

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 1, Scene 1

*Enter RODMERIGO and IAGO**RODERIGO and IAGO enter.***RODERIGO**

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Despise me
If I do not. Three great ones of the city
10 (In personal suit to make me his lieutenant)
Off-capped to him, and by the faith of man
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.
But he (as loving his own pride and purposes)
Evades them with a bombast circumstance
15 Horribly stuffed with epithets of war,
And in conclusion
Nonsuits my mediators. For "Certes," says he,
"I have already chose my officer."
And what was he?
20 Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine
(A fellow almost damned in a fair wife)
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
25 More than a spinster—unless the bookish theoretic,

RODERIGO

Come on, don't tell me that. I don't like it that you
knew about this, Iago. All this time I've thought
you were such a good friend that I've let you
spend my money as if it was yours.

IAGO

Damn it, you're not listening to me! I never
dreamed this was happening—if you find out I
did, you can go ahead and hate me.

RODERIGO

You told me you hated him.

IAGO

I do hate him, I swear. Three of Venice's most
important noblemen took their hats off to him and
asked him humbly to make me his lieutenant, the
second in command. And I know my own worth
well enough to know I deserve that position. But
he wants to have things his own way, so he
sidesteps the issue with a lot of military talk and
refuses their request. "I've already chosen my
lieutenant," he says. And who does he choose? A
guy who knows more about numbers than
fighting! This guy from Florence named Michael
Cassio. He has a pretty wife but he can't even
control her. And he's definitely never commanded
men in battle. He's got no more hands-on
knowledge of warfare than an old woman—
unless you count what he's read in books,

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 2

Wherein the togged consuls can propose
As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th' election
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
30 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
Christian and heathen, must be beleee'd and calmed
By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster
He (in good time) must his lieutenant be
And I, bless the mark, his Moorship's ancient.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

which any peace-lover can do. His military
understanding is all theory, no practice. But
Cassio's been chosen over me. My career is cut
short by some bookkeeper, even though the
general saw my fighting skills first-hand in
Rhodes and Cyprus. This accountant is now
lieutenant, while I end up as the Moor's flag-
bearer.

RODERIGO

By God, I'd rather be his executioner.

IAGO

And there's nothing I can do about it. That's the
curse of military service. You get promoted when
someone likes you, not because you're next in
line. Now, you tell me: should I feel loyal to the
Moor?

Original Text

To love the Moor.

RODERIGO

I would not follow him then.

IAGO

O sir, content you.

I follow him to serve my turn upon him.

- 45 We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly followed. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave
That (doting on his own obsequious bondage)
Wears out his time much like his master's ass
50 For naught but provender, and when he's old,
cashiered.
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves
55 And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them. And when they have lined
their coats,
Do themselves homage. These fellows have some
soul,

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 3

And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.

- 60 In following him, I follow but myself.
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end.
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
65 In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at. I am not what I am.

RODERIGO

What a full fortune does the Thick-lips owe
If he can carry't thus!

IAGO

Call up her father.

- 70 Rouse him. Make after him, Poison his delight,
Proclaim him in the streets. Incense her kinsmen,
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,
Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
75 As it may lose some color.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

- 80 What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

Modern Text

RODERIGO

If you don't like him you should quit.

IAGO

No, calm down. I'm serving under him to take
advantage of him. We can't all be masters, and
not all masters should be followed. Look at all the
devoted servants who work for their masters their
whole lives for nothing but their food, and then
when they get old they're terminated. They ought
to be whipped for being so stupid. But then
there's another kind of servant who looks dutiful
and devoted, but who's really looking out for
himself. By pretending to serve their lords, these
men get rich, and when they've saved up enough
they can be their own masters. Guys like that
have soul, and that's the kind of guy I am. Let me
tell

you, as sure as your name's Roderigo, if I were
the Moor I wouldn't want to be Iago. I may seem
to love and obey him, but in fact, I'm just serving
him to get what I want. If my outward appearance
started reflecting what I really felt, soon enough
I'd be wearing my heart on my sleeve for birds to
peck at. No, it's better to hide it. I'm not who I
appear to be.

RODERIGO

Thick-lips sure is lucky if he can pull this off!

IAGO

Let's shout up to Desdemona's father, wake him,
pester him, spoil his happiness, spread rumors
about him in the streets, enrage his relatives, and
irritate him endlessly. However real his happiness
is, it will vanish in light of this.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Do it, and shout like the city's on fire.

RODERIGO

Hey, Brabantio! Signor Brabantio, hey!

Original Text

IAGO

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

*Enter **BRABANTIO**, above*

Modern Text

IAGO

Wake up, Brabantio! Wake up! Thieves! Thieves!
Check on your daughter, your house, your
money! Thieves! Thieves!

***BRABANTIO** enters, above.*

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 4

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

Signior, is all your family within?

IAGO

Are your doors locked?

BRABANTIO

Why, wherefore ask you this?

IAGO

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

90 Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise,
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
Arise, I say!

BRABANTIO

What, have you lost your wits?

RODERIGO

95 Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

BRABANTIO

Not I. What are you?

RODERIGO

My name is Roderigo.

BRABANTIO

The worser welcome.

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

RODERIGO

105 Sir, sir, sir—

BRABANTIO

What's the reason for this horrible shouting?
What's the matter?

RODERIGO

Sir, is everyone in your family at home?

IAGO

Are your doors locked?

BRABANTIO

Why are you asking me that?

IAGO

For God's sake, sir, you've been robbed. Get
dressed. Your heart's going to break. It's like half
your soul's been ripped out. At this very minute
an old black ram is having sex with your little
white lamb. Wake up, wake up, ring a bell and
wake up all the snoring citizens. If you wait too
long you'll have black grandchildren. Get up, I tell
you!

BRABANTIO

Are you crazy?

RODERIGO

Do you recognize my voice, noble lord?

BRABANTIO

Not me. Who are you?

RODERIGO

My name's Roderigo.

BRABANTIO

I told you not to hang around my house. I've
already told you quite plainly that my daughter
will never marry you. Now you come here drunk
to make trouble and startle me out of a sound
sleep?

RODERIGO

Sir, sir, sir—

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 5

BRABANTIO

But thou must needs be sure
My spirits and my place have in their power
To make this bitter to thee.

RODERIGO**BRABANTIO**

You know I'm powerful enough to make you pay
for this.

RODERIGO

Original Text

Patience, good sir.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not serve
God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to do
you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll have
your daughter covered with a Barbary horse. You'll
have your nephews neigh to you. You'll have
coursers for cousins and gennets for Germans.

BRABANTIO

What profane wretch art thou?

IAGO

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

BRABANTIO

Thou art a villain!

IAGO

You are a senator!

BRABANTIO

This thou shalt answer. I know thee, Roderigo.

RODERIGO

Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,
If't be your pleasure and most wise consent
120 (As partly I find it is) that your fair daughter
At this odd-even and dull watch o' th' night

Modern Text

Please wait, sir.

BRABANTIO

Why are you talking about robbery? This is
Venice. My house isn't in some remote
countryside.

RODERIGO

Brabantio, with all due respect, I'm here out of
courtesy and good will. I've come to tell you—

IAGO

My God, sir, you're stubborn and suspicious. We
come here to help you and you treat us like
thugs, but you let an African horse climb all over
your daughter. Your grandsons will neigh to you
like horses. Your whole family will be ruined.

BRABANTIO

What kind of crude jerk are you?

IAGO

The kind that tells you that the Moor is having
sex with your daughter right now.

BRABANTIO

You're a villain!

IAGO

You're a senator!

BRABANTIO

You're going to pay for this, Roderigo. I know
who you are.

RODERIGO

I'll answer for everything. I don't know if you
know or approve of this, but in the wee hours of
the morning your daughter left your house, with
no better escort than a hired gondolier, to go into
the rough embrace of a lustful Moor. If all of this
happened with your

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 6

Transported with no worse nor better guard
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor,
125 If this be known to you and your allowance,
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs.
But if you know not this my manners tell me
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe
That, from the sense of all civility,
130 I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.
Your daughter (if you have not given her leave)
I say again, hath made a gross revolt,
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger
135 Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself.
If she be in her chamber or your house,

approval, then we've been very rude to bother
you like this. But if you didn't know about it, then
you were wrong to get mad at us. I'd never play
pranks on you. If you didn't allow your daughter
to do what she's doing, then she's rebelling
against you. She's throwing her life away on
some stranger. Go ahead, see for yourself if
she's in her bedroom. If she is, you can sue me
for lying to you.

Original Text

Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.

BRABANTIO

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

*Exit above***IAGO***(to RODERIGO)*

Farewell, for I must leave you.
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,
145 To be producted (as, if I stay, I shall)
Against the Moor. For I do know the state
(However this may gall him with some check)
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embarked
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars
150 (Which even now stand in act) that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none
To lead their business. In which regard,

Modern Text

BRABANTIO

Light the candles! Wake up my whole household!
I dreamt about this. I'm starting to worry it's true.
Give me some light!

*BRABANTIO exits.***IAGO***(to RODERIGO)*

It's time for me to say goodbye to you. It would
be inappropriate—dangerous, even—for me to
be seen working against the Moor, as I would if I
stayed. The Venetian government might
reprimand him for this, but it can't safely get rid of
him, since it needs him urgently for the imminent
Cyprus wars. They couldn't find another man
with his abilities to lead their armed forces—not if
their souls depended on it. I hate him, but I've got
to show him signs of loyalty

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 7

Though I do hate him as I do hell pains,
Yet for necessity of present life
155 I must show out a flag and sign of love,
(Which is indeed but sign). That you shall surely find
him,
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search,
And there will I be with him. So farewell.

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

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

RODERIGO

Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO

Oh, heaven, how got she out? Oh, treason of the
blood!
170 Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds
By what you see them act. Is there not charms
By which the property of youth and maidhood

and affection, even if it's just an act. If you want
to find him, send the search party to the
Sagittarius Inn. He and I will be there.

*IAGO exits.**BRABANTIO enters with servants and torches.***BRABANTIO**

It's true. She's gone. The rest of my life will be
nothing but bitterness. Now, Roderigo, where did
you see her?—Oh, that miserable wretch!—You
say you saw her with the Moor?—Oh, who would
want to be a father?—How did you know it was
her?—To think she tricked me so easily!—What
did she say to you?—Get me more candles, and
wake up all my relatives. Do you think they're
married?

RODERIGO

Yes, I really think so.

BRABANTIO

Oh, heaven, how did she get out? My own flesh
and blood rebels against me! Fathers, never trust
your daughters just because they act obedient
and innocent. Are there magic spells that can
lead young virgins astray? Have you ever heard

Original Text

May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,
Of some such thing?

RODERIGO

Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRABANTIO

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

RODERIGO

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

Modern Text

of anything like that, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

Yes, sir, I have.

BRABANTIO

Call my brother.—Now I wish you'd married
her!—Some of you go one way, some the other
way.—Do you know where we can find her and
the Moor?

RODERIGO

I think I can find him. Get together a group of
armed men and follow me.

Act 1, Scene 1, Page 8

BRABANTIO

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

BRABANTIO

Lead the way. I'll stop at every house. I'm
respected enough that most of them will do what
I say.—Get your weapons! And get the officers
who guard the city at night.—Let's go, Roderigo.
I'll reward you for your troubles.

Exeunt

They exit

Act 1, Scene 2

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and attendants with torches

*OTHELLO and IAGO enter, followed by
attendants with torches.*

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

'Tis better as it is.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Let him do his spite.
My services which I have done the signiory
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know—
20 Which, when I know that boasting is an honor,

IAGO

I've killed many men in battle, but I still believe it's
deeply wrong to murder someone. Sometimes I
worry I'm not cruel enough for this job. Nine or
ten times I wanted to stab him under the ribs.

OTHELLO

It's better that you didn't kill him.

IAGO

But he kept chattering so foolishly, talking about
you in such insulting and despicable terms, that it
was hard for me to restrain myself. But please tell
me, sir, is your marriage [secure](#)? Brabantio is an
important man in this city, almost as powerful as
the duke himself. He'll try to annul your marriage,
or else inflict whatever punishment the law and
his power will allow him to.

OTHELLO

Let him do his worst. The services I have done for
the Venetian government will count for more than
his complaints will. No one knows this yet—and I
don't like to brag, but I come from a royal family,

Original Text

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

Modern Text

and I'm as noble as the woman I've married. And
 let me tell you, Iago, if I didn't love Desdemona as
 much as I do, I'd never agree to get married and
 lose my freedom at all. But look at those lights.
 Who's coming?

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 2**IAGO**

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

By Janus, I think no.

Enter CASSIO, with officers and torches

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

What's the matter, think you?

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

Exit

IAGO

That's her father and his friends, who've been
 roused out of bed. You'd better go inside.

OTHELLO

No, I must let them find me. My good qualities,
 my legal status as Desdemona's husband, and
 my innocence will protect me. Is it them?

IAGO

I don't think so.

CASSIO enters with officers and men carrying torches.

OTHELLO

The servants of the Duke and my lieutenant?
 Hello, everyone! What's going on?

CASSIO

The Duke sends his regards. He needs to see
 you right away.

OTHELLO

What do you think he wants?

CASSIO

Something about Cyprus. I think it's important.
 The warships have sent a dozen messages
 tonight, one after the other, and many of the
 senators have been awakened and are at the
 Duke's already. They're very anxious for you to
 get there. When you weren't at home, the Senate
 sent out three different search parties to find you.

OTHELLO

It's good you found me. I'll just speak a word or
 two here in the house and then I'll go with you.

