof**: i.e., directly I have the results of the test

228. **Look to**: keep watch over

229. **not jealous nor secure**: i.e., neither suspicious nor wholly trustful

231. **self-bounty**: inherent goodness; **abused**: deceived; **Look to 't**: i.e., be on your guard

232. **country**: native (i.e., Venetian)

242. **go to**: an expression of impatience or annoyance

243. **give out such a seeming**: i.e., present **such a** false appearance

244. **seel**: i.e., close up (literally, sew shut, as was done with the eyes of a falcon being tamed); **oak**: i.e., the grain in **oak**

247. **of**: for

254. **moved:** disturbed, troubled

255. **am to:** i.e., must

255–57. **strain . . . suspicion:** i.e., force what **I** say to have greater consequences or broader scope **than to** raise **suspicion**

260. **fall into . . . success:** i.e., have such a hateful outcome or result

265. **I do not think but:** i.e., **I think** that; **honest:** chaste (This was the standard meaning of **honest** when applied to a woman.)

267. **erring from itself:** (1) wandering **from itself**; (2) sinning by departing from one's supposedly God-given **nature**

269. **affect:** like, be attracted to

270. **clime:** region; **complexion:** (1) temperament; (2) skin color; **degree:** social rank

271. **Whereto:** i.e., to which

272. **such:** i.e., **such** a one; **will:** desire; **rank:** offensively strong; loathsome; violent

274. **in position:** i.e., in establishing this general proposition

275. **Distinctly:** i.e., specifically

276. **recoiling:** returning

277. **match:** compare; **country forms:** i.e., the appearance of her countrymen

278. **happily:** haply, perhaps

281. **Set on:** i.e., instruct, urge

284. **unfolds:** discloses, reveals

285. **would I might:** i.e., **I would** like to

287. **place:** position (as lieutenant)

290. **his means:** i.e., perhaps, the **means** he uses to recover **his** lieutenancy

291. **strain:** insist upon; **entertainment:** i.e., (return to) service, i.e., reinstatement

294. **busy:** prying, inquisitive

295. **As . . . am:** i.e., **as I have** great **cause to fear** that **I am**

296. **hold her free:** i.e., regard her as guiltless

297. **Fear . . . government:** i.e., do not have doubts about my discreet behavior

300. **qualities:** sorts, kinds

300–301. **with a learned . . . dealings:** i.e., **with a** mind experienced in all kinds of **human** behavior

301. **haggard:** i.e., uncontrolled, unchaste (A **haggard** is a wild female falcon.)

302. **Though that:** i.e., even **though**; **jesses:** the straps that link a trained falcon's legs to its leash

303. **whistle her off . . . wind:** i.e., turn her loose, abandon her (A falcon being let loose was “whistled **down the wind**,” i.e., cast off to go with the wind.) (See picture, of a falconer with a trained falcon.)



A falconer with his tamed falcon. ([3.3.301](#)–4)

From George Turberville, *The booke of faulconrie or hauking* . . . (1575).

[304](#). **prey at fortune:** i.e., fend for herself; **Haply, for:** perhaps because

[305](#). **soft parts:** i.e., ingratiating qualities; **conversation:** i.e., way of dealing with others

[306](#). **chamberers:** gallants; **for:** because

[307](#). **vale:** valley

[308](#). **abused:** deceived

315. Prerogativèd . . . base: i.e., men of higher social rank do not enjoy exemption from wifely infidelity as much as do those of lower rank (**the base**)

317. this forkèd plague: i.e., the **plague** of wearing cuckolds' horns (See longer note to *cuckold*, [3.3.197](#) and [picture](#).)

318. do quicken: are conceived

319. false, heaven: Many editions include words from the quarto to make this phrase read "false, O then heaven." This addition regularizes the meter, but the line as it stands in the Folio is a strong poetic line.

3.3 (continued) When Desdemona enters and Othello complains of an aching head, Desdemona offers to bind his head with her handkerchief. As they exit, the handkerchief drops unnoticed by either of them. Emilia picks it up and gives it to Iago, who has often asked for it. Othello reenters and, now tormented by jealousy, threatens Iago with death unless he provides proof of Desdemona's infidelity.

322. generous: highborn, noble

324. to blame: i.e., blameworthy, at fault

326. upon my forehead: i.e., where cuckolds' horns supposedly grow

327. with watching: i.e., from lack of sleep

330. napkin: handkerchief

335. remembrance: i.e., token of **remembrance**, keepsake

336. wayward: "capriciously wilful" (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

337. token: keepsake

338. conjured: implored (accent on second syllable); **ever:** always

339. reserves it evermore: i.e., always keeps it

340. **work:** i.e., needlework, embroidery pattern; **ta'en out:** taken out (i.e., copied)

343. **nothing but to:** i.e., only; **fantasy:** fancy, whim

357. **to th' advantage:** i.e., fortunately

364. **purpose of import:** important **purpose**

367. **Be not acknown on 't:** i.e., do not admit to knowing about it

374. **conceits:** conceptions, ideas

375. **are . . . distaste:** i.e., scarcely offend the taste

376. **act:** action

377. **the mines of sulfur: Sulfur mines** were famous for the fact that once on fire, they seemed unquenchable.

379. **poppy:** i.e., opium; **mandragora:** the mandrake plant, which yields a narcotic syrup

380. **drowsy:** i.e., sleep-inducing, soporific

382. **owedst:** i.e., did own, did experience

385. **Avaunt:** i.e., away (used to send away witches and devils); **the rack:** an instrument of torture that tore the body apart (See picture.)



“Thou hast set me on the rack.” ([3.3.385](#))
From Girolamo Maggi, *De tintinnabulis liber* . . . (1689).

[386](#). **abused**: deceived

[394](#). **wanting**: missing

[397](#). **the general camp**: the whole army

[398](#). **Pioners**: pioneers; i.e., trench-diggers, the soldiers of lowest status in the army

[399](#). **So**: i.e., **so** long as

403. **trump:** i.e., trumpet

405. **royal:** i.e., splendid

406. **Pride:** i.e., proud display; **circumstance:** pageantry

407. **mortal engines:** i.e., deadly cannons **engines:** literally, machines

408. **Jove's . . . counterfeit:** imitate the sound of the thunderbolts thrown by Jove (See picture.)



“Jove’s dread clamors.” (3.3.408)

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Le vere e noue imagini . . .* (1615).

415. **answer:** i.e., be made to defend yourself against

418. **probation:** proof

422. **remorse:** repentance, pity

423. **On horror's . . . accumulate:** i.e., pile up **horrors** on the horror you have already committed

424. **amazed:** astounded (with horror)

426. **that:** i.e., the **slander** of Desdemona and **torture** of Othello (line 421)

429. **God b' wi' you:** **God** be with **you**, i.e., goodbye

430. **vice:** fault, failing

433. **profit:** i.e., profitable lesson

434. **sith:** since

435. **Nay, stay:** Iago probably has begun to exit, and Othello calls him back. **shouldst be honest:** (1) ought to tell the truth; (2) should **be**, if appearance and experience can be believed, an honorable man

437. **that:** i.e., **that** which

439. **honest:** chaste

442. **Dian's visage:** the face of Diana, goddess of chastity (See picture.)



Diana. ([3.3.442](#))

From Robert Whitcombe, *Janua divorum* . . . (1678).