OTHELLO exits.

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 3**CASSIO**

Ancient, what makes he here?

CASSIO

Ensign, what's he doing in there?

Original Text

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

CASSIO
 I do not understand.

IAGO
 He's married.

CASSIO
 To who?

IAGO
 Marry, to—

Enter OTHELLO

Come, captain, will you go?

OTHELLO
 55 Have with you.

CASSIO
 Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and officers with
 torches and weapons*

IAGO
 It is Brabantio. General, be advised,
 He comes to bad intent.

OTHELLO
 Holla! Stand there!

RODERIGO
 Signior, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO
 Down with him, thief!

They draw their swords

Modern Text

IAGO
 Tonight he boarded a treasure ship. If he can
 keep it, he'll be set forever.

CASSIO
 I don't understand.

IAGO
 He's married.

CASSIO
 To whom?

IAGO
 To—

OTHELLO enters.

Are you ready?

OTHELLO
 Yes, I'll go with you now.

CASSIO
 Here comes another group looking for you.

*BRABANTIO and RODERIGO enter, followed
 by OFFICERS and men with torches.*

IAGO
 It's Brabantio. Look out, sir. He intends to do
 something bad to you.

OTHELLO
 Hey! Stop right there!

RODERIGO
 Sir, it's the Moor.

BRABANTIO
 Get him, he's a thief!

Both sides draw their swords.

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 4

IAGO
 60 You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I am for you.
OTHELLO
 Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust
 them.
 Good signior, you shall more command with years
 Than with your weapons.

BRABANTIO
 O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed my
 65 daughter?
 Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!
 For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
 If she in chains of magic were not bound,
 Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
 70 So opposite to marriage that she shunned
 The wealthy curled 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.

IAGO
 You, Roderigo! Come on, I'll fight you.
OTHELLO
 Put away your swords. They'll get rusty in the
 dew. Sir, your age and status inspire more
 respect than your weapons do.
BRABANTIO
 You evil thief, where have you hidden my
 daughter? You devil, you've put a spell on her!
 Anybody with eyes could tell you that a beautiful
 and happy young girl like her, who's refused to
 marry all of the handsome young men of the city,
 wouldn't run off with a black thing like you unless
 she'd been bewitched. You're something to fear,
 not to love. It's obvious to everyone that you've
 tricked her, drugged her, or kidnapped her. That's
 probably what happened, so I'm arresting you.—
 Arrest this man as a practitioner of black magic.

Original Text**Modern Text**

- 75 Judge me the world if 'tis not gross in sense
 That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms,
 Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals
 That weakens motion. I'll have 't disputed on.
 'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.
 80 I therefore apprehend and do attach thee
 For an abuser of the world, a practicer
 Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.—
 Lay hold upon him. If he do resist,
 Subdue him at his peril!

OTHELLO

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

Grab him. If he struggles, use force!

OTHELLO

Just a minute. I don't need anyone to tell me when to fight. You've accused me of some serious crimes. Where do you want me to go to respond to these charges?

Act 1, Scene 2, Page 5**BRABANTIO**

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

OTHELLO

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

OFFICER

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

BRABANTIO

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

Exeunt

BRABANTIO

To prison, until you're called into court.

OTHELLO

What if I do what you say? How would I satisfy the Duke then? His messengers are waiting here to take me to him immediately, on pressing state business.

OFFICER

It's true. The Duke's in a meeting right now, and he's sent for you too.

BRABANTIO

The Duke's in a meeting? At this time of night? Bring him with us. The law's on my side. The Duke and any of my fellow senators will take this wrong as seriously as if it were their own. If we let crimes like this happen, slaves and heathens will be our rulers.

They all exit.

Act 1, Scene 3

Enter DUKE, SENATORS, and OFFICERS

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

*The DUKE enters
 with SENATORS and OFFICERS.*

DUKE

These reports are inconsistent. You can't trust them.

FIRST SENATOR

It's true, they're inconsistent. My letters say there are a hundred and seven ships.

Original Text

DUKE

5 And mine a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR

And mine, two hundred.

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

DUKE

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

SAILOR

(*within*)

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

OFFICER

15 A messenger from the galleys.

Enter SAILOR

DUKE

Now, what's the business?

SAILOR

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

Modern Text

DUKE

And mine say a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR

And mine say two hundred. But often in these
cases, reports are just estimates. The important
thing is that they all say a Turkish fleet is
approaching Cyprus.

DUKE

Yes, we get the idea. The inconsistency doesn't
make me think that the reports are all wrong. I
have no doubt about what they're basically
saying, and it's frightening.

SAILOR

(*offstage*) Hello! Hey, hello!

OFFICER

It's a messenger from the warships.

A SAILOR enters.

DUKE

Why are you here?

SAILOR

Signor Angelo told me to come here and tell you
that the Turkish fleet is heading for Rhodes, not
Cyprus.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 2

DUKE

20 How say you by this change?

FIRST SENATOR

This cannot be,

By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant,
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
Th' importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,
And let ourselves again but understand

25 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
30 We must not think the Turk is so unskillful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain
To wake and wage a danger profitless.

DUKE

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

OFFICER

35 Here is more news.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESSENGER

DUKE

What do you think about this change?

FIRST SENATOR

They can't have changed; there's no way this
could be true. It's a trick to confuse us. Think
about how important Cyprus is to the Turks, and
remember that they could capture Cyprus more
easily, since it isn't as well protected as Rhodes
is. If we keep these things in mind, we can't
possibly imagine that the Turks would be so
incompetent as to put off for last what they want
to achieve first, setting aside something easy and
profitable to do something dangerous and
pointless.

DUKE

No, I think we can be confident that the Turks
aren't really headed for Rhodes.

OFFICER

Here's some more news coming in.

A MESSENGER enters.

MESSENGER

Original Text

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

MESSENGER

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

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 3

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

He's now in Florence.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

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

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

- So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me.
5 Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
5 Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general
care
Take hold on me, for my particular grief
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows
6 And it is still itself.
0

DUKE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO

My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

ALL

Dead?

BRABANTIO

Ay, to me.

Modern Text

Sir, the Turks sailed to Rhodes, where they joined
with another fleet.

FIRST SENATOR

That's just what I thought. How many, can you
guess?

MESSENGER

Thirty ships. Now they've turned around and are
clearly heading for Cyprus. Signor Montano, your
brave and loyal servant, gives you this
information and asks you to send reinforcements
to relieve him.

DUKE

Then it's certain they're heading for Cyprus. Is
Marcus Luccicos in town?

FIRST SENATOR

No, he's in Florence.

DUKE

Write to him immediately. Hurry.

FIRST SENATOR

Here come Brabantio and the brave Moor.

BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, CASSIO, IAGO, RODERIGO enter.

DUKE

Brave Othello, I have to send you right away to fight
the Turks, our great enemy.—(to BRABANTIO) Oh, I
didn't see you there. Welcome, sir. I could have
used your wisdom and help tonight.

BRABANTIO

I could have used yours as well. Forgive me, your
grace. I didn't get out of bed and come here in the
dead of night because I heard about the war or
because I was worried about the city's defense. I
have a personal problem so painful and gut-
wrenching that it overwhelms everything else.

DUKE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO

It's my daughter! Oh, my daughter!

FIRST SENATOR

Is she dead?

BRABANTIO

She's dead to me. She's been tricked and stolen

Original Text

She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.

Modern Text

from me, enchanted by black magic spells. She
must've

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 4

65 For nature so prepost'rously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

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

ALL

We are very sorry for't.

DUKE

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

BRABANTIO

Nothing, but this is so.

OTHELLO

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

been tricked or drugged, because there's no way
she could have made this mistake on her own.

DUKE

Whoever tricked your daughter and stole her from
you will pay for it. And you yourself will determine
the sentence as you see fit, and impose the death
penalty if you choose to, even if the criminal were
my own son.

BRABANTIO

I humbly thank you, sir. Here is the man, the
Moor. It seems you had your own reasons for
summoning him here.

ALL

We're sorry to hear this.

DUKE

(to OTHELLO) What do you have to say for
yourself?

BRABANTIO

Nothing, but this is true.

OTHELLO

Noble, honorable gentlemen whom I serve: it's
true that I've taken this man's daughter from him
and married her. But that's my only offense.
There's nothing more. I'm awkward in my speech
and I'm not a smooth talker. From the time I was
seven years old until nine months ago I've been
fighting in battles. I don't know much about the
world apart from fighting. So I won't do myself
much good by speaking in my own defense. But if
you'll let me, I'll tell you the plain

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 5

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

BRABANTIO

story of how we fell in love, and what drugs,
charms, spells, and powerful magic—because
that's what I'm being accused of—I used to win
his daughter.

BRABANTIO

Original Text

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

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

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

OTHELLO

I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,

Modern Text

She's a good girl, quiet and obedient. She blushes at the slightest thing. And you want me to believe that despite her young age and proper upbringing she fell in love with a man she'd be afraid to look at? The very thought of it is ridiculous. You'd have to be stupid to think that someone so perfect could make such an unnatural mistake as that. The devil must be behind this. Therefore I say again that he must have used some powerful drug or magic potion on her.

DUKE

Your saying this isn't proof. There has to be clear evidence that he's done this, not just these accusations.

FIRST SENATOR

Tell us, Othello. Did you trick or deceive this lady in some way? Or did you agree to this as equals?

OTHELLO

Please, send for Desdemona to come here from the Sagittarius Inn and ask her to speak about me in front

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 6

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

DUKE

Fetch Desdemona hither.

OTHELLO

Ancient, conduct them. You best know the place.

Exeunt IAGO and attendants

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

DUKE

Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO

130 Her father loved me, oft invited me,
Still questioned me the story of my life
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,

of her father. If she has anything bad to say about me, then you can sentence me to death.

DUKE

Bring Desdemona here.

OTHELLO

Iago, bring Desdemona here. You know where she is.

IAGO and attendants exit.

In the meantime I'll tell you all, as honestly as I confess my sins to God, how I wooed this beautiful lady, and how she came to love me.

DUKE

Tell us, Othello.

OTHELLO

Her father loved me and used to invite me to his house often, continually asking me about my life and all the battles I've fought. I told him

Original Text

That I have passed.
 I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
 135 To th' very moment that he bade me tell it,
 Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances,
 Of moving accidents by flood and field,
 Of hair-breadth 'scapes i' th' imminent deadly
 breach,
 140 Of being taken by the insolent foe
 And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence
 And portance in my traveler's history.
 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
 Rough quarries, rocks, hills whose heads touch
 145 heaven
 It was my hint to speak—such was my process—
 And of the Cannibals that each others eat,

Modern Text

everything, from my boyhood up until the time
 when I was talking to him. I told him about
 unfortunate disasters, hair-raising adventures on
 sea and on land, and near-catastrophes and
 dangerous adventures I've been through. I told
 him how I was captured and sold as a slave, how
 I bought my freedom, and how I wandered
 through caves and deserts. I was able to tell him
 about cannibals who eat each other, and men
 with heads growing below their shoulders. When
 I talked about all these things, Desdemona used
 to listen attentively. If she had to go do some
 household chore, I noticed that she'd always
 come back quickly to hear more of my stories.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 7

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

Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants

DUKE

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

When I was relaxing, she'd pull me aside and
 ask to hear some part of a story she had missed.
 Her eyes would fill with tears at the bad things I
 went through in my younger years. When my
 stories were done, she'd sigh and tell me how
 strangely wonderful and sad my life had been.
 She said she wished she hadn't heard it, but she
 also wished there was a man like me for her.
 She thanked me and told me that if a friend of
 mine had a story like mine to tell, she'd fall in
 love with him. I took the hint and spoke to her.
 She said she loved me for the dangers I'd
 survived, and I loved her for feeling such strong
 emotions about me. That's the only witchcraft I
 ever used. Here comes my wife now. She'll
 confirm everything.

DESDEMONA, IAGO, and attendants enter.

DUKE

I think a story like that would win my own
 daughter over. Brabantio, I urge you to make the
 best of this. Try to accept what's happened.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 8

BRABANTIO

I pray you, hear her speak.
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head if my bad blame
Light on the man.—Come hither, gentle mistress.

180 Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?

DESEMONA

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

190 Due to the Moor my lord.

BRABANTIO

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

DUKE

200 Let me speak like yourself and lay a sentence
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.

BRABANTIO

Please let her speak. If she admits she wanted this, then I won't blame Othello.—Come here, my child. Who do you obey here?

DESEMONA

Father, this isn't easy for me. I'm torn. I owe you respect because you gave me life and education. You're the one I have to obey. I'm your daughter. But this man here is my husband now, and I owe him as much as my mother owed you, just as she preferred you to her own father. So I have to give my obedience to the Moor, my husband.

BRABANTIO

I'm finished, then. Duke, please go ahead with your state business. I'd rather adopt a child than have one of my own.—Come here, Moor. I'm forced to give my blessing to this marriage. With all my heart, I give you that thing which, if you didn't already have it, I'd try with all my heart to keep from you. Desdemona, I'm glad you're my only child, since if I had others I'd keep them all locked up. You would have made me treat them like a tyrant.—I'm done, my lord.

DUKE

Let me refer to a proverb that may help you forgive these lovers: if you can't change something, don't cry about it. When you lament something bad that's already happened, you're setting yourself up for more

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 9

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
205 Is the next way to draw new mischief on.
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mock'ry makes.
The robbed that smiles steals something from the thief,
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

BRABANTIO

210 So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile,
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
He bears the sentence well that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears.
But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
215 That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences to sugar or to gall,

bad news. A robbery victim who can smile about his losses is superior to the thief who robbed him, but if he cries he's just wasting time.

BRABANTIO

So if the Turks steal Cyprus from us, it won't be bad as long as we keep smiling. It's easy to accept platitudes like that if you haven't lost anything. But I've lost something precious, and I have to put up with the platitude as well as suffering my loss. Talk is cheap. I've never heard of someone feeling better because of someone

Original Text

Being strong on both sides, are equivocal.
But words are words. I never yet did hear
That the bruised heart was piercèd through the ears.

220 I humbly beseech you, proceed to th' affairs of state.

DUKE

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

OTHELLO

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down. I do agnize

225 A natural and prompt alacrity

I find in hardness, and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 10

I crave fit disposition for my wife.

230 Due reference of place and exhibition,
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE

Why, at her father's.

BRABANTIO

I'll not have it so.

OTHELLO

235 Nor I.

DESDEMONA

Nor would I there reside,
To put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious Duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous ear

240 And let me find a charter in your voice,
T' assist my simpleness.

DUKE

What would you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
245 May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord.
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honors and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
250 So that, dear lords, if I be left behind
A moth of peace and he go to the war,

Modern Text

else's words. Please, I'm asking you, go ahead
and get back to your state affairs.

DUKE

The Turks are heading for Cyprus with a powerful fleet. Othello, you understand better than anyone how the defenses for Cyprus work. Even though we have a very good officer in charge there already, everyone says you're the better man for the job. So I'll have to ask you to put a damper on your marriage celebrations and take part in this dangerous expedition.

OTHELLO

I've gotten used to the hardships of a military life. I rise to the occasion when faced with difficulties. I will take charge of this war against the Turks. But I humbly ask you to make appropriate arrangements for my wife,

giving her a place to live and people to keep her company that suit her high rank.

DUKE

She can stay at her father's house.

BRABANTIO

I won't allow it.

OTHELLO

Neither will I.

DESDEMONA

And I wouldn't stay there. I don't want to upset my father by being in his house. Dear Duke, please listen to what I have to say.

DUKE

What do you want to do, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

When I fell in love with Othello I made up my mind that I wanted to live with him. You can see how much I wanted to be with him by how violently I threw away my old life. I feel like I'm a part of him now, and that means I'm part of a soldier. I saw Othello's true face when I saw his mind. I gave my whole life to him because of his honor and bravery. If I were left at home uselessly while he went off to war, then I'm

Original Text

The rites for which I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTHELLO

- 255 Let her have your voice.
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite,

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 11

- Nor to comply with heat the young affects
In my defunct and proper satisfaction,
260 But to be free and bounteous to her mind,
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
When she is with me. No, when light-winged toys
Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness
265 My speculative and officed instrument,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation.

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

You must away tonight.

OTHELLO

With all my heart.

DUKE

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

OTHELLO

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

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 12**DUKE**

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

FIRST SENATOR**Modern Text**

separated from my husband in his natural
element. I'd be miserable without him. Let me go
with him.

OTHELLO

Please allow her to do this. I'm not asking to
have her near me for sex—I'm too old for that,
and my sexual

urges are dead. I want this because she wants
it—I love her for her mind. And I'd never want
you to think that I'd neglect my serious official
duties while she was there with me. If I ever let
love blind me so that I choose to lounge around
in bed with my loved one instead of going off to
war, then you can let a housewife use my helmet
as a frying pan. My reputation would be
disgraced if I ever acted like that.

DUKE

You can decide that privately. I don't care
whether she stays or goes. What's important is
the urgency of this mission. You've got to act
fast.

FIRST SENATOR

You'll have to leave tonight.

OTHELLO

With all my heart, I'll go right away.

DUKE

We'll meet again at nine in the morning. Othello,
have one of your officers stay behind to bring
you your commission and whatever else is
important to you.

OTHELLO

My lord, my ensign is an honest and trustworthy
man. He'll accompany my wife, and bring
whatever else you think I might need.

DUKE

All right, then. Good night, everyone.—
(to BRABANTIO) Sir, if goodness is beautiful,
your son-in-law is beautiful, not black.

FIRST SENATOR

Original Text

Adieu, brave Moor. Use Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO

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

*Exeunt DUKE, BRABANTIO, CASSIO, SENATORS,
and officers*

OTHELLO

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

Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA

RODERIGO

Iago.

IAGO

What say'st thou, noble heart?

RODERIGO

What will I do, think'st thou?

IAGO

- 300 Why, go to bed, and sleep.

RODERIGO

I will incontinently drown myself.

Modern Text

Goodbye, black Moor. Treat Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO

Keep an eye on her, Moor. She lied to me, and
she may lie to you.

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

OTHELLO

I'd bet my life she'd never lie to me. Iago, I'm
leaving my dear Desdemona with you. Have your
wife attend to her, and bring them along as soon
as you can. Come on, Desdemona, I've only got
an hour of love to spend with you, to tell you what
you need to do. We're on a tight schedule.

OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.

RODERIGO

Iago.

IAGO

What do you have to say, noble friend?

RODERIGO

What do you think I should do?

IAGO

Go to bed, and sleep.

RODERIGO

I'm going to go drown myself.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 13

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Virtue? A fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or
thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our
wills are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles or
sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply
it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many—
either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured

IAGO

If you do that, I'll never respect you again. Why,
you silly man!

RODERIGO

It's silly to live when life is torture. The only cure
is death.

IAGO

Oh, how stupid! I've been alive for twenty-eight
years, and I've never met a man who knew what
was good for him. I'd rather be a baboon than kill
myself out of love for some woman I can't have.

RODERIGO

What should I do? I know it's foolish to be so
much in love, but I can't help it.

IAGO

Can't help it? Nonsense! What we are is up to
us. Our bodies are like gardens and our
willpower is like the gardener. Depending on
what we plant—weeds or lettuce, or one kind of
herb rather than a variety, the garden will either
be barren and useless, or rich and productive. If

Original Text

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

RODERIGO

It cannot be.

IAGO

It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man. Drown thyself? Drown cats and blind puppies! I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness.

Modern Text

we didn't have rational minds to counterbalance our emotions and desires, our bodily urges would take over. We'd end up in ridiculous situations. Thankfully, we have reason to cool our raging lusts. In my opinion, what you call love is just an offshoot of lust.

RODERIGO

I don't believe it.

IAGO

You feel love because you feel lust and you have no willpower. Come on, be a man. Drown yourself? Drowning is for cats or blind puppies—don't drown yourself! I've told you I'm your friend, and I'll stick by you.

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 14

I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse. Follow thou the wars, defeat thy favor with an usurped beard. I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be long that Desdemona should continue her love to the Moor—put money in thy purse—nor he his to her. It was a violent commencement in her, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration—put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in their wills—fill thy purse with money. The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth. When she is sated with his body she will find the errors of her choice. Therefore, put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst. If sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her. Therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! 'Tis clean out of the way. Seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

Thou art sure of me. Go, make money. I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor. My cause is hearted. Thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him. If thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse, go, provide thy money. We will have more of this

I've never been more useful to you than I will be now. Here's what you'll do. Sell all your assets and your land, and turn it into cash. Desdemona can't continue loving the Moor any more than he can continue loving her. She fell in love with him very suddenly, and they'll break up just as suddenly. Moors are moody people.—So sell your lands and raise a lot of cash. What seems sweet to him now will soon turn bitter. She'll dump Othello for a younger man. When she's had enough of the Moor's body, she'll realize her mistake. She'll need to have a new lover. She'll have to have it. So have your money ready. If you want to go to hell, there are better ways to do it than killing yourself. Raise all the money you can. I can get the better of religion and a few flimsy vows between a misguided barbarian and a depraved Venetian girl. You'll get to sleep with her—just put together some money. And to hell with drowning yourself! That's completely beside the point. If you're ready to die, you can risk death by committing crimes in an attempt to get the woman you want. Don't just give up on her and drown yourself.

RODERIGO

Can I count on you if I wait to see what happens?

IAGO

You can trust me. Go now and get cash. I told you before, and I'll tell you again and again: I hate the Moor. I'm devoted to my cause of hating him, just as devoted as you are to yours. So let's join forces and get revenge. If you seduce Desdemona and make a fool out of him, it'll be fun for both of us. Many things may happen. Go get money. We'll speak again tomorrow.

Original Text

tomorrow. Adieu.

RODERIGO

Where shall we meet i' th' morning?

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 15

IAGO

At my lodging.

RODERIGO

I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO

Go to, farewell.

Do you hear, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

315 What say you?

IAGO

No more of drowning, do you hear?

RODERIGO

I am changed.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

I'll sell all my land.

Exit

IAGO

320 Thus do I ever make my fool my purse.
For I mine own gained knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor,
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
325 He's done my office. I know not if 't be true,
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well.
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now,

Modern Text

Goodbye.

RODERIGO

Where will we meet in the morning?

IAGO

At my house.

RODERIGO

I'll be there early.

IAGO

Go home. Goodbye. Oh, and one more thing—

RODERIGO

What is it?

IAGO

No more talk about killing yourself, okay?

RODERIGO

I've changed my mind about that.

IAGO

Go then, goodbye. Put a lot of cash together.

RODERIGO

I'm going to sell all my land.

RODERIGO exits.

IAGO

That's how I always do it, getting money from fools. I'd be wasting my skills dealing with an idiot like that if I couldn't get something useful out of him. I hate the Moor, and there's a widespread rumor that he's slept with my wife. I'm not sure it's true, but just the suspicion is enough for me. He thinks highly of me. That'll help. Cassio's a handsome man. Let's see, how can I

Act 1, Scene 3, Page 16

330 To get his place and to plume up my will
In double knavery. How? How? Let's see.
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife.
He hath a person and a smooth dispose
335 To be suspected, framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are.
340 I have 't. It is engendered! Hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

Exit

get his position and use him to hurt Othello at the same time? How? How? Let's see. After a while I'll start telling Othello that Cassio is too intimate with Desdemona. Cassio is a smooth talker and a good-looking guy, the sort of man that people would expect to be a seducer. The Moor is open and straightforward. He thinks any man who seems honest is honest. People like that are easy to manipulate. So it's all decided. I've worked it out. With a little help from the devil, I'll bring this monstrous plan to success.

He exits.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 2, Scene 1

*Enter MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN***MONTANO**

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

*Enter a THIRD GENTLEMAN**MONTANO and two GENTLEMEN enter.***MONTANO**

What can you see out on the ocean?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing. The water's so rough that I can't see any
sails, either in the bay or on the ocean.

MONTANO

It was windy on shore too. A big blast of wind
shook our fortifications. How could a ship made
out of wood hold together in those mountainous
waves? What do you think will be the result of this
storm?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

The Turkish navy will be broken up. The wind's
whipping up the waves so high you expect them
to reach the clouds and splash against the stars
in the sky. I've never seen the waters so
disturbed.

MONTANO

If the Turkish fleet isn't protected in some harbor,
their men must all be drowned. No ship could
survive this storm.

A THIRD GENTLEMAN enters.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 2

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

How? Is this true?

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

MONTANO

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

I've got news, boys, the war's over! This terrible
storm has smashed the Turks so badly that their
plans are ruined. One of our ships has reported
that it saw most of their fleet shipwrecked.

MONTANO

What? Is this true?

THIRD GENTLEMAN

The ship's sailing into harbor now; it's from
Verona. Michael Cassio, lieutenant of the Moor
Othello, has arrived on shore. The Moor himself
is still at sea. He's been commissioned to come
here to Cyprus.

MONTANO

I'm happy about that. He'll be a good governor.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Cassio brings good news about the Turkish
defeat, but he's worried about the Othello's
safety. The two of them were separated during

Original Text**Modern Text**

35 With foul and violent tempest.

MONTANO

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

THIRD GENTLEMAN

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

Enter CASSIO

the storm.

MONTANO

I hope to God Othello's all right. I served under
him, and I know what an excellent commander he
is. Let's go to the shore to get a look at the ship
that came in, and to look out for Othello's ship.
We'll stare out at the sea until the sea and the sky
blur together.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Let's do that. Every minute we expect more ships
to arrive.

CASSIO enters.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 3

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

Is he well shipped?

CASSIO

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

A VOICE

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

Enter a MESSENGER

CASSIO

What noise?

MESSENGER

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

CASSIO

My hopes do shape him for the governor.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO

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

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I shall.

Exit

CASSIO

Thanks, you brave men who defend this island
and respect Othello. I hope heaven protects him
from the weather, because I lost sight of him on
the stormy sea.

MONTANO

Is his ship sturdy?

CASSIO

Yes, it's well built, and the ship's pilot is very
expert and experienced. For that reason I still
have some hope for him, even though I don't
have my hopes up too high.

A VOICE

(offstage) A sail! A sail! A sail!

A MESSENGER enters.

CASSIO

What's all that shouting about?

MESSENGER

Everybody in town is down at the shore shouting
"A sail!"

CASSIO

I hope it's Othello.

A shot is heard.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

They've fired a greeting shot, so at least it's a
friendly ship.

CASSIO

Please go find out for certain who has arrived.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I'll do that.

SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 4

Original Text

MONTANO

But good lieutenant, is your general wived?

CASSIO

Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid

- 6 That paragons description and wild fame,
5 One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in th' essential vesture of creation
Does tire the ingener.

Enter SECOND GENTLEMAN

How now? Who has put in?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

- 7 'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.
0

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

What is she?

CASSIO

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

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO with attendants

Modern Text

MONTANO

Good lieutenant, is your general married?