[445](#). **Would:** i.e., if only

[447](#). **put it to you:** i.e., raised with you the question of Desdemona's fidelity

[448](#). **would be:** wish to be

[451](#). **supervisor:** spectator

[452](#). **topped:** "covered" in coition, i.e., "tupped" (See note to [1.1.98](#).)

456. bolster: This seems to mean “copulate.” (A bolster is a long pillow. It is possible that *to bolster* means “to share a bolster.”)

457. More: i.e., other

460–61. prime, hot, salt: lustful, lecherous

461. pride: heat

463. imputation and strong circumstances: i.e., a charge based on circumstantial evidence

3.3 (continued) Iago alleges that Cassio one night talked in his sleep about making love to Desdemona and that Cassio once wiped his beard with the lost handkerchief. Othello is convinced by this “proof” and vows to kill Desdemona; Iago agrees to kill Cassio. Othello then appoints Iago to the lieutenantcy.

467. office: duty

469. Pricked: spurred

477. gripe: i.e., grip, clutch

484. but: only

486. denoted . . . conclusion: i.e., indicated something that had actually happened

487. shrewd doubt: i.e., cause for keen suspicion

489. demonstrate: accent on second syllable

491. Yet: up to this point

492. yet: despite everything

494. Spotted with strawberries: i.e., embroidered with a strawberry pattern

502. the slave: probably Cassio, since this term of contempt was usually applied to males

505. **fond:** foolish

508. **hearted throne:** i.e., **throne** seated in the heart

509. **fraught:** load, burden

510. **aspics' tongues:** i.e., the **tongues** of poisonous snakes **aspics:** asps (See picture.)



An asp. (3.3.510)

From Edward Topsell, *The historie of serpents* . . . (1608).

514–17. **the Pontic Sea . . . Hellespont:** The Black Sea (**the Pontic Sea**) empties into the Sea of Marmora (**the Propontic**) and through the Dardanelles (the **Hellespont**) into the Aegean Sea. This outward current seems never to be reversed, never to feel “**retiring ebb**,” because the water that flows back into the Black Sea does so in a deep undercurrent far below the surface. Philemon Holland’s 1601 translation of Pliny’s *Historia Naturalis* reads “And the sea Pontus evermore floweth and runneth out into Propontis, but the sea never retireth back again within Pontus” (bk. 2, chap. 97). **compulsive:** onward-driving **due:** straight

518. **bloody:** bloodthirsty

520. **capable:** capacious, full

521–22. **marble heaven:** perhaps the sky, shining or streaked (with clouds) like marble; or, perhaps heaven, providing unrelenting justice, as hard as marble

524. **engage:** pledge

527. **clip:** embrace

528–29. **give up . . . wit:** turn over the activities of his mind

531. **remorse:** a solemn obligation

532. **What bloody business ever:** i.e., however **bloody** the **business**

535. **bounteous:** i.e., unrestrained

536. **put thee to 't:** i.e., **put** you **to** the test

541. **minx:** promiscuous woman, whore

ACT 3

Scene 4

3.4 Desdemona, still actively seeking to have Cassio reinstated, is worried about the loss of her handkerchief. Her anxiety about it increases when Othello asks her for it and then sternly rebukes her when she cannot produce it. Cassio approaches her, but she must now, because of Othello's anger, postpone her efforts on his behalf. As he waits, Bianca, his lover, appears. Cassio has found Desdemona's handkerchief in his room (placed there by Iago) and he asks Bianca to copy the embroidery work for him.

1. **sirrah:** term of address to a male social inferior

2. **lies:** dwells, lodges

5. **lies:** i.e., does not tell the truth

6. **'tis stabbing:** i.e., is asking to be stabbed

7. **Go to:** an expression of impatience

12. **devise:** i.e., make up

13. **lie in mine own throat:** i.e., tell a big lie

14. **edified:** instructed

19. **moved:** appealed to

21. **compass:** scope

23. **should I lose:** i.e., can I have lost

26. **crusadoes:** Portuguese gold coins, each stamped with a cross (*crux*); **but:** i.e., except that

32. **humors:** i.e., the bodily fluids then believed to cause such characteristics as jealousy (The person was governed by four **humors** that, ideally, were balanced within the body. The predominance of a particular humor could push a person toward anger or laziness or cheerfulness or melancholy. The word *humor* could refer either to the fluid or to the characteristic related to that fluid, but the idea of the sun drawing the humor from the person suggests that here the black bile that causes jealousy is the humor referred to.)

37. **hardness:** i.e., how difficult it is

44. **liberal:** generous (with a play on “dissolute,” “licentious”)

46. **sequester:** seclusion

47. **castigation:** corrective discipline or punishment; **exercise devout:** acts of devotion

50. **frank:** open, generous (with a suggestion again of dissoluteness)

53–54. **The hearts . . . hearts:** Othello responds to Desdemona’s “’twas that hand that gave away my heart” by saying that in the past, people’s **hearts** controlled the giving of **hands** (in marriage); now it is **hands** that (all too liberally) give away **hearts**.

56. **chuck:** a term of affection

57. **sent:** i.e., **sent** a messenger

58. **a salt and sorry rheum:** perhaps, a bad cold—though in Shakespeare “**salt rheum**” often refers to **salt** water (tears, or the

sea); **offends:** troubles

67. **charmer:** sorceress, enchantress

68. **She:** the enchantress; **her, she:** my mother

70. **amiable:** desirable

73. **hold her:** regard her as

74. **fancies:** loves

76. **her:** i.e., to my wife; **take heed on 't:** perhaps, **take** care of it

77. **Make it a darling:** i.e., cherish it

78. **perdition:** loss, ruin

81. **web:** weave, fabric

82–83. **A sybil . . . compasses:** i.e., a 200-year-old prophetess (See picture.) **course:** travel **compasses:** i.e., yearly circuits



A sibyl. ([3.4.82](#))

From Philippus de Barberiis, *Quattuor hic compressa* . . . (1495).

[84](#). **fury**: inspired state

[86](#). **mummy**: a preparation made from mummified bodies, thought to have medicinal or magic power

[87](#). **Conserved of**: prepared from

[90](#). **would**: i.e., I wish

[91](#). **Wherefore**: why

[92](#). **startingly**: i.e., impetuously, fitfully; **rash**: i.e., urgently

[93](#). **out o' th' way**: missing

[96](#). **an if**: i.e., if

101. **suit:** petition

106. **sufficient:** capable

115. **Zounds:** i.e., by Christ's wounds (a very strong oath)

119. **unhappy:** (1) sad; (2) unfortunate

121. **but:** merely

122. **hungerly:** i.e., hungrily

123. **belch us:** vomit us up

126. **importune:** accent on the second syllable

131. **office:** service, duty

132. **would not:** i.e., do not wish to

133. **mortal:** deadly

134. **nor . . . nor:** i.e., neither . . . nor

137. **But:** i.e., only

139–40. **shut myself . . . fortune's alms:** i.e., confine myself to some other career, taking what fortune gives me

142. **advocation:** i.e., advocacy

144. **favor:** appearance; **humor:** mood (though with the implication that the balance of the four humors in the body had altered) See note to 3.4.32.

147. **stood within the blank:** i.e., become the target **blank:** the white spot in the center of an archery target (See picture.)



Aiming at “the blank.” (3.4.147)

From Gilles Corrozet, *Hecatographie* . . . (1543).