CASSIO

Yes, and he's very lucky to have married the woman he did. His wife defies description. She's God's masterpiece, and she'd exhaust whoever tried to do her justice while praising her.

The SECOND GENTLEMAN enters.

Who's arrived in the harbor?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

A man named Iago, the general's ensign.

CASSIO

He made good time. You see how the storm, the jagged rocks, and the sand banks that trap ships all appreciate a beautiful woman. They let the heavenly Desdemona arrive safe and sound.

MONTANO

Who's that?

CASSIO

She's the one I was talking about, the general's wife. The brave Iago was put in charge of bringing her here, and he's arrived a week sooner than we expected. Dear God, please protect Othello and help him arrive here safely, so he and Desdemona can be in each other's arms, and Othello can cheer us up and bring comfort to Cyprus.

DESDEMONA, IAGO, RODERIGO and EMILIA enter

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 5

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Oh, but I fear. How lost you company?

Look, the precious Desdemona has arrived on shore. We should all kneel before her, men of Cyprus! Greetings, my lady, and may God always be with you.

DESDEMONA

Thank you, brave Cassio. Is there any news about my husband?

CASSIO

He hasn't arrived yet. As far as I know, he's okay and will arrive here soon.

DESDEMONA

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

Original Text

CASSIO

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

A VOICE

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

CASSIO

But, hark! a sail.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

CASSIO

See for the news.

Exit a SECOND GENTLEMAN

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

A shot

Modern Text

CASSIO

The storm separated us.

A VOICE

(offstage) A sail! A sail!

CASSIO

Listen, they've spotted another ship!

A gunshot is heard.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

They fired a greeting shot too, so this is also a
friendly ship.

CASSIO

Go find out the news.

SECOND GENTLEMAN exits.

Ensign Iago, welcome.—And welcome to you,
too, madam. *(he kisses EMILIA)* Don't be upset
that I kissed your wife hello, Iago. It's a courtesy
where I come from.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 6

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

Alas, she has no speech!

IAGO

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

EMILIA

You have little cause to say so.

IAGO

Come on, come on. You are pictures out of door,
bells in your parlors, wild-cats in your kitchens,
saints in your injuries, devils being offended, players
in your housewifery, and housewives in your beds.

DESDEMONA

Oh, fie upon thee, slanderer!

IAGO

120 Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk.

IAGO

If she gave you as much lip as she gives me,
you'd be sick of her by now.

DESDEMONA

On the contrary, she's a soft-spoken woman.

IAGO

No, she talks too much. She's always talking
when I want to sleep. I admit that in front of you,
my lady, she keeps a bit quiet. But she's scolding
me silently.

EMILIA

You have no reason to say that.

IAGO

Come on, come on. You women are all the
same. You're as pretty as pictures when you're
out in public, but in your own houses you're as
noisy as jangling bells. In your own kitchens you
act like wildcats. You make yourselves sound
like saints when you're complaining about
something, but you act like devils when someone
offends you. You don't take your jobs as
housewives seriously, and you're shameless
hussies in bed.

DESDEMONA

Shame on you, you slanderer!

IAGO

No, it's true, or if it's not, I'm a villain. You wake

Original Text

You rise to play and go to bed to work.

EMILIA

You shall not write my praise.

IAGO

No, let me not.

DESDEMONA

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

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 7

IAGO

O gentle lady, do not put me to 't,

125 For I am nothing, if not critical.

DESDEMONA

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

IAGO

Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA

I am not merry, but I do beguile

The thing I am by seeming otherwise.

130 Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

IAGO

I am about it, but indeed my invention

Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze,

It plucks out brains and all. But my Muse labors

And thus she is delivered:

135 If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,

The one's for use, the other useth it.

DESDEMONA

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO

If she be black, and thereto have a wit,

She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

DESDEMONA

140 Worse and worse!

EMILIA

How if fair and foolish?

IAGO

She never yet was foolish that was fair,

For even her folly helped her to an heir.

DESDEMONA

These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i'

th' alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her

That's foul and foolish?

IAGO

145 There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,

But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

Modern Text

up to have fun, and you start work when you go to bed.

EMILIA

You clearly have nothing good to say about me.

IAGO

No, I don't.

DESDEMONA

But if you had to say something nice about me, what would you say?

IAGO

Don't make me do it, my lady. I'm critical by nature.

DESDEMONA

Come on, just try.—By the way, has someone gone down to the harbor?

IAGO

Yes, madam.

DESDEMONA

I'm not as happy as I seem. I'm just trying not to show how worried I am about Othello's safety.

Come on, what would you say about me?

IAGO

I'm trying to think of something, but I'm not good at inventing clever things. It takes time. Ah, I've got it. If a woman is pretty and smart, she uses her good looks to get what she wants.

DESDEMONA

Very clever! But what if the woman is smart but ugly?

IAGO

Even if she's ugly, she'll be smart enough to find a guy to sleep with her.

DESDEMONA

This is getting worse and worse!

EMILIA

What if she's pretty but stupid?

IAGO

No pretty woman is stupid, because her stupidity will make her more attractive to men.

DESDEMONA

These are stupid old jokes that men tell each other in bars. What horrible thing do you have to say about a woman who's both ugly and stupid?

IAGO

No matter how ugly or stupid the woman is, she plays the same dirty tricks that the smart and pretty ones do.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 8

DESEMONA

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

IAGO

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

DESEMONA

To do what?

IAGO

160 To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

DESEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

CASSIO takes DESEMONA'S hand

IAGO

(*aside*) He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said,
whisper! With as little a web as this will I ensnare as
great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do, I will
gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true, 'Tis
so, indeed.

DESEMONA

You don't know a thing! You give your best
praise to the worst women. But how would you
praise a truly good woman, someone who had no
reason to worry about what anyone said about
her?

IAGO

A woman who was beautiful but never proud,
who could speak well but knew when to be quiet,
who dressed well but was never overdressed,
who had self-restraint even when she could get
what she wanted, a woman who never took
revenge, who overlooked it when people hurt
her, who was too wise to do anything stupid, who
could think without revealing her thoughts, and
who could refrain from flirting with men in love
with her, that kind of woman, if she ever existed,
would—

DESEMONA

Would do what?

IAGO

Would raise babies and clip coupons.

DESEMONA

Oh, that's pathetic! Don't listen to him, Emilia,
even though he's your husband. What do you
think about him, Cassio? Isn't he a horrible man?

CASSIO

He speaks bluntly, madam. He's more of a
soldier than a wise man.

CASSIO takes DESEMONA'S hand.

IAGO

(*to himself*) He's taking her hand. That's right, go
ahead and whisper together. This is all I need to
get Cassio. Yes, keep smiling at her, Cassio.
Your fine manners around women will be your
downfall. Oh, I'm sure you're saying something
very clever.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 9

If such tricks as these strip you out of your
lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed
your three fingers so oft, which now again you are
most apt to play the sir in. Very good, well kissed,
and excellent courtesies! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again
your fingers to your lips? Would they were clyster-
pipes for your sake!—

Trumpet within

165 The Moor! I know his trumpet.

CASSIO

If you lose your job because of little flirtations like
this, you'll wish you hadn't been so courteous
with her. Oh, how nice, you're [kissing](#) your own
hand, one finger at a time? I wish those fingers
were enema tubes!—

A trumpet plays offstage.

That's the Moor! I recognize his trumpet.

CASSIO

Original Text

'Tis truly so.

DESDEMONA

Let's meet him and receive him.

CASSIO

Lo, where he comes!

Enter OTHELLO and attendants

OTHELLO

Oh my fair warrior!

DESDEMONA

My dear Othello!

OTHELLO

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. Oh, my soul's joy!

170 If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death,
And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,

175 'Twere now to be most happy, for I fear
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.

DESDEMONA

The heavens forbid

But that our loves and comforts should increase,

180 Even as our days do grow.

Modern Text

Yes, it is.

DESDEMONA

Let's go greet him when he lands.

CASSIO

Look, here he comes.

OTHELLO enters with attendants.

OTHELLO

My beautiful warrior!

DESDEMONA

My darling Othello!

OTHELLO

I'm amazed you got here before me. But I'm
overjoyed! My love, if the calm after the storm
could always be this wonderful, I'd want the wind
to blow until it waked the dead, and whipped up
waves as tall as mountains! If I died right now I'd
be completely happy, since I'll probably never be
as happy as this again in my life.

DESDEMONA

God willing, our love and our happiness will only
increase as we get older.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 10

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Come, let us to the castle.
News, friends! Our wars are done, the Turks are
drowned.

190 How does my old acquaintance of this isle?—
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus,
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote
In mine own comforts.—I prithee, good Iago,
195 Go to the bay and disembark my coffers.
Bring thou the master to the citadel.
He is a good one, and his worthiness

OTHELLO

Amen to that! I can't talk about my happiness
anymore. It's too much. I hope these kisses I'm
about to give you are the closest we ever come
to fighting. (*they kiss*)

IAGO

(*to himself*) Oh, you're happy now, but I'll ruin
your happiness, for all my supposed honesty.

OTHELLO

Let's go up to the castle. Good news, friends.
The war's over and the Turks are drowned. How
are my old friends from this island doing?—
Honey, they'll love you here in Cyprus. They've
been very good to me here. Oh, my dear, I'm
blabbing on and on because I'm so happy.—
Iago, would you be good enough to go get my
trunks from the ships? And bring the ship's
captain to the castle. He's a good man.—Let's
go, Desdemona. I'll say it again: I'm so happy to
see you here in Cyprus!

Original Text

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

Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

IAGO

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

Modern Text

OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants exit.

IAGO

Meet me down at the harbor.—Come here. They say love makes cowards brave. So if you're brave, listen to me. Lieutenant Cassio will be on guard duty tonight. But first, I have to tell you that Desdemona's completely in love with him.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 11**RODERIGO**

200 With him? Why, 'tis not possible.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

With Cassio? That's impossible.

IAGO

Be quiet and listen to me. Remember how she fell madly in love with the Moor because he bragged and told her made-up stories? Did you expect her to keep on loving him for his chattering? You're too smart to think that. No, she needs someone nice-looking. Othello's ugly, what pleasure could she find in him? Lovemaking gets boring after a while. To keep things hot, she'll need to see someone with a handsome face, someone close to her in age, someone who looks and acts like her. Othello isn't any of those things. Since he doesn't have these advantages to make him attractive to her, she'll get sick of him until he makes her want to puke. She'll start looking around for a second choice. Now, if that's true—and it's obviously true—who's in a better position than Cassio? He's a smooth talker, and uses sophistication and fine manners to hide his lust. Nobody's as crafty as he is. Besides, he's young and handsome, and he's got all the qualities that naïve and silly girls go for. He's a bad boy, and Desdemona's got her eye on him already.

RODERIGO

I can't believe that. She's not that kind of woman. She's very moral.

IAGO

Like hell she is! She's made of the same flesh and blood as everyone else. If she were so moral, she would never have fallen in love with the Moor in the first place. Good lord! Did you notice how she and Cassio were fondling each

Original Text

Modern Text

other's hands? Did you see that?

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 12

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Well.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

210 Adieu.

Exit

RODERIGO

Yes, I did. But that wasn't romantic, it was just
polite manners.

IAGO

They were lusting after each other. You could tell
by how they were acting that they're going to be
lovers. They were so close that their breath was
mingling. When two people get that intimate, sex
will soon follow. Disgusting! But listen to me; let
me guide you. I brought you here from Venice.
Be on guard duty tonight. I'll put you in charge.
Cassio doesn't know you. I'll be nearby. Make
Cassio angry somehow, either by speaking too
loud, or insulting his military skills, or however
else you want.

RODERIGO

All right.

IAGO

He's hot-tempered, and he might try to hit you
with his staff. Try to get him to do that. That'll
allow me to stir up public sentiment against him
here in Cyprus. I'll get them so riled up that they'll
only calm down when Cassio's fired. To get what
you want, you need to get Cassio out of the way.
If you don't do that, things are hopeless for you.

RODERIGO

I'll do it, if you help me out.

IAGO

I promise I will. Meet me in a little while at the
citadel. I need to get Othello's things from the
ship. Goodbye.

RODERIGO

Goodbye.

RODERIGO exits.

Act 2, Scene 1, Page 13

IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
215 And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,

IAGO

I think Cassio really does love her, and it's
perfectly likely that she loves him too. I can't
stand the Moor, but I have to admit that he's a
reliable, loving, and good-natured man. He'd
probably be a good husband to Desdemona. I
love her too, not simply out of lust, but also to

Original Text

Not out of absolute lust—though peradventure
 I stand accountant for as great a sin—
 But partly led to diet my revenge,
 220 For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
 Hath leaped into my seat. The thought whereof
 Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
 And nothing can or shall content my soul
 Till I am evened with him, wife for wife.
 225 Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
 At least into a jealousy so strong
 That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
 If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace
 For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
 230 I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
 Abuse him to the Moor in the right garb
 (For I fear Cassio with my night-cape too)
 Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me
 For making him egregiously an ass
 235 And practicing upon his peace and quiet
 Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused.
 Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

Exit

Modern Text

feed my revenge. I have a feeling the Moor slept
 with my wife. That thought keeps gnawing at me,
 eating me up inside. I won't be satisfied until I get
 even with him, wife for wife. If I can't do that, I
 can at least make the Moor so jealous that he
 can't think straight. If that piece of Venetian trash
 Roderigo can do what I need to carry out my
 plan, I'll have power over Cassio. I'll say bad
 things about him to the Moor. I have a feeling
 Cassio seduced my wife as well. I'll make the
 Moor thank me, love me, and reward me, even
 though the joke will be on him the whole time.
 I've got a good plan, though I haven't worked out
 the details yet. You can never see the end of an
 evil plan until the moment comes.

IAGO exits.

Act 2, Scene 2

*Enter Othello's HERALD, with a proclamation***HERALD**

It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general,
 that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the
 mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put
 himself into triumph: some to dance, some to make
 bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his
 addiction leads him. For besides these beneficial
 news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was
 his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are
 open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this
 present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Bless
 the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

*Exit**Othello's HERALD enters with a proclamation.***HERALD**

Our noble and courageous general Othello having
 been informed that the Turkish fleet has been
 completely destroyed, invites every man to
 celebrate our victory. Some of you dance, some
 of you make bonfires, and every man celebrate in
 whatever way he likes to. For besides the good
 news, we are also celebrating his marriage. That's
 the end of the announcement. There will be a
 feast from five o'clock until eleven. God bless the
 island of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

The HERALD exits.

Act 2, Scene 3

*Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and attendants***OTHELLO**

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

Iago is most honest.

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

Good Michael, keep a careful eye on the guards
 tonight. Let's exercise restraint and not let the
 party get too wild.

CASSIO

Iago has orders what to do. But I'll see to it
 personally anyway.

OTHELLO

Iago's a good man. Goodnight, Michael. Come

Original Text

Michael, good night. Tomorrow with your earliest
Let me have speech with you.—
Come, my dear love,

- 10 The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue:
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.
Good night.

Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

Enter IAGO

CASSIO

Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

- 15 She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO

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

Modern Text

talk to me tomorrow as early as you can.—Come
with me, my dear love. Now that the wedding's
over, we can have the pleasure of consummating
our marriage. Good night, everyone.

*OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit with their
attendants.*

IAGO enters.

CASSIO

Hello, Iago. It's time for us to stand guard.

IAGO

Not yet, lieutenant. It's not even ten o'clock. The
general got rid of us early tonight so he could be
with Desdemona.—I can't blame him. He hasn't
spent the night with her yet, and she's beautiful
enough to be Jove's lover.

CASSIO

She's an exquisitely beautiful lady.

IAGO

And I bet she's good in bed too.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 2

CASSIO

Indeed she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

An inviting eye, and yet methinks right modest.

IAGO

- 20 And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

CASSIO

She is indeed perfection.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

- 25 I have drunk but one cup tonight, and that was craftily
qualified too, and behold what innovation it makes

CASSIO

Yes, she's young and tender.

IAGO

And such pretty eyes! Like an invitation.

CASSIO

Yes, she's pretty. But she's modest and ladylike
too.

IAGO

And when she speaks, doesn't her voice stir up
passion?

CASSIO

She's a perfect woman, it's true.

IAGO

Well, good luck to them tonight in bed! Come with
us, lieutenant. I've got a jug of wine, and these
two Cyprus gentlemen want to drink a toast to the
black Othello.

CASSIO

Not tonight, Iago. I'm not much of a drinker. I wish
there was less social pressure to drink.

IAGO

Oh, but these are our friends. Just one glass. I'll
do most of the drinking for you.

CASSIO

I've already had a glass of wine tonight, watered
down, but look how drunk I am. I'm not a heavy

Original Text

here. I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO

What, man, 'tis a night of revels! The gallants desire it.

CASSIO

Where are they?

IAGO

Here at the door. I pray you call them in.

CASSIO

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

Exit

Modern Text

drinker. I wouldn't dare drink much more than that.

IAGO

What are you talking about, man? Tonight is for celebrating! The gentlemen are waiting.

CASSIO

Where are they?

IAGO

By the door. Please invite them in.

CASSIO

I'll do it, but I don't like it.

CASSIO exits.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 3

IAGO

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

Enter CASSIO, MONTANO and gentlemen

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

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

IAGO

Some wine, ho!

(sings)

- And let me the cannikin clink, clink,*
50 *And let me the cannikin clink.*
A soldier's a man,
A life's but a span,
Why then let a soldier drink.
Some wine, boys!

IAGO

If I can just get him to drink one more glass after what he's drunk already, he'll be as argumentative and eager to fight as a little dog. That fool Roderigo, all twisted up inside with love, has been drinking toasts to Desdemona by the gallon, and he's on guard duty. I've gotten the rest of the guards drunk, as well as several gentlemen from Cyprus who are quick to take offense. Now I'll get Cassio to do something in front of all these drunkards that will offend everyone on the island. Here they come. If the future turns out as I hope it will, I'm all set for success.

CASSIO, MONTANO, and GENTLEMEN enter,
followed by servants with wine.

CASSIO

My God, they've given me a lot to drink.

MONTANO

No, it was a little one, not more than a pint.

IAGO

Bring in more wine!

(he sings)

And clink your glasses together,
And clink your glasses together.
A soldier's a man,
And a man's life is short,
So let the soldier drink.
Have some more wine, boys!

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 4

Original Text

CASSIO

55 Fore heaven, an excellent song.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO

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

CASSIO

To the health of our general!

MONTANO

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

IAGO

Oh, sweet England!

(sings)

*King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown,*

65 *He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown.*

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

70 *Then take thine auld cloak about thee.
Some wine, ho!*

CASSIO

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

IAGO

Will you hear 't again?

CASSIO

No, for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, heaven's above all, and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO

75 It's true, good lieutenant.

Modern Text

CASSIO

My God, what a great song!

IAGO

I learned it England, where they have a talent for drinking. The Danes, the Germans, and the Dutch—come on, drink, drink!—are nothing compared to the English.

CASSIO

Are Englishmen really such heavy drinkers?

IAGO

They drink Danes under the table, and it takes them no effort at all to out-drink Germans. And the Dutch are vomiting while the English are asking for refills.

CASSIO

Let's drink to our general!

MONTANO

Hear, hear! I'll drink as much as you do!

IAGO

Oh, sweet England!

(he sings)

*King Stephen was a good king, and his pants
were very cheap,*

*But he thought his tailor overcharged him, so
he called him a peasant.*

*And that was a man of noble rank, much higher
than you are.*

*So be happy with your worn-out cloak,
Since pride is ruining the nation.*

More wine!

CASSIO

God, that song's even better than the other one.

IAGO

Do you want to hear it again?

CASSIO

No, because we shouldn't be doing that—stuff. Oh well, God's in charge, and some people have to go to heaven, while other people have to go to hell.

IAGO

That's true, lieutenant.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 5

CASSIO

For mine own part, no offence to the general nor any man of quality, I hope to be saved.

IAGO

And so do I too, lieutenant.

CASSIO

Ay, but (by your leave) not before me. The lieutenant

CASSIO

Speaking for myself—and no offense to the general or anyone else—I hope I'm going to heaven.

IAGO

Me too, lieutenant.

CASSIO

Okay, but please not before me. The lieutenant

Original Text

is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this, let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!—Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This is my ancient, this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now. I can stand well enough, and I speak well enough.

ALL

Excellent well!

CASSIO

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

*Exit***MONTANO**

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

*Exit GENTLEMEN***IAGO**

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

MONTANO

But is he often thus?

Modern Text

has to get to heaven before the ensign. But let's stop this drinking and get down to business.—God forgive our sins!—Gentlemen, let's get down to business. By the way, I don't want anyone thinking I'm drunk. This is my ensign. This is my right hand, and this is my left hand.
I'm not drunk. I can stand well enough, and I can speak just fine.

ALL

Yes, you're speaking very well.

CASSIO

Yes, very well. So don't think that I'm drunk.

*CASSIO exits.***MONTANO**

Let's go to the platform where we'll stand guard.
Come on.

*GENTLEMEN exit.***IAGO**

You see that man who just left? He's a good soldier, good enough to be Caesar's right-hand man. But he has a serious weakness. It's too bad. I'm worried that Othello trusts him too much, and it'll be bad for Cyprus eventually.

MONTANO

But is he often like this?

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 6**IAGO**

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

MONTANO

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

*Enter RODERIGO***IAGO**

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

*Exit RODERIGO***MONTANO**

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

IAGO

He drinks like this every night before he goes to sleep. He'd stay up all night and all day if he didn't drink himself to sleep.

MONTANO

The general should be informed about this.
Maybe he's never noticed, or he only wants to see Cassio's good side. Don't you think so?

*RODERIGO enters.***IAGO**

(*speaking so that only RODERIGO can hear*)
Hello, Roderigo. Please, follow the lieutenant.
Hurry! Go!

*RODERIGO exits.***MONTANO**

And it's too bad that the Moor chose a man with such a deep-rooted drinking problem as his second-in-command. We should definitely say

Original Text

It were an honest action to say
So to the Moor.

IAGO

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

Cry within "Help! help!"

IAGO

But, hark! What noise?

Enter CASSIO, pursuing RODERIGO

Modern Text

something to the Moor.

IAGO

I wouldn't say anything, not if you gave me the
whole island for doing so. I respect Cassio and
I'd like to help cure his alcoholism—

A voice offstage calls "Help! Help!"

IAGO

What's that noise?

CASSIO enters, chasing RODERIGO.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 7

CASSIO

Zounds! You rogue! You rascal!

MONTANO

What's the matter, lieutenant?

CASSIO

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

RODERIGO

Beat me?

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

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

CASSIO

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

MONTANO

115 Come, come, you're drunk.

CASSIO

Drunk?

They fight

IAGO

(aside to RODERIGO)

Away, I say, go out, and cry a mutiny.—

Exit RODERIGO

Nay, good lieutenant! Alas, gentlemen—

120 Help, ho!—Lieutenant—sir, Montano—
Help, masters!—Here's a goodly watch indeed!

Bell rings

CASSIO

Damn you, you villain, you rascal!

MONTANO

What's the matter, lieutenant?

CASSIO

To think that fool had the nerve to try to teach me
manners! I'll beat him until the welts look like
basket-weave!

RODERIGO

You'll beat me?

CASSIO

Are you talking, you villain? *(he hits RODERIGO)*

MONTANO

No, don't hit him, lieutenant! Please, sir, restrain
yourself. *(he restrains CASSIO)*

CASSIO

Let me go, or I'll knock you on the head.

MONTANO

Come on, you're drunk.

CASSIO

Drunk?

MONTANO and CASSIO fight.

IAGO

(speaking so that only RODERIGO can hear) Go
tell everyone there's a riot.—

RODERIGO exits.

No, lieutenant—God, gentlemen—Help—

Lieutenant—sir, Montano—Help, men!—The
night guard is coming!

Someone rings a bell.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 8

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

Enter OTHELLO and attendants

Who's sounding that alarm? The whole town will
riot! God, lieutenant, please stop! You'll be
ashamed of this forever!

OTHELLO enters with attendants.

Original Text

OTHELLO

125 What is the matter here?

MONTANO

I bleed still,

I am hurt to the death. He dies!

OTHELLO

Hold, for your lives!

IAGO

Hold, ho! Lieutenant—sir, Montano—gentlemen,

130 Have you forgot all place of sense and duty?

Hold! The general speaks to you. Hold, for shame!

OTHELLO

Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?

Are we turned Turks? And to ourselves do that

Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

135 For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage

Holds his soul light, he dies upon his motion.

Silence that dreadful bell, it frights the isle

From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?—

140 Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving,

Speak, who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

IAGO

I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,

In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom

Divesting them for bed. And then, but now,

145 As if some planet had unwitting men,

Modern Text

OTHELLO

What is the matter here?

MONTANO

My God, I'm bleeding! I've been mortally

wounded. I'll kill him!

OTHELLO

Stop right now!

IAGO

Stop! Lieutenant—sir, Montano—gentlemen!

Have you forgotten your duty and your sense of

decorum? Stop! The general is talking to you!

Stop, for God's sake!

OTHELLO

How did this all start? Have we all become as

savage as the Turks, treating each other as

badly as they would have treated us? For

heaven's sake, stop this savage brawl! The next

man who swings his sword must not care about

his life, because the instant he strikes, he dies.

Stop that alarm from ringing, it's scaring the

islanders. What's the matter here, gentlemen?—

Honest Iago, you look upset. Speak up and tell

me who started this. Answer me.

IAGO

I don't know. We were all having fun until just a

minute ago; we were as happy as a bride and

groom taking off their clothes. But then the mood

suddenly changed. It was as if something had

driven the men insane and made them point their

swords at one another. I don't

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 9

Swords out, and tilting one at other's breasts

In opposition bloody. I cannot speak

Any beginning to this peevish odds,

And would in action glorious I had lost

150 Those legs that brought me to a part of it.

OTHELLO

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

CASSIO

I pray you pardon me, I cannot speak.

OTHELLO

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil.

The gravity and stillness of your youth

155 The world hath noted, and your name is great

In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter

That you unlace your reputation thus

And spend your rich opinion for the name

Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.

MONTANO

160 Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger.

know what could have started this. I'd rather
have lost my legs in battle than be a part of this!

OTHELLO

How did you manage to lose your self-control like
this, Michael?

CASSIO

Please, excuse me, sir. I can't speak.

OTHELLO

Montano, you're supposed to be calm and

collected. You're famous for it. Wise people

respect you. What in the world made you risk

your reputation like this and become a street

brawler? Tell me.

MONTANO

Othello, I've been seriously hurt. Your officer

Original Text

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

OTHELLO

Now, by heaven,
 My blood begins my safer guides to rule,
 And passion, having my best judgment collied,
 170 Assays to lead the way. If I once stir,

Modern Text

Iago can tell you what happened. I should save
 my breath, since it hurts to talk. I didn't do
 anything wrong that I know of, unless it was a sin
 to defend myself when someone attacked me.