148. free: frank, open

153. unquietness: perturbed state

158. moment: importance

161. Something . . . of state: i.e., affairs . . . of state

162. unhatched practice: hitherto undisclosed intrigue

163. Made demonstrable: i.e., shown, revealed

164. puddled: muddied

166. object: i.e., the **object** of **their** concern

167. let . . . and: i.e., when **our finger** hurts

167–69. it endues . . . Of pain: i.e., it makes the rest of the body hurt too **endues:** brings **healthful members:** healthy parts of the body

170. observancy: i.e., observant attention

171. **bridal**: wedding, or wedding feast; **Beshrew me**: curse me (a mild oath)

172. **unhandsome**: inexpert; i.e., clumsy

173. **Arraigning . . . soul**: i.e., bringing him into my soul's court of justice on the charge of being unkind (The legal metaphor continues in the next two lines with **suborned the witness** and **indicted**.)

175. **he's**: i.e., Othello is

177. **conception**: notion

178. **toy**: whim

182. **for they're**: because they are

183. **Begot upon**: procreated or engendered upon

187. **fit**: i.e., receptive

189 SD. **Bianca**: It has been suggested that **Bianca** is Cassio's longtime mistress, who has traveled with him to Cyprus. This is an attractive speculation.

190. **'Save**: i.e., God save (a commonplace greeting)

191–92. **What . . . home?**: i.e., **what** are **you** doing away **from home**

197. **Eightscore eight hours**: 160 plus **eight hours** (i.e., seven days and nights)

197–98. **lovers' absent . . . times**: i.e., an hour of a lover's absence is 160 times more tedious than all the hours on a clock's face (**dial**)

201. **pressed**: oppressed, weighed down

202. **more continue**: less interrupted

203. **Strike off . . . absence**: i.e., pay off my debt of absence **score**: a debt that was originally marked on a post by cutting or scoring it with

notches (with a pun on Bianca's use of **score** [in **eightscore**, [line 197](#)] to mean "twenty")

[204](#). **Take . . . out:** i.e., copy this embroidered pattern for me

[206](#). **friend:** i.e., mistress

[213](#). **remembrance:** keepsake

[217](#). **Ere . . . demanded:** i.e., before it is asked for by its owner

[218](#). **like:** i.e., likely

[221](#). **attend . . . on:** wait for

[222](#). **addition:** mark of honor

[223](#). **womaned:** i.e., with a woman

[227](#). **bring me:** i.e., go with me

[228](#). **at night:** i.e., tonight

[231](#). **be circumstanced:** i.e., accept your terms and conditions

ACT 4

Scene 1

[4.1](#) Iago continues to torment Othello with vivid descriptions of Desdemona's alleged sexual activity. Othello falls into an epileptic seizure. Iago next places Othello where he can see (but not hear) a conversation between Cassio and Iago about Bianca, telling Othello that the bawdy talk is about Cassio and Desdemona. Othello's fury grows.

Lodovico arrives from Venice with orders from the duke and senators that Othello return to Venice and that Cassio be appointed in his place. Othello strikes Desdemona in Lodovico's presence, then

rudely dismisses her, leaving in a jealous rage. Lodovico expresses his astonishment at the change in Othello.

9. hypocrisy . . . devil: i.e., if to seem good while doing evil **is hypocrisy against** God, then to seem evil while “meaning no harm” is **hypocrisy against the devil**

11–12. tempt heaven: i.e., put to the test God’s grace to keep them from sin

13. venial slip: pardonable fault

21. it . . . it: i.e., the reputation for honor . . . honor itself

25. raven: a bird that was itself a bad omen and that was believed to spread infection; **infectious:** infected

26. Boding: ominous

33. voluntary dotage: i.e., willing but foolish affection

34. Convinced or supplied them: conquered them (through **importunate suit** [[line 32](#)]) or sexually satisfied them (those in **voluntary dotage** [[line 33](#)])

46. belie: tell lies about

47. fulsome: obscene

48. To . . . hanged: Proverbial: “**Confess and be hanged.**”

50. invest: clothe

50–51. such shadowing passion: a reference to his body’s trembling **shadowing:** prefiguring, ominous **passion:** physical disorder

51. instruction: solid information

52. words: i.e., mere **words**

67. lethargy: morbid drowsiness; **his:** i.e., its

68. by and by: at once

71. straight: straightaway, immediately

72. great occasion: i.e., an important subject

74. mock me: i.e., in referring to my head, suggesting that I wear the horns of a cuckold

76. Would: i.e., I wish; **fortune:** fate (as a cuckold)

77. hornèd man: i.e., a cuckold (See [picture](#).)

79. civil: civilized

82–83. every bearded . . . you: i.e., like **you**, **every** married man is a cuckold (Iago compares married men to yoked oxen pulling a load.)
bearded: i.e., old enough to have a beard **yoked:** (1) married; (2) literally, under a yoke for horned oxen (See picture.) **draw:** pull



Marriage yoke ([4.1.82–83](#))

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britannia* . . . (1612).

84. **unproper beds:** **beds** not exclusively their own (because of their wives' lovers)

85. **peculiar:** exclusively theirs

87. **lip a wanton:** kiss an unchaste woman; **secure couch:** bed free of suspicion

92. **in a patient list:** within the bounds of calmness **list:** boundary, limit

95. **shifted him away:** got him out of the way

96. **laid . . . ecstasy:** i.e., provided good explanations for your trance

97. **anon:** soon

98. **encave:** hide

99. **fleers, gibes:** i.e., sneers

103. **cope:** (1) meet; (2) copulate with

104. **but . . . gesture:** i.e., just observe his manner; **patience:** be calm

105. **all in all in spleen:** i.e., consumed in anger

111. **keep time:** i.e., stay in control (a figure of speech from music)

112. **of:** i.e., about

113. **huswife:** hussy (pronounced "hussif") Iago, Cassio, and Emilia accuse Bianca of being a prostitute, but she fiercely denies this at 5.1.143–44.

120. **unbookish:** ignorant

121. **light:** frivolous

123. **worser:** i.e., worse; **addition:** title (i.e., **lieutenant**)

124. **want:** lack

127. **speed:** succeed

128. **caitiff:** wretch

134. **importunes:** accent on second syllable

135. **tell it o'er:** tell the whole story

139. **Roman:** i.e., perhaps, conqueror (through association with the word **triumph**, the name of the public celebrations of victory held by the ancient Romans)

140. **customer:** common woman, prostitute

140–41. **Prithee . . . wit:** i.e., please think charitably of my intelligence

141–42. **unwholesome:** tainted, corrupted

143. **They . . . wins:** Proverbial: “He laughs that wins.”

144. **cry:** common talk

146. **very:** true; **else:** otherwise

147. **scored:** struck, wounded

148. **the monkey's . . . giving out:** i.e., what Bianca says

149–50. **love and flattery:** i.e., **love** of me **and flattery** of herself

151. **he begins:** Cassio **begins**

152. **even:** i.e., just

155. **bauble:** i.e., silly woman

155–56. **falls thus . . . neck:** Neill (Oxford *Othello*) here adds the stage direction “*Cassio embraces Iago*,” noting that Cassio would be playing the part of Bianca and Iago would stand in for Cassio.

158. **imports:** signifies

165. **Before me:** a mild oath in imitation of “before God”

166. **such another fitchew:** i.e., such a prostitute (Literally, **fitchew** means polecat.) For such language in this play, see note to 4.2.142

169. **Let:** i.e., may; **dam:** mother (Proverbially, the “devil’s **dam**” was more evil than **the devil.**)

171–72. **take out:** copy

172. **piece of work:** i.e., story

175. **hobbyhorse:** i.e., mistress

176. **on ’t:** i.e., from it

178. **should:** i.e., must

180–81. **when . . . next prepared for:** perhaps, **when** I **next** invite **you**, which will be never

187. **fain:** gladly

189. **Go to:** an expression of impatience

196. **prizes:** regards

204. **I strike it:** Neill (Oxford *Othello*) adds the stage direction “*He beats his breast.*”

207. **your way:** i.e., the **way** you should think

211. **wit and invention:** intelligence and inventiveness

214. **gentle:** (1) noble; (2) kind; **condition:** character, disposition, cast of mind

215. **gentle:** pliant, yielding to pressure, easily managed (said of animals)

218. **fond over:** foolish about, doting on

219. **patent:** permission, license

219–20. **touch, comes near:** affects

221. **messes:** pieces (literally, individual servings of food)

227. **unprovide my mind:** i.e., make me unwilling

229. **even the:** i.e., the very

232. **his undertaker:** i.e., the one who undertakes to kill him

237. **This:** i.e., this delegation

240. **With . . . heart:** perhaps an emphatic “amen” to Lodovico’s greeting

242. **instrument of their pleasures:** i.e., the letter that contains their wishes or orders (He presumably brings the paper to his lips.)

244. **signior:** i.e., sir

248. **fall’n:** i.e., befallen, happened

249. **unkind:** unfortunate; unnatural, awkward

254. **in:** i.e., with

255. **’twixt:** i.e., between

257. **atone:** reconcile

260. **wise:** sane

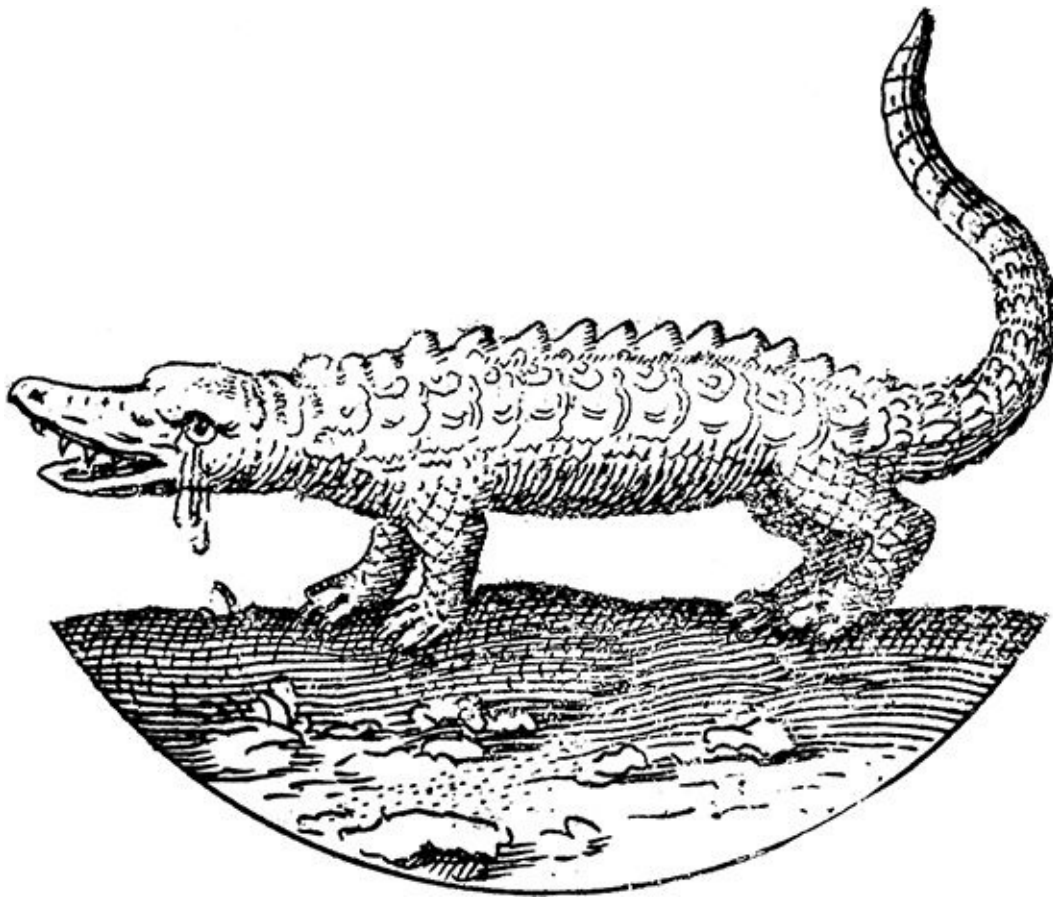
264. **Deputing . . . government:** i.e., appointing **Cassio** as governor in Othello’s place

265. **troth:** faith; **on ’t:** i.e., of it

268. **mad:** perhaps, foolish, or, perhaps, crazy (in admitting your love for Cassio)

276. **teem with:** prolifically spawn

277. falls: lets fall; **crocodile:** a creature thought to shed hypocritical tears (See picture.)



Crocodile tears. (**4.1.276**–77)
From Jacob Typot, *Symbola diuina* . . . (1652).

286. turn: i.e., **turn** back

287, 286. turn: (1) return; (2) change (i.e., become unfaithful)

291. well-painted: i.e., nicely counterfeited, faked; **passion:** emotion

293. anon: i.e., soon

295. place: official position

297–98. Goats and monkeys: Othello echoes Iago's line at **3.3.460**, where he refers to Cassio and Desdemona as "as prime as **goats**, as hot as **monkeys**," with *prime* and *hot* meaning "lecherous."

300. **all in all sufficient:** i.e., capable **in all** respects

301. **virtue:** (1) manliness; (2) integrity

306. **safe:** sound, sane

307. **that:** i.e., **that** which; **censure:** judgment, perhaps condemnation, of

308. **might:** This word shifts meaning within the line, first alluding to what Othello **might** have already become, then to what he ought to be.

309. **would:** wish

313. **use:** habit

314. **blood:** emotions

320. **courses will denote:** i.e., conduct will reveal

ACT 4

Scene 2

4.2 Othello questions Emilia about Cassio and Desdemona's relationship, acting as if Emilia is the mistress of a brothel and Desdemona one of her prostitutes. Othello denounces Desdemona to her face as a whore. Desdemona turns for help to Iago, who reassures her.

Roderigo, protesting to Iago that his gifts to Desdemona have won him no favor from her, threatens to ask for the return of the gifts. Iago counters this threat by telling Roderigo that Desdemona will leave for Mauritania with Othello unless Roderigo can delay them. The best way to do this, says Iago, is by killing Cassio.