OTHELLO

All right, now I'm starting to lose my cool. By
 God, if you don't tell me what happened you'll all
 suffer. Tell me how this fight began, who started
 it. Whoever is guilty, even if he were my twin
 brother, I swear I'm through with him. We're in a
 town that's just

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 10

Or do but lift this arm, the best of you
 Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know
 How this foul rout began, who set it on,
 And he that is approved in this offence,
 175 Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth,
 Shall lose me. What, in a town of war
 Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
 To manage private and domestic quarrel?
 In night, and on the court and guard of safety?
 180 'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began 't?

MONTANO

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

IAGO

Touch me not so near.
 I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
 185 Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio.
 Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth
 Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general:
 Montano and myself being in speech,
 There comes a fellow crying out for help
 190 And Cassio following him with determined sword
 To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
 Steps in to Cassio and entreats his pause,
 Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
 Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out—
 195 The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot,
 Outran my purpose, and I returned then rather
 For that I heard the clink and fall of swords
 And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight
 I ne'er might say before. When I came back—
 200 For this was brief—I found them close together
 At blow and thrust, even as again they were
 When you yourself did part them.
 More of this matter cannot I report.

avoided a war, everyone's still on edge, and
 you're getting into private fights while you're
 supposed to be on guard duty? That's
 unbelievably bad. Iago, who started it?

MONTANO

I know you're close to Cassio, but if you diverge
 from the truth in any way, you're not a true
 soldier.

IAGO

You're hitting close to home there. I'd rather cut
 my tongue out of my mouth than say anything
 bad about Michael Cassio. But I don't think it'll
 hurt him to tell the truth. This is what happened,
 General. Montano and I were talking when a
 man came running, crying for help. Cassio was
 chasing him with his sword out, trying to kill the
 guy. This gentleman stopped Cassio and told
 him to put away his sword. I followed the guy
 who was crying for help, to keep him from
 scaring the public. But he was fast and outran
 me. When I got back, I heard the swords clinking
 and Cassio swearing. I'd never heard him swear
 before. They were nearly killing each other, as
 you saw when you pulled them apart. I can't tell
 you anything else.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 11

But men are men, the best sometimes forget.
 205 Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
 As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
 Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received
 From him that fled some strange indignity
 Which patience could not pass.

OTHELLO

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

Enter DESDEMONA, attended

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

DESDEMONA

215 What's the matter, dear?

OTHELLO

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

MONTANO is led off

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

*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO***IAGO**

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO

225 Marry, heaven forbid!

But nobody's perfect, and even the best man
 sometimes loses control and strikes out in rage.
 Cassio was wrong to hurt Montano, who was
 only trying to help him, but I'm sure the guy who
 ran away must have offended Cassio in some
 terrible way, and Cassio couldn't let it pass.

OTHELLO

Iago, I know you're fond of Cassio and are
 downplaying this for his benefit. Cassio, I love
 you, but you're never again going to be one of
 my officers.—

DESDEMONA enters with attendants.

Look, you've woken my wife! I'll make you an
 example for the others to learn from.

DESDEMONA

What's the matter, dear?

OTHELLO

Everything's fine, now, sweetheart. Go back to
 bed.— (to MONTANO) I'll see to it personally
 that your wounds are treated. Lead him off.

MONTANO is carried off.

Iago, go and calm down the townspeople.—
 Come with me, Desdemona. Unfortunately, it's
 part of the soldier's life to be woken up by
 trouble.

*Everyone except CASSIO and IAGO exits.***IAGO**

Are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Yes, but no doctor can help me.

IAGO

Oh I hope that's not true!

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 12

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

My reputation, my reputation! I've lost my
 reputation, the longest-living and truest part of
 myself! Everything else in me is just animal-like.
 Oh, my reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO

I swear I thought you meant you'd been hurt
 physically. Your physical health matters more
 than your reputation. A reputation is a useless
 and fake quality that others impose on us. You
 haven't lost it unless you think you have. There
 are lots of ways to get on the general's good side
 again. You've been discharged because he's
 angry, and because he's obliged to do so for
 policy reasons, not because he dislikes you. He's

Original Text

offenseless dog to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again and he's yours.

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

230 I know not.

IAGO

Is 't possible?

CASSIO

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

Modern Text

got to beat up the weak to frighten the strong. Go to him, petition him. He'll change his mind.

CASSIO

I'd rather ask him to hate me than ask such a good commander to accept such a worthless, drunk, stupid officer as myself. Drunk? Babbling senselessly? Squabbling? Swaggering? Swearing? Ranting and raving to my own shadow! Oh, wine is the devil!

IAGO

Who were you chasing with your sword? What did he do to you?

CASSIO

I don't know.

IAGO

Is that possible?

CASSIO

I remember a jumble of impressions, but nothing distinctly. I remember a fight, but not why we were fighting. Oh God, why do men drink and lose their minds? Why do we party until we're like animals?

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 13**IAGO**

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

IAGO

You seem all right now. How did you get better?

CASSIO

My drunkenness went away when anger took over. One weakness led to another, to make me hate myself.

IAGO

Come on, you're being too hard on yourself. I wish none of this had happened, given the situation here, and your rank. But since this has happened, you should fix it for your own good.

CASSIO

I'll ask him for my position back again, and he'll tell me I'm a drunk. Even if I had a whole bunch of mouths, I wouldn't be able to answer that. I was a reasonable man, then I became a fool, and finally a beast! Oh, how strange! Every glass of liquor is damned, and the devil's the main ingredient!

IAGO

Come on now, wine is good for you, if you know how to use it. Don't say anything bad about wine anymore. Lieutenant, I think you know I'm your friend.

CASSIO

I know that, sir. Imagine, me, a drunk!

Original Text

IAGO

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

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 14

CASSIO

240 You advise me well.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Good night, honest Iago.

IAGO

245 And what's he then that says I play the villain?

When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal to thinking and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
Th' inclining Desdemona to subdue

250 In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful

As the free elements. And then for her
To win the Moor, were to renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,
His soul is so enfeathered to her love,

255 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
Even as her appetite shall play the god
With his weak function. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!

260 When devils will the blackest sins put on
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows
As I do now. For whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,

Modern Text

IAGO

Any man can get drunk sometime. I'll tell you what to do. Othello's wife has a lot of influence now. He's completely devoted to her. Go open your heart to her. Ask her to help you get back your position. She is so generous, kind, and ready to help that she thinks it's wrong not to do everything she can, even more than she is asked to do. Ask her to help you heal the rift between her husband and you. I'd bet my lucky stars your problem will be forgotten, and your relationship will be stronger than ever.

CASSIO

That's good advice.

IAGO

I'm helping you because I like and respect you.

CASSIO

I believe it completely. Early in the morning I'll go visit Desdemona and plead my case. My situation is desperate.

IAGO

You're doing the right thing. Good night, lieutenant. I've got to go to the guard tower.

CASSIO

Good night, honest Iago.

Exit

CASSIO exits.

IAGO

Who can say I'm evil when my advice is so good? That's really the best way to win the Moor back again. It's easy to get Desdemona on your side. She's full of good intentions. And the Moor loves her so much he would renounce his Christianity to keep her happy. He's so enslaved by love that she can make him do whatever she wants. How am I evil to advise Cassio to do exactly what'll do him good? That's the kind of argument you'd expect from Satan! When devils are about to commit their biggest sins they put on their most heavenly faces, just like I'm doing now. And while this fool is begging Desdemona to help him, and while she's pleading his case to the Moor, I'll poison the Moor's ear against her, hinting that she's taking Cassio's side because of her lust for him. The more she

Original Text

Modern Text

265 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 15

That she repeals him for her body's lust.
And by how much she strives to do him good
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch
270 And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

Enter RODERIGO

How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?
275 Thou know'st we work by wit and not by witchcraft,
And wit depends on dilatory time.
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee.
And thou, by that small hurt, hath cashiered Cassio.
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
280 Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.
Content thyself awhile. In troth, 'tis morning.
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
Retire thee, go where thou art billeted.
Away, I say, thou shalt know more hereafter.
285 Nay, get thee gone.

Exit RODERIGO

tries to help Cassio, the more she'll shake
Othello's confidence in her. And that's how I'll
turn her good intentions into a big trap to snag
them all.

RODERIGO enters.

Hello, Roderigo!

RODERIGO

I'm totally worn out. My chase is too much for
me. I've spent most of my money, and tonight I
got beaten up. The upshot is that I've got a little
more experience. So with no money, but a little
more wisdom, I'm going back to Venice.

IAGO

You're a poor man if you're this impatient! If you
get hurt, does your wound heal immediately? No,
it heals gradually. We achieve things with our
intelligence, not by magic, and intelligent
planning takes time. Aren't things going well?
Cassio's beaten you up, but with that tiny
sacrifice on your part, you got Cassio
discharged! If we're patient, we'll be rewarded
with the fruits of our labors. My God, it's morning.
All this excitement has made the time fly by. Go
back to where you're staying and go to sleep. Go
on, I'm telling you. You'll understand better later.
Go.

RODERIGO exits.

Act 2, Scene 3, Page 16

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

Exit

Now two things still need to be done. My wife
has to help make Desdemona take Cassio's
side. I'll put her on that. And I need to take the
Moor aside right at the moment when Cassio's
talking to Desdemona, so he'll see them
together. Yes, that's the way I'll do it. Let's not
ruin a brilliant plan by being slow to act.

IAGO exits.

Act 3, Scene 1

Enter CASSIO and MUSICIANS

CASSIO

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

CASSIO enters with MUSICIANS.

CASSIO

Musicians, start playing here. I'll pay you for your
trouble. Play something short that will put the

Original Text

general.”

They play. Enter CLOWN

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

How, sir? How?

CLOWN

5 Are these, I pray you, wind instruments?

MUSICIAN

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLOWN

Oh, thereby hangs a tail.

MUSICIAN

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

10 Well, sir, we will not.

Modern Text

general in a good mood.

The MUSICIANS play. The CLOWN enters.

CLOWN

Your instruments all have a nasal twang. Have they been to [Naples](#)?

MUSICIAN

Excuse me?

CLOWN

Are these wind instruments?

MUSICIAN

Yes, they are.

CLOWN

Oh, there's the problem.

MUSICIAN

What's the problem?

CLOWN

Anyone full of hot air is a problem. But here's some money. The general likes your music a lot, but he asks you to stop playing now.

MUSICIAN

Well, we'll stop, then.

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 2

CLOWN

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

MUSICIAN

We have none such, sir.

CLOWN

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

Exeunt MUSICIANS

CASSIO

Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

CLOWN

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

CASSIO

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

CLOWN

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

Exit CLOWN

Enter IAGO

In happy time, Iago.

CLOWN

If you've got any music that can't be heard, then play that. But as I said, the general isn't really in the mood to hear music now.

MUSICIAN

We don't have any music that can't be heard.

CLOWN

Then pack up your instruments and go away. Go!

The MUSICIANS exit.

CASSIO

Do you hear, my friend?

CLOWN

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

CASSIO

Please don't play games.
(CASSIO gives CLOWN money). There's a bit of gold for you. When the woman taking care of the general's wife wakes up, could you please tell her that Cassio asks to speak with her?

CLOWN

She's awake, sir. If she feels like coming over here, I'll give her your message.

The CLOWN exits.

IAGO enters.

Good to see you, Iago.

Original Text**IAGO**

You have not been abed, then?

CASSIO

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

Act 3, Scene 1, Page 3**IAGO**

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

CASSIO

I humbly thank you for't.

Exit IAGO

I never knew a Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter EMILIA***EMILIA**

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

CASSIO

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

EMILIA

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

CASSIO

I am much bound to you.

*Exeunt***Modern Text****IAGO**

You didn't go to sleep, then?

CASSIO

No. When I left you it was already morning. I've
 been bold, Iago. I've asked to talk to your wife.
 I'm going to ask her to let me talk to Desdemona.

IAGO

I'll send her out to you now. I'll think of a plan to
 get the Moor out of the way, so you can speak
 more openly.

CASSIO

I humbly thank you.

IAGO exits.

Even for a [Florentine](#), I never knew someone so
 kind and honest.

*EMILIA enters.***EMILIA**

Good morning, lieutenant. I'm sorry about what
 happened, but I'm sure everything will turn out all
 right. The general and his wife are talking about it
 now, and she's defending you strongly. The Moor
 says the man you hurt is very important in
 Cyprus, and that under the circumstances he has
 no choice but to refuse to reinstate you. But he
 says he still loves and respects you, and based
 on his own feelings alone he's looking for an
 opportunity to safely take you back.

CASSIO

Please find a way to give me some time alone
 with Desdemona, if you think that's all right.

EMILIA

Please come in. I'll take you to a place where you
 can speak freely.

CASSIO

Thank you very much.

*They exit.***Act 3, Scene 2***Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and GENTLEMEN***OTHELLO**

These letters give, Iago, to the pilot,

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

Iago, give these letters to the ship's captain who

Original Text

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see 't?

GENTLEMEN

We'll wait upon your lordship.

Exeunt

Modern Text

brought me here, and ask him to pay my respects to the Senate of Venice. Now that's done, I'm going to walk on the fortification walls. Look for me there when you come back.

IAGO

I will, my lord.

OTHELLO

Shall we go see this fortification, men?

GENTLEMEN

We're at your service, my lord.

They all exit.

Act 3, Scene 3

Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Do not doubt that. Before Emilia here
20 I give thee warrant of thy place. Assure thee,
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it
To the last article. My lord shall never rest,
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience.