5. made up: formed

10. **mask**: conventional public attire for women of the time

13. **durst**: dare; **honest**: chaste, faithful

14. **at stake**: i.e., as my bet; **other**: i.e., otherwise

15. **abuse**: deceive; wrong

17. **Let . . . curse**: i.e., may God punish him with **the curse** he laid on the serpent in Genesis 3.14 (“ . . . upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life”)

19. **happy**: fortunate (in his wife)

22. **She**: i.e., Emilia

22–23. **she’s . . . much**: i.e., the simplest brothel keeper can tell the same kind of story

24. **closet**: private room; or, cabinet, chest; or, a very private space

32. **Some . . . function**: i.e., do your job (as a brothel keeper)

34. **procreants**: i.e., those who procreate, copulate

36. **mystery**: trade; **dispatch**: hurry

43. **Lest**: for fear that

51. **heavy**: sorrowful

52. **motive**: cause

53. **haply**: perhaps

54. **calling back**: i.e., being called **back** to Venice

58. **try**: test

64–65. **A fixèd . . . finger at**: The image may be that of Othello as like a number on the dial of a clock, with the hand that points to him moving so slowly that it does not seem to move at all. He seems

forever to be an object of scorn to the world. **time of scorn:** i.e., scornful **time**, or scornful world

67. **there:** i.e., his love for Desdemona; **garnered up:** stored

69. **fountain:** fountainhead, spring

71. **cistern:** i.e., pool of foul standing water (cesspool)

72. **knot and gender:** i.e., couple and engender

72–74. **turn . . . hell:** i.e., let even **rose-lipped Patience** change to pale grimness **cherubin:** angel (Cherubins were often depicted as rosy-faced, smiling infants with wings.)

76–77. **summer flies . . . blowing:** The picture drawn here is of the most flagrant sexual promiscuity. **shambles:** slaughterhouse **quicken:** become “quick,” i.e., pregnant **even with blowing:** as soon as they are themselves deposited as eggs

81. **ignorant sin have I:** i.e., **sin have I** ignorantly (or unknowingly); **committed:** perpetuated (This word could also mean “to commit adultery or fornication” [as in “commit not with a man’s sworn spouse,” *King Lear* 3.4.87–88]. Othello seems to assume this meaning at lines 83, 84, 87, and 91.)

82. **fair paper:** i.e., Desdemona

84. **commoner:** prostitute

88. **it:** i.e., what you **committed** (line 87); **moon winks:** i.e., **the moon** (in the person of the moon goddess, Diana) shuts its eyes (Diana is also the goddess of chastity. See picture.)

90. **mine:** subterranean passage (In mythology the winds were said to retire into caves within the earth.)

91. **will not:** refuses to

92. **Impudent:** insolent; shameless

96. **vessel:** body (See 1 Thessalonians 4.3–5: “ye should abstain from fornication . . . every one of you should know how to possess his **vessel** [marginal note: ‘That is, his body, which is profaned by such filthiness’] in holiness and honor, and not in the lust of concupiscence.”)

103. **cry you mercy:** i.e., beg your pardon

104. **took you for:** mistook **you for**, thought **you** were

108. **done our course:** i.e., finished our business

111. **conceive:** think

121. **go by water:** i.e., be said with tears

125. **meet:** proper

126. **been behaved:** i.e., **behaved** myself, acted; **stick:** fasten

127. **opinion:** i.e., criticism; **least misuse:** smallest misbehavior

134. **bewhored:** i.e., called her whore

135. **despite:** contempt, spite; **heavy:** (1) grievous; (2) violent

141. **beggar in his drink:** drunk **beggar**

142. **callet:** female companion (**Callet**, like “hussy,” “strumpet,” “minx,” “harlot,” “harlotry,” and “whore,” is a term of abuse attached to women accused of having sex outside of marriage. Some of these terms, along with “prostitute,” “commoner,” and “customer,” are also applied to women who have sex in exchange for money. All of these words are used by the men in this play to attack the women. Even Emilia uses such language about Bianca in 5.1.)

151. **Beshrew:** curse; **trick:** foolishness, whim

153. **I will be hanged if:** i.e., **I will** bet my life that; **eternal:** infernal, damned

154. **busy:** meddlesome

155. **cogging**: fraudulent; **cozening**: deceiving

159. **halter**: hangman's noose

162. **What form?**: i.e., in **what** way

162–63. **What likelihood?**: i.e., **what** indications are there

164. **abused**: deceived; injured

165. **scurvy**: vile

166. **that**: i.e., I pray **that**; **companions**: fellows (a contemptuous term); **unfold**: disclose

170. **Speak within door**: i.e., **speak** more temperately

171. **squire**: fellow

172. **the seamy side without**: i.e., **the** ugly **side** out, inside out (referring to the seams in a piece of clothing)

181. **discourse**: course

182, 184. **that**: i.e., if

184. **yet**: still

187. **Comfort forswear**: i.e., may (heavenly) **comfort** forsake

189. **defeat**: destroy

192. **addition**: title, name

193. **world's mass of vanity**: i.e., every pleasure in the world

194. **humor**: mood

195. **does him offense**: i.e., annoys him

200. **stays the meat**: i.e., are waiting for supper

206–7. **daff'st me . . . device**: put me off **with some** trick

208. **conveniency:** convenient occasion (to court Desdemona)

209. **of hope:** i.e., for increasing my hopes

210. **put up:** i.e., accept, **put up** with

216. **naught:** nothing

219. **votaress:** nun

221. **comforts:** encouragement; **sudden respect:** immediate regard

226. **fopped:** cheated, deceived

232. **satisfaction:** i.e., in a duel

233. **have said:** i.e., **have** spoken, **said** what you **have** to say

235. **intendment of doing:** i.e., I intend to do

240. **directly:** honestly

250. **engines for:** plots against

251–52. **within reason and compass:** i.e., reasonably possible **compass:** bounds, scope

254. **depute:** i.e., appoint

257.



“Mauritania.” (4.2.257)

From Lucan, *Lucan's Pharsalia* . . . (1718).

258–59. **abode be lingered:** stay **be** extended

259–60. **wherein . . . determinate:** i.e., and no accident can be **so** conclusive in extending his stay

261. **How:** i.e., what

262. **uncapable of:** i.e., incapable of taking

265. **profit:** benefit

266. **harlotry:** prostitute, whore

269. **fall out:** happen

272. **amazed:** astounded, bewildered

274. **high:** i.e., fully, quite

275. **grows to waste:** i.e., is already wasting away, or, perhaps, is being wasted by our inactivity

276. **further reason:** i.e., more justification

ACT 4

Scene 3

4.3 Othello, walking with Lodovico, orders Desdemona to go to bed and to dismiss Emilia. As Emilia helps Desdemona prepare for bed, they discuss marital infidelity, with Desdemona arguing that no woman would be unfaithful to her husband and Emilia arguing that women have the same desires as men do.

7–8. **be returned:** i.e., return

12. **incontinent:** immediately

19. **would:** wish

20. **approve:** commend, praise

21. **stubbornness:** harshness; **checks:** reprimands

22. **unpin me:** In performance, it is sometimes Desdemona's hair and sometimes her clothing that is unpinned. **have grace and favor in them:** i.e., are attractive to me

24. **All's one:** all right; or, it doesn't matter

31. **her fortune:** i.e., what happened to her

33–34. **I have . . . hang:** i.e., I can barely restrain myself from hanging

38. **proper:** admirable, worthy (Emilia, line 39, responds as if Desdemona had meant "good-looking," another meaning of this word.)

41. **would:** i.e., who would

42. **nether:** lower

44. **willow:** "a symbol of grief for unrequited love or loss of a mate" (*Oxford English Dictionary*) See picture.



A willow. (4.3.44)

From Henry Peacham, *Minerua Britanna* . . . (1612).

52. **Lay by these:** i.e., put **these** things aside

54. **hie thee:** i.e., hurry; **anon:** right away

56. **approve:** commend

61. **couch:** lie down

64. **bode:** forebode, portend

68. **abuse:** deceive; ill-use

69. **In such gross kind:** i.e., **in such** an obscene way (by committing adultery)

74. **by this heavenly light:** a mild oath (which Emilia treats as if it means “in the daylight”)

78. **price:** prize

79. **vice:** fault

82. **Marry:** i.e., indeed

83. **joint ring:** puzzle ring, made up of two or three rings that fit together; a love token; **measures of lawn:** i.e., lengths of fine linen

84–85. **petty exhibition:** trivial gift

85. **'Uds:** i.e., God's

91. **having:** possessing; **for:** i.e., in exchange for

92. **might:** i.e., could

95. **to th' vantage:** i.e., in addition

96. **store:** populate; **played:** wagered (with, perhaps, a pun on “played” as “engaged in sexual sport”)

98. **they:** i.e., husbands; **slack:** neglect; **duties:** obligations to their wives (including sexual)

101. **Throwing:** i.e., imposing

102. **scant:** cut back; **having:** allowance; **in despite:** i.e., out of spite or malice

103. **galls:** i.e., capacities for resentment; **grace:** goodness, forgiveness

104. **revenge:** i.e., appetite for **revenge**

105. **sense:** i.e., the five senses; **They:** i.e., wives

108. **they:** i.e., husbands

109. **change:** i.e., exchange; **sport:** (1) fun; (2) amorous play

110. **affection:** passion, lust

111. **frailty:** human weakness

114. **use:** treat; **Else:** otherwise

116–17. **God . . . mend:** i.e., may **God** enable me to find ways, not of learning to do wrong from imitating wrongdoers, but of learning to improve myself by departing from their example (Instead of learning adultery from wayward husbands, Desdemona prays to learn chastity instead.) **uses:** ways, habits

ACT 5

Scene 1

5.1 In the dark streets of Cyprus, Roderigo attacks Cassio, who, uninjured, stabs Roderigo. Iago then wounds Cassio in the leg. Othello, hearing Cassio cry out, thinks that Iago has killed him, and departs to murder Desdemona. Iago then kills the wounded Roderigo. While Iago, Lodovico, and Gratiano tend to Cassio, Bianca arrives. Iago accuses her of being a whore and of engineering the plot against Cassio that led to his injury.

1. **bulk:** something projecting out from a building, perhaps a stall;
Straight: immediately

3. **bare:** unsheathed; **put:** thrust

7. **miscarry:** fail

12. **quat:** contemptuous term for a youngster (literally, pimple or small boil); **to the sense: to the** quick

15. **Live Roderigo:** i.e., if **Roderigo** lives

17. **bobbed:** took by deception

22. **unfold me:** i.e., disclose my lies

26. **But:** i.e., except; **my coat is better:** Perhaps Cassio simply means his coat is thicker or tougher, but perhaps he means that he wears leather or metal armor under his coat.

27. **make proof of:** test

32. **even:** just

34. **he:** i.e., Cassio; **brave:** fine, worthy

36. **Minion:** This term, here referring to Desdemona, could mean both “darling” and “hussy.”

37. **unblest fate:** i.e., damnation; **hies:** hurries onward

38. **Forth of:** i.e., out from

42. **watch:** watchman; **passage** i.e., people passing

43. **'Tis some mischance:** i.e., there's something wrong

47. **heavy:** gloomy, overcast

49. **in to:** i.e., near

52. **one:** i.e., **one** who; **in his shirt:** i.e., perhaps, in his night attire; or, without his outer garments

54. **cries on:** shouts

62. **What:** i.e., who

63. **spoiled, undone:** seriously injured, destroyed

67. **make:** i.e., get

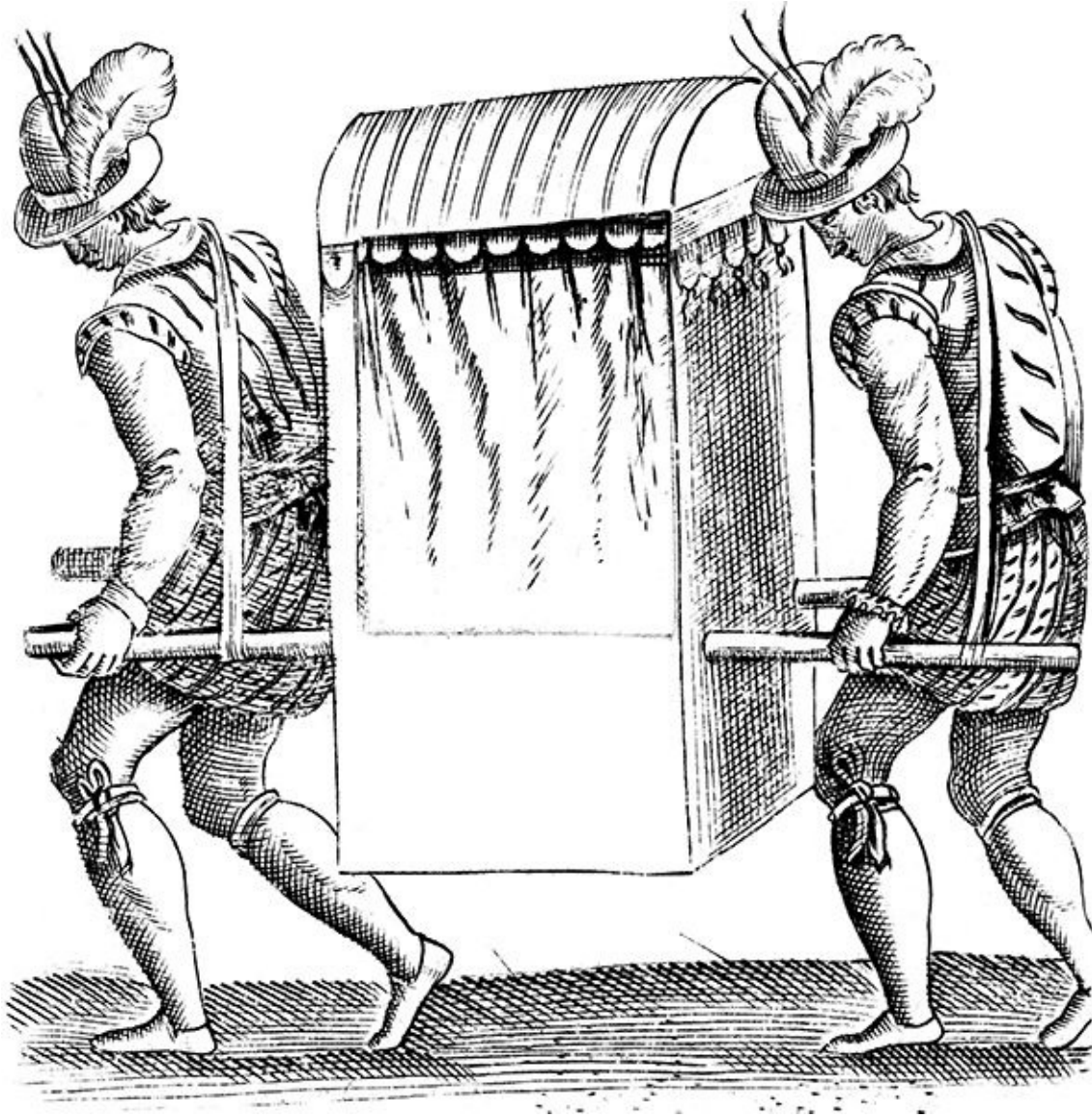
79. **prove us:** find us to be by experience; **praise:** appraise, value

82. **I cry you mercy:** i.e., I beg your pardon

92. **notable:** notorious

92–93. **may . . . should be:** i.e., do **you** know **who they** are

96. **chair:** presumably a sedan **chair**, carried on poles (See picture.)