DESDEMONA, CASSIO and EMILIA enter.

DESDEMONA

I'll do everything I can for you, Cassio.

EMILIA

Please do, madam. My husband's so upset about
Cassio's problem you'd think it was his own.

DESDEMONA

Your husband's such a good man. Don't worry,
Cassio. I'm sure you and my husband will be as
friendly as you were before.

CASSIO

My dear beautiful lady, whatever happens to
Michael Cassio, he'll always be your humble
servant.

DESDEMONA

I know that. Thank you. You're my husband's
friend and you've known him a long time. I assure
you the only reason he's keeping away from you
now is political.

CASSIO

Yes, my lady. But those political considerations
might last such a long time that the general will
forget my love and service, especially if I'm gone
and someone else has my job.

DESDEMONA

That'll never happen. Emilia here will be my
witness: I promise you that you'll get your position
back again. And if I promise to help someone, I
do everything I can. My husband will never get a
moment's rest, I'll keep him up at night talking
about you until he runs out

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 2

His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift,

of patience. He will think that his bed has become

Original Text

Modern Text

25 I'll intermingle everything he does
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,
For thy solicitor shall rather die
Than give thy cause away.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

EMILIA

Madam, here comes my lord.

CASSIO

Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESDEMONA

Why, stay and hear me speak.

CASSIO

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

DESDEMONA

Well, do your discretion.

Exit CASSIO

IAGO

Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO

What dost thou say?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

40 I do believe 'twas he.

a conference table for discussing your problem—
he won't be able to get away from it. I'll bring up
your name at every moment. So cheer up. I'm
your advocate, and I'd rather die than give up on
you.

OTHELLO and IAGO enter.

EMILIA

Madam, here comes your husband.

CASSIO

Madam, I'd better leave now.

DESDEMONA

Why not stay and hear me talk to him?

CASSIO

No, madam. I'm very uncomfortable, and that
won't help my case.

DESDEMONA

Well, do whatever you think best.

CASSIO exits.

IAGO

Hey! I don't like that.

OTHELLO

What did you say?

IAGO

Nothing, my lord, or if I did—I don't know what.

OTHELLO

Wasn't that Cassio leaving my wife?

IAGO

Cassio, my lord? No, I don't think so. He wouldn't
sneak away looking so guilty when he saw you
coming.

OTHELLO

I really think it was him.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 3

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Who is 't you mean?

DESDEMONA

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
45 If I have any grace or power to move you
His present reconciliation take.
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgment in an honest face.

50 I prithee, call him back.

OTHELLO

Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA

What's this, my lord? I was talking to a petitioner
here just now, someone who's suffering from your
anger.

OTHELLO

Who do you mean?

DESDEMONA

Your lieutenant, Cassio. Oh, if I've got any
influence over you at all, please patch things up
with him. In my judgment, this man truly loves
you, and his mistake was innocent rather than
wicked. Please call him and tell him to come back
here.

OTHELLO

Was that him just now?

Original Text

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

55 Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.

DESDEMONA

But shall 't be shortly?

OTHELLO

The sooner, sweet, for you.

DESDEMONA

Shall 't be tonight at supper?

OTHELLO

No, not tonight.

DESDEMONA

Tomorrow dinner, then?

OTHELLO

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

Modern Text

DESDEMONA

Yes. He feels so bad and humble that I feel bad
along with him. My love, call him back in here.

OTHELLO

Not now, my sweet Desdemona. Some other
time.

DESDEMONA

But will it be soon?

OTHELLO

Very soon, because you want it.

DESDEMONA

Will it be tonight at supper?

OTHELLO

No, not tonight.

DESDEMONA

Then tomorrow at dinner?

OTHELLO

I won't be eating dinner at home. I'll be meeting
the captains at the citadel.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 4

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

I will deny thee nothing!

DESDEMONA

Well then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morning.
Or Tuesday noon or at night, or Wednesday
morning. Please just name a time, but don't wait
more than three days. He's very sorry. His
mistake was hardly worth punishing him for in the
first place—though in wartime it is sometimes
necessary to make examples out of even the best
soldiers. So when should he come? Tell me,
Othello. I can't imagine you asking me for
something and me telling you no or standing
there muttering. Michael Cassio came with you
when you were trying to win my love. Sometimes
I'd criticize you to him, and he'd defend you. And
now I have to make this big fuss about bringing
him back? I swear, I could do so much—

OTHELLO

Please, no more. He can come whenever he
wants. I won't refuse you anything.

DESDEMONA

Don't act like you're doing me a favor! This is like
if I asked you to wear your gloves when it's cold
outside, or eat nutritious food, or do something
that's good for you. If I ever have to ask you for
something that will put your luck to the test, it'll be
something difficult and terrible.

OTHELLO

I won't deny you anything! But in return, please,

Original Text

Whereon I do beseech thee, grant me this,
85 To leave me but a little to myself.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 5

DESDEMONA

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

Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Why of thy thought, Iago?

IAGO

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

OTHELLO

Oh, yes, and went between us very oft.

IAGO

Indeed?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Honest, my lord?

Modern Text

do one thing for me: leave me alone for a little while.

DESDEMONA

Would I ever deny you anything? No. Goodbye, my husband.

OTHELLO

Goodbye, my Desdemona. I'll come see you right away.

DESDEMONA

Come here, Emilia.—Do whatever you feel like doing, my husband, and I'll obey you.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.

OTHELLO

What a wonderful girl! God help me, I love you!
And when I stop loving you, the universe will fall back into the chaos that was there when time began.

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

What is it, Iago?

IAGO

When you were wooing Desdemona, did Michael Cassio know about it?

OTHELLO

Yes, he knew about it the whole time. Why do you ask?

IAGO

I was just curious. No reason.

OTHELLO

Why are you curious, Iago?

IAGO

I didn't realize he knew her.

OTHELLO

Oh, yes. He carried messages back and forth between us very often.

IAGO

Oh, really?

OTHELLO

Oh, really? Yes, really. Do you see something wrong with that? Isn't he an honest man?

IAGO

Honest, my lord?

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 6

OTHELLO

OTHELLO

Original Text

Honest, ay, honest.

IAGO

My lord, for aught I know.

OTHELLO

What dost thou think?

IAGO

Think, my lord?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I think so too.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 7

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO

Why then I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO

- 135 Nay, yet there's more in this.
I prithee speak to me as to thy thinkings,

Modern Text

Honest, yes, honest.

IAGO

As far as I know, sir.

OTHELLO

What are you thinking?

IAGO

Thinking, my lord?

OTHELLO

"Thinking, my lord?" My God, you keep repeating everything I say as if you were thinking something too horrible to say out loud. You're thinking something. Just a minute ago I heard you say you didn't like it when Cassio left my wife. What didn't you like? And when I told you he was involved the whole time I was trying to get Desdemona, you were like, "Oh, really?" And then you frowned and wrinkled up your forehead as if you were imagining something horrible. If you're my friend, tell me what you're thinking.

IAGO

My lord, you know I'm your friend.

OTHELLO

I think you are. And I know you're full of love and honesty, and you think carefully before you speak. That's why these pauses of yours frighten me. If some fool were withholding things from me, I wouldn't think twice about it. If some lying, cheating villain acted like that, it would just be a trick. But when an honest man acts like that, you know he's wrestling with bad thoughts and can't help it.

IAGO

As for Michael Cassio, I think it would be safe for me to swear that he's honest.

OTHELLO

I think so too.

IAGO

People should be what they appear to be. If they're not honest, they shouldn't look like they are!

OTHELLO

Absolutely, people should be what they appear to be.

IAGO

In that case, I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO

No, I think there's more to this than you're letting on. Please tell me what you're thinking—even

Original Text**Modern Text**

As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

IAGO

Good my lord, pardon me,
Though I am bound to every act of duty
140 I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false,
As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure
Wherein uncleanly apprehensions
145 Keep leets and law-days and in sessions sit
With meditations lawful?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

your worst suspicions.

IAGO

Please don't make me do that, sir. I have to obey all your orders, but surely I'm not obligated to reveal my deepest thoughts—even slaves aren't expected to do that. You want me to say what I'm thinking? What if my thoughts are disgusting and wrong? Even good people think horrible things sometimes. Who is so pure that they never think a bad thought?

OTHELLO

You're not being a good friend, Iago, if you *eventhink* your friend has been wronged and you don't tell him about it.

IAGO

Please don't ask me to tell you. I might be completely wrong. I have a bad tendency to be suspicious of people and to look too closely into what they're doing. Often I imagine crimes that aren't really there. You would be wise to ignore my weak guesses and imaginary suspicions, and don't worry yourself about the meaningless things I've noticed. For me to tell you my thoughts would only destroy your peace of mind, and

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 8

Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom
To let you know my thoughts.

OTHELLO

What dost thou mean?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

it wouldn't be wise, honest, or responsible for me to tell them.

OTHELLO

What are you talking about?

IAGO

A good reputation is the most valuable thing we have—men and women alike. If you steal my money, you're just stealing trash. It's something, it's nothing: it's yours, it's mine, and it'll belong to thousands more. But if you steal my reputation, you're robbing me of something that doesn't make you richer, but makes me much poorer.

OTHELLO

I'm going to find out what you're thinking.

IAGO

You can't find that out, even if you held my heart in your hand you couldn't make me tell you. And as long my heart's inside my body, you never will.

OTHELLO

Original Text

Ha!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Oh, misery!

IAGO

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

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 9

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Modern Text

What?

IAGO

Beware of jealousy, my lord! It's a green-eyed monster that makes fun of the victims it devours. The man who knows his wife is cheating on him is happy, because at least he isn't friends with the man she's sleeping with. But think of the unhappiness of a man who worships his wife, yet doubts her faithfulness. He suspects her, but still loves her.

OTHELLO

Oh, what misery!

IAGO

The person who's poor and contented is rich enough. But infinite riches are nothing to someone who's always afraid he'll be poor. God, help us not be jealous!

OTHELLO

Why are you telling me this? Do you think I would live a life of jealousy, tormented by new suspicions every hour? No. If there's any doubt, there is no doubt. I might as well be a goat if I ever let myself become obsessed with the kind of suspicions you're implying. If you say my wife is beautiful, eats well, loves good company, speaks freely, sings, plays music, and dances well, you're not making me jealous. When a woman is virtuous, talents like these just make her better. And I'm not going to start feeling inferior. She had her eyes wide open when she chose me. No, Iago, I'll have to see some real evidence before I start suspecting her of anything bad, and when I suspect her, I'll look for proof, and if there's proof, that's when I'll let go of my love and my jealousy.

IAGO

I'm glad to hear you say that. Now I can show you my devotion and my duty with more honesty. So please listen to me. I'm not talking about proof yet. Watch your wife. Watch how she is with Cassio. Just watch—don't be either completely suspicious or completely trustful. I wouldn't want to see you taken advantage of because you're such an open and trusting guy. Watch out! I know the people of Venice well. They let God see things they wouldn't show their husbands. They don't avoid doing things that are wrong, they just try not to get caught.

OTHELLO

Original Text

Modern Text

210 Dost thou say so?

Do you really think so?

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 10

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

And so she did.

IAGO

Why, go to then.

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

OTHELLO

I am bound to thee forever.

IAGO

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

OTHELLO

220 Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO

Trust me, I fear it has.

I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved.
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach

225 Than to suspicion.

OTHELLO

I will not.

IAGO

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

My lord, I see you're moved.

IAGO

She lied to her father to marry you. And when
she pretended to be afraid of you, she loved you
the most.

OTHELLO

That's right, she did.

IAGO

Well, there you go. She was so young, but she
deceived her father so thoroughly he thought it
was witchcraft! But I'm sorry I've blurted all this
out. I beg your pardon for loving you too much.

OTHELLO

I'm indebted to you forever.

IAGO

You seem a little depressed about this.

OTHELLO

Not at all, not at all.

IAGO

Really, I'm afraid you are. I hope you remember
that I said all this because I love you. But I see
you're troubled. Please don't take what I said
more seriously than it deserves to be taken.

OTHELLO

I won't.

IAGO

If you take it too seriously, it'll have bad effects
that I didn't want it to have. Cassio's a good
friend of mine—My lord, I can see you're upset.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 11

OTHELLO

No, not much moved.

I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

And yet how nature, erring from itself—

IAGO

Ay, there's the point. As, to be bold with you,

OTHELLO

No, not too upset. I'm sure Desdemona would
never cheat on me.

IAGO

I hope she never does! And I hope you keep on
thinking she wouldn't.

OTHELLO

But still, it's true that good things can go bad,
away from their true natures—

IAGO

That's the point I'm trying to make. If I can be

Original Text

235 Not to affect many proposèd matches
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
Where to we see in all things nature tends—
Foh! One may smell in such a will most rank,
Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural.

240 But—pardon me—I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,
May fall to match you with her country forms,
And happily repent.

OTHELLO

Farewell, farewell.

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

250 (*returns*) My lord, I would I might entreat your honor
To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time.
Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place,
For sure, he fills it up with great ability,
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,
255 You shall by that perceive him and his means.
Note if your lady strain his entertainment

Modern Text

frank with you, she veered away from her own
nature in turning down all those young men from
her own country, with her skin color, with her
status—everything her nature would have drawn
her to—Ugh! You can almost smell the dark and
ugly desires inside her, the unnatural thoughts—
But—I'm sorry—I didn't mean to refer to her
specifically just now. I only worry that she might
snap back to her natural taste in men one day,
and compare you unfavorably to other Italians.