A chair. ([5.1.96](#), [113](#), [116](#))

From Pietro Bertelli, *Diuersarum nationum habitus* . . . (1594–96).

[99](#). **trash:** i.e., Bianca

[110](#). **accidents:** events

[116](#). **said:** i.e., done

[118](#). **For:** i.e., as for

[119](#). **Save you your labor:** i.e., do not take the trouble (Perhaps Bianca is tending to Cassio; or, perhaps, Iago is suggesting that Bianca is feigning sorrow for Cassio's injury.)

126. **gastness:** dread, terror

127. **stare:** treated here as perhaps a sign of guilt (See [line 129.](#))

130. **out of use:** i.e., no longer able to form words

138. **know of:** i.e., find out from

141. **charge:** command

143. **honest:** chaste

146. **see . . . dressed:** i.e., **see** that (he) gets his wounds **dressed**

147. **tell 's:** i.e., **tell** us

151. **fordoes:** undoes, destroys

ACT 5

Scene 2

5.2 Desdemona is asleep in bed when Othello enters. He kisses her and wakes her and once again charges her with infidelity. Over her protests of innocence, he smothers her. When Emilia comes to tell Othello about the violence in the streets, he acknowledges the killing, telling her that Iago had informed him of Desdemona's infidelity. Emilia's cries of "Murder" bring Iago, Montano, and Gratiano. Iago, under pressure, admits accusing Desdemona. When Emilia discloses the truth about the handkerchief, Othello tries, unsuccessfully, to kill Iago, and Iago kills Emilia. Othello, aware of his enormous error in regarding Desdemona as unfaithful, stabs himself, falling dead on the bed beside Emilia and Desdemona. Iago is taken away to be tortured and killed.

5. monumental: i.e., used in making monuments

6. else: otherwise

8. flaming minister: i.e., the torch that serves me

10. Should I: i.e., if I should; **But once:** i.e., but if I once

11. cunning'st: most artfully created; **excelling:** superior, surpassing

12. Promethean heat: Shakespeare seems to be combining two separate Greek myths about Prometheus, one in which Prometheus gave fire to humankind and one in which he was the creator of humankind. **heat:** fire; spark of life

13. relume: relight

18. Justice: Justice is often depicted as a woman in a blindfold with a set of scales in one hand and a sword in the other. (See picture.)



Justice. (5.2.18)

From Thomas Peyton, *The glasse of time* . . . (1620).

22. fatal: deadly

23. cruel tears: i.e., tears that show no pity

30. bethink yourself: i.e., think; **crime:** sin

32. **Solicit for it straight:** i.e., pray for heavenly grace at once
33. **Alack:** i.e., alas
35. **walk by:** i.e., stand aside
- 36, 37. **would not:** do not wish to
37. **forfend:** forbid
54. **portents:** omens
55. **point on me:** i.e., predict my future
66. **presently:** immediately
68. **each article: each** item or count in the charge against you (a legal term)
69. **conception:** idea, thought
70. **groan withal:** i.e., **groan** with (Coupled with the use of **conception** a line earlier, **groan** suggests a woman in labor to deliver a child she has conceived.)
74. **Offend:** wrong
- 75–76. **with such . . . love:** i.e., **with** the **love** that **heaven** authorizes us to feel for all humankind
76. **token:** i.e., love **token**, keepsake
77. **in 's:** i.e., in his
78. **stone my heart:** turn **my heart** to stone
84. **confess:** testify to
85. **confessed:** i.e., owned up
87. **used:** i.e., **used** sexually
92. **ta'en order for 'it:** i.e., seen to that

95. **stomach:** appetite

96. **undone:** destroyed

106 SD. **within:** i.e., offstage

115. **By and by:** soon

116. **'Tis like:** i.e., probably; **she comes:** Emilia comes

118. **she:** i.e., Emilia

119. **she:** i.e., Desdemona

125. **yawn:** i.e., open up with an earthquake; **alteration:** i.e., this changed condition

129. **Soft, by and by:** i.e., wait a moment; **curtains:** i.e., bed-curtains

135. **error:** i.e., wandering out of the sphere in which it was thought to travel around the Earth

136. **wont:** accustomed to

137. **mad:** lunatic (*luna:* moon, in Latin)

147. **Out:** an interjection of dismay or lamentation

148. **Help:** Emilia has now opened the bed curtains closed by Othello at line 129



“Burning hell.” (5.2.159)

From Jan David, *Veridicus Christianus* . . . (1601).

162. **folly**: wantonness, wickedness

163. **belie**: tell lies about her

164. **false as water**: Proverbial: as unstable (**false**) **as water**

167. **top**: cover in coition (a term used for animals); **else**: i.e., if you doubt me

168. **were**: i.e., would be

169. **But**: i.e., except

176. **chrysolite**: a name once given such precious stones as topaz (Pliny’s *Natural History* [trans. Philemon Holland, 1601] reports that the Egyptian king Ptolomæus Philadelphus had a statue of his wife Arsinoë carved from a huge chrysolite stone.)

179. **told me on**: informed me about

183. **iterance**: repetition

185. **made mocks with**: i.e., **made** a mockery of

192. **bargain**: contract, purchase (i.e., her marriage); or, perhaps, what she acquired in the marriage (i.e., Othello himself)

197. **Peace, you were best**: i.e., you’d better be silent

199. **gull**: dupe, gullible person

213. **apt**: plausible, credible

219. **Charm**: i.e., silence

220. **bound**: compelled, morally obligated

222. **forfend**: forbid

223. **set . . . on**: incited **the murder**

229. **then:** Emilia is perhaps referring to her speech at 4.2.153–56.

231. **charge:** order

232. **leave:** permission

233. **proper:** fitting

240. **uncle:** i.e., Gratiano, brother to Brabantio

243. **shows:** looks, seems

246. **Shore his old thread in twain:** cut in two the **thread** of **his** life (In classical mythology, life is represented as a thread spun by Clotho, measured out by Lachesis, and cut by Atropos. These three are the Fates. See picture.)



The Fates. ([5.2.246](#))

From Vincenzo Cartari, *Imagines deorum* . . . (1581).

[247](#). **turn:** deed

[248](#). **better angel:** i.e., guardian angel

[249](#). **reprobance:** reprobation, damnation

[253](#). **gratify:** reward

[254](#). **recognizance:** token, emblem

261. liberal as the north: i.e., as freely as the blowing of the north wind

269. fortune: chance

278. coxcomb: i.e., fool (literally, a fool's cap)

281–82. Are . . . thunder?: i.e., has Jove, the mythological thundergod, **no stones** to use to strike down Iago? Does Jove need them all **for thunder?** (Jove is sometimes portrayed as attacking people with thunderbolts. See [picture](#).)

282. Precious: complete, utter

287. recovered: got hold of

288. without: from the outside; **him:** Othello

292. whipster: slight, contemptible person

293. honor outlive honesty: i.e., the reputation of being honorable outlast honor itself

295. bode: forebode, portend

296–97. play . . . music: Proverbially, swans were said to sing at their deaths.

303. the ice brook's temper: i.e., tempered or hardened in ice-cold water

305. dear: i.e., dearly

308. naked: i.e., weaponless

315. your stop: the obstruction you are capable of providing

318. butt: terminal point, boundary

319. sea-mark: the boundary or limit of the flow of the sea (This word could also refer to a landmark or a beacon.) **utmost:** furthestmost

320. go back: i.e., move away from me; **lost:** groundless

321. Man but a rush: i.e., wield no more than a bulrush

323. ill-starred: doomed through the malign influence of the stars

324. at compt: i.e., at the Last Judgment (See picture.)



The Last Judgment, or “compt.” (5.2.324)

From *A Series of Antient . . . Paintings . . . on the Walls of the Chapel . . . at Stratford upon Avon* (etched and published in 1807 by Thomas Fisher).

326–27. Cold . . . like thy chastity: Shakespeare often links **chastity** with coldness, sometimes setting it in opposition to the heat of lust, sometimes connecting it with Diana, goddess of **chastity** and of “the cold fruitless moon” (as he calls it in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 1.1.75). See [picture](#) of Diana.

331. steep-down: precipitous

336. I look . . . feet: i.e., to see if he has the cloven **feet** reputed to mark a devil ([line 337](#))

343. practice: deception, machinations

347. **naught:** nothing

348. **part:** partly

353. **demi-devil:** i.e., half-human, half-devil

361. **befall'n:** happened

365. **imports:** concerns

369. **gross:** glaring, flagrant

370. **discontented paper:** i.e., letter expressing discontent

373. **belike:** probably

375. **caitiff:** wretch

379. **even:** just

381. **wrought to his desire:** i.e., worked out in accord with his wishes

385. **Brave:** challenge, defy; **whereon:** i.e., for which cause

386. **cast:** cashiered; **he:** i.e., Roderigo

388. **set him on:** incited him

391. **For:** i.e., as **for**

393. **hold him:** i.e., keep him alive

394. **close prisoner rest:** i.e., remain a closely guarded **prisoner**

395. **Till that:** i.e., until

397. **Soft you:** i.e., wait a minute

401. **unlucky:** unfortunate

403. **aught:** i.e., anything

405. **being wrought:** i.e., having been stirred up or worked up

406. **Perplexed:** confused, tormented

407. **base:** vile; **Judean:** This is the reading of the First Folio, where it is spelled *Iudean*; the First Quarto reads *Indian*. Very probably one of these readings is a printing or scribal error, since the spellings differ, essentially, only in the second letter (*u/n*). It is impossible to be certain which is the error, which the correct reading.

The word **Judean** would have Othello likening himself to Judas, who, in betraying Jesus, threw **away “a pearl of great price”** (as Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven, Matthew 13.46). The word *Indian* would have him comparing himself to someone then regarded as a primitive having no knowledge of the value of the jewel he carelessly discards.

408. **Richer:** i.e., worth more; **subdued:** i.e., **subdued** by tears

411. **Arabian trees:** i.e., myrrh trees

412. **medicinal:** i.e., medicinal

414. **malignant:** evil

418. **period:** termination, conclusion (of his speech and of his life)

420. **ere:** before

424. **Spartan:** i.e., cruel

425. **fell:** fierce, cruel

427. **object:** spectacle

428. **keep:** guard

430. **succeed on:** i.e., fall to

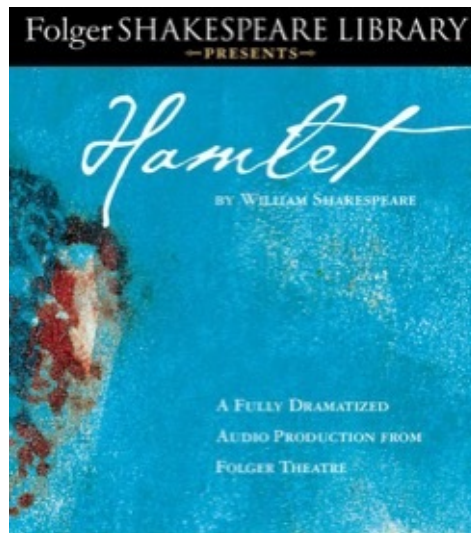
432. **censure:** judgment and/or sentence

434. **straight:** i.e., straightaway, immediately

435. **heavy:** woeful, sorrowful

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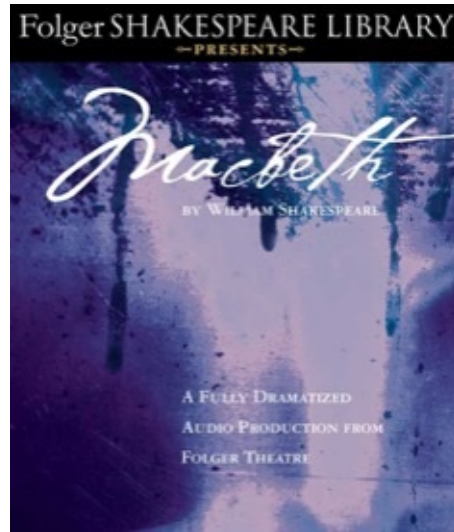
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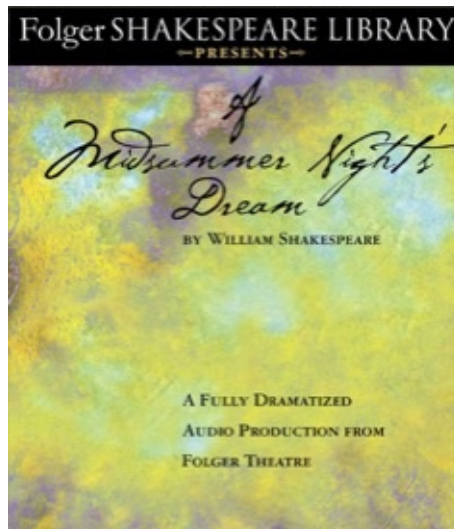
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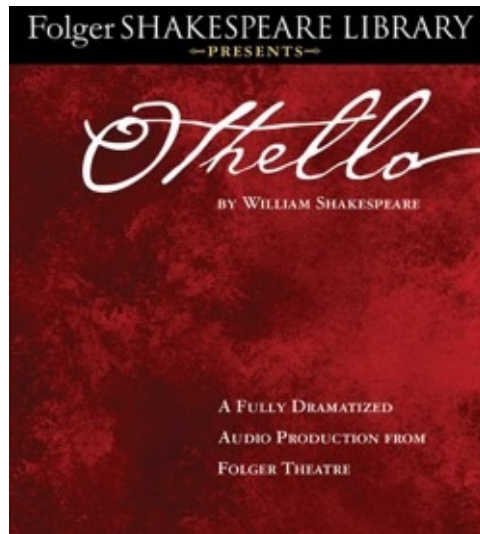
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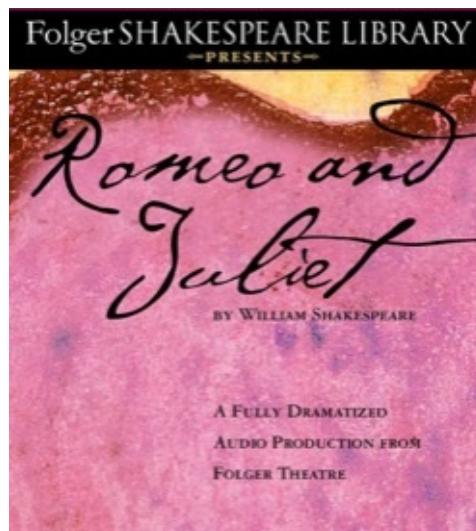
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