OTHELLO

Goodbye, goodbye. If you see anything else, let
me know. Tell your wife to watch her. Leave me
alone now, Iago.

IAGO

My lord, I'll say goodbye now. (*beginning to exit*)

OTHELLO

(*to himself*) Why did I ever get married? I'm sure
this good and honest man sees and knows more,
much more, than he's telling me.

IAGO

(*returning*) My lord, please don't think about this
any more. Time will tell. It's right for Cassio to
have his lieutenantcy back—he's very talented.
But keep him away for a while, and you'll see
how he goes about getting it back. Notice
whether your wife insists on your

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 12

With any strong or vehement importunity.
Much will be seen in that. In the meantime,
Let me be thought too busy in my fears—

260 As worthy cause I have to fear I am—
And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

OTHELLO

Fear not my government.

IAGO

I once more take my leave.

OTHELLO

This fellow's of exceeding honesty
And knows all quantities, with a learned spirit,
265 Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind
To prey at fortune. Haply, for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
270 That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. Oh, curse of marriage

giving it back to him. That will tell you a lot. But in
the meantime, just assume that I'm paranoid—as
I'm pretty sure I am—and keep thinking she's
innocent, please.

OTHELLO

Don't worry about how I handle it.

IAGO

I'll say goodbye once more.

Exit

IAGO exits.

OTHELLO

This Iago is extremely honest and good, and he
knows a lot about human behavior. If it turns out
that she really is running around on me, I'll send
her away, even though it'll break my heart.
Maybe because I'm black, and I don't have nice
manners like courtiers do, or because I'm getting
old—but that's not much—She's gone, and I've
been cheated on. I have no choice but to hate
her. Oh what a curse marriage is! We think our
beautiful wives belong to us, but their desires are
free! I'd rather be a toad in a moldy basement

Original Text

That we can call these delicate creatures ours
 275 And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad
 And live upon the vapor of a dungeon
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love
 For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague to great ones,
 Prerogative are they less than the base.
 280 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.
 Even then this forkèd plague is fated to us
 When we do quicken. Look where she comes.

Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA

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

Modern Text

than to have only a part of someone I love,
 sharing the rest of her with others. This is the
 plague of important men—our wives betray us
 more than those of poor men. It's our destiny,
 like death. We are destined to be betrayed when
 we are born. Oh, here she comes.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.

If she's cheated on me, then heaven itself is a
 fake. I don't believe it.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 13

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

I am to blame.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

290 I have a pain upon my forehead, here.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Your napkin is too little,
 295 Let it alone.

Her handkerchief drops

Come, I'll go in with you.

DESDEMONA

I am very sorry that you are not well.

Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA

EMILIA

(picks up the handkerchief)

I am glad I have found this napkin,
 300 This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
 My wayward husband hath a hundred times

DESDEMONA

What's going on, Othello, darling? The nobles of
 Cyprus whom you invited to dinner are waiting
 for you.

OTHELLO

I'm sorry.

DESDEMONA

Why are you whispering? Are you sick?

OTHELLO

I have a [headache](#), right here in my forehead.

DESDEMONA

That's from lack of sleep. It'll go away. Let me
 wrap up your head, and it will feel okay in less
 than an hour. *(she pulls out a handkerchief)*

OTHELLO

No, your handkerchief's too little. Leave my head
 alone.

The handkerchief falls to the floor.

Come on, I'll escort you to dinner.

DESDEMONA

I'm very sorry you're not feeling well.

OTHELLO and DESDEMONA exit.

EMILIA

(picking up the handkerchief) I'm glad I found this
 handkerchief. It's the first keepsake the Moor
 gave her. My stubborn husband has asked me to
 steal it a

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 14

Wooed me to steal it, but she so loves the token
 (For he conjured her she should ever keep it)
 That she reserves it evermore about her
 305 To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out
 And give 't Iago. What he will do with it
 Heaven knows, not I.

hundred times. But she loves it so much (since
 Othello told her she should always keep it with
 her) that she always keeps it near her to kiss it
 and talk to it. I'll copy the embroidery pattern and
 then give it to Iago. Heaven knows what he's
 going to do with it. I only try to satisfy his whims.

Original Text

Modern Text

I nothing but to please his fantasy.

Enter IAGO

IAGO enters.

IAGO

How now! What do you here alone?

IAGO

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

EMILIA

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

EMILIA

Don't snap at me. I've got something for you.

IAGO

A thing for me? It is a common thing—

IAGO

You've got something for me? It's a common thing—

EMILIA

Ha?

EMILIA

What?

IAGO

To have a foolish wife.

IAGO

—to have a stupid wife.

EMILIA

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

EMILIA

Oh, is that so? And what would you give me for the handkerchief?

315 For the same handkerchief?

IAGO

What handkerchief?

IAGO

What handkerchief?

EMILIA

What handkerchief?

EMILIA

What handkerchief? The one the Moor gave to Desdemona, which you asked me to steal so many times.

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

IAGO

320 Hast stolen it from her?

IAGO

You stole it from her?

EMILIA

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

EMILIA

No, actually. She dropped it carelessly, and, seizing the opportunity, since I was here, I picked it up. Look, here it is.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 15

IAGO

A good wench, give it me.

IAGO

Good girl, give it to me.

EMILIA

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

EMILIA

And what are you going to do with it? Why did you want it so much that you begged me to steal it?

IAGO

Why, what is that to you?

IAGO

What's it to you?

EMILIA

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

EMILIA

If you don't need it for some important reason, then give it back to me. Poor lady, she'll go crazy when she sees it's missing.

IAGO

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

IAGO

Don't admit to knowing anything about it. I need it. Now go, leave me.

Exit EMILIA

EMILIA exits.

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin
And let him find it. Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong

I'll leave this handkerchief at Cassio's house and let him find it. To a jealous man, a meaningless little thing like this looks like absolute proof. This

Original Text

As proofs of holy writ. This may do something.
 335 The Moor already changes with my poison.
 Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
 But with a little act upon the blood
 Burn like the mines of sulfur.

Enter OTHELLO

I did say so.
 340 Look, where he comes. Not poppy nor mandragora
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou owedst yesterday.

OTHELLO

Ha! Ha! False to me?

IAGO

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

Modern Text

handkerchief may be useful to me. The Moor's
 mind has already become infected with my
 poisonous suggestions. Ideas can be like
 poisons. At first they hardly even taste bad, but
 once they get into your blood they start burning
 like hot lava.

OTHELLO enters.

Here he comes. No drugs or sleeping pills will
 ever give you the restful sleep that you had last
 night.

OTHELLO

Argh! She's cheating on me?

IAGO

Oh, general, please, no more of that!

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 16

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

How now, my lord!

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

I am sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Is 't possible, my lord?

OTHELLO

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,

OTHELLO

Get lost! You've tortured me with these thoughts.
 It is better to be tricked completely than to only
 suspect a little.

IAGO

What's with you, my lord?

OTHELLO

I had no idea she was cheating on me. I never
 saw it or suspected it, so it never hurt me. I slept
 well, ate well, and was happy. I never saw
 Cassio's kisses on her lips. A man who's robbed,
 but doesn't miss what's stolen, isn't robbed at all.

IAGO

I'm sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO

I would've been happy if the whole army had had
 sex with her, the lowest-ranking grunts and all,
 as long as I didn't know anything about it. Oh,
 goodbye to my peace of mind! Goodbye to my
 happiness! Goodbye to the soldiers and to the
 wars that make men great! Goodbye! Goodbye
 to the horses and the trumpets and the drums,
 the flute and the splendid banners, and all those
 proud displays and pageantry of war! And you
 deadly cannons that roar like thunderbolts
 thrown by the gods, goodbye! Othello's career is
 over.

IAGO

Is this possible, my lord?

OTHELLO

You villain, you'd better be able to prove my

Original Text

370 Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof
Or by the worth of mine eternal soul
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 17

IAGO

Is 't come to this?

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 18

IAGO

I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion.
I do repent me that I put it to you.

Modern Text

wife's a whore! Be sure of it. Get me proof I can
see. If you can't, trust me, you won't want to feel
my rage!

IAGO

Has it come to this?

OTHELLO

Show me, or at least prove it beyond the shadow
of a doubt. If you can't, your life is worthless!

IAGO

My noble lord—

OTHELLO

If you're slandering her just to torture me, then
it'll be no use to pray for mercy or say you're
sorry. You might as well go ahead and commit
every unspeakable crime you can think of,
because there's nothing you could do that would top
what you've already done!

IAGO

Oh, heaven help me! Aren't you a rational human
being? Don't you have any sense at all?
Goodbye. I resign my official position. I'm such
an idiot for always telling the truth! What a
horrible world we live in! Listen, pay attention,
everybody. It's not safe to be straightforward and
honest. I'm glad you've taught me this valuable
lesson. From now on, I'll never try to help a friend
when it hurts him so much to hear the truth.

OTHELLO

No, stop. You should always be honest.

IAGO

I should always be wise. Honesty's stupid, it
makes me lose my friends even when I'm trying
to help them.

OTHELLO

I swear, I think my wife's faithful, and I think she's
not. I think you're trustworthy one minute and
then not the next. I need proof! Her reputation
was as pure as the snow, but now it's as dirty
and black as my own face. As long as there
are ropes, knives, poison, fire, or streams to
drown in, I won't stand for this. Oh, how I wish I
knew the truth!

IAGO

I see you're all eaten up with emotion. I'm sorry I
said anything. You want proof?

Original Text

You would be satisfied?

OTHELLO

Would? Nay, and I will.

IAGO

And may, but how? How satisfied, my lord?

405 Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on,
Behold her topped?

OTHELLO

Death and damnation! Oh!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

IAGO

420 I do not like the office.
But, sith I am entered in this cause so far,
Pricked to 't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
425 I could not sleep. There are a kind of men
So loose of soul that in their sleeps will mutter

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 19

Their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio.
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."

430 And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry "O sweet creature!" and then kiss me hard,
As if he plucked up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips, lay his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh, and kiss, and then
435 Cry "Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!"

OTHELLO

Oh, monstrous! Monstrous!

IAGO

Nay, this was but his dream.

Modern Text

OTHELLO

Want? Yes, I want it, and I'll get it.

IAGO

But how? How will you get proof? Are you going
to hide and watch them having sex?

OTHELLO

Death and damnation! Oh!

IAGO

I think it would be very hard to arrange for them
to have sex while you watched. If anyone sees
them in bed together besides themselves, I
guess we could damn them then. So what can
we do? What can I say? What proof is there? It'd
be impossible for you to watch them, even if they
were as horny as animals in heat and as stupid
as drunks. But if you would be willing to accept
circumstantial evidence as proof, we can get
that.

OTHELLO

Give me one good reason to think she's cheating
on me.

IAGO

I don't like what you're asking me to do. But
since I've gotten myself involved this far,
because I'm so stupidly honest and because I
like you so much, I'll keep going. I recently
shared a bed with Cassio, and I couldn't sleep
because of a raging toothache. Well, some
people talk in their sleep, and Cassio is one of
them. I heard him saying, "Sweet Desdemona,
let's be careful and hide our love," in his sleep.
And then he grabbed my hand and said, "Oh, my
darling!" and

kissed me hard, as if he were trying to suck my
lips off. Then he put his leg over mine, and
sighed and kissed me, and said, "Damn fate for
giving you to the Moor!"

OTHELLO

Oh, that's monstrous! Monstrous!

IAGO

No, it was just a dream.

Original Text

OTHELLO

But this denoted a foregone conclusion.

IAGO

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

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

OTHELLO

I'll tear her all to pieces!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

If it be that—

IAGO

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

Modern Text

OTHELLO

But it shows that something has already happened.

IAGO

It's a reason for suspicion, even though it's just a dream. And it might back up other evidence that may seem too flimsy.

OTHELLO

I'll tear her to pieces!

IAGO

No, be reasonable. We don't have any proof yet. She might still be faithful. Just tell me this: have you ever seen her holding a handkerchief with an embroidered strawberry pattern on it?

OTHELLO

Yes, I gave her one like that. It was my first gift to her.

IAGO

I don't know about that, but I saw a handkerchief like that today. I'm sure it belongs to your wife, and I saw Cassio use it to wipe his beard.

OTHELLO

If it's the same one—

IAGO

If it's the same one, or any one that belongs to her, then together with the other evidence it's pretty strong.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 20

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Yet be content.

OTHELLO

Oh, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO

Patience, I say. Your mind may change.

OTHELLO

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on
465 To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace

OTHELLO

Oh, I'd kill that bastard Cassio forty thousand times if I could! Killing him once is not enough revenge. Now I see it's true. Oh, Iago, all the love I felt is gone, vanished in the wind. Welcome, hatred and vengeance! Get out of my heart, love! My heart feels like it's full of poisonous snakes!

IAGO

Calm down—

OTHELLO

I want blood!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Never, Iago. My thoughts of revenge are flowing through me like a violent river, never turning back to love, only flowing toward full revenge that'll swallow them up. I swear to God I'll get revenge. (*he kneels*)

Original Text

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

IAGO

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

Modern Text

IAGO

Don't get up yet. Let heaven be my witness—I'm putting my mind, my heart, and my hands in Othello's control. Let him command me, and I'll do whatever he asks, no matter how violent.

Act 3, Scene 3, Page 21

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

I am your own for ever.

OTHELLO

I accept your devotion with my deepest love. I'll put you to the test right away. Within the next three days I want to hear you tell me that Cassio's dead.

IAGO

My friend Cassio is dead. It's done, because you request it. But let her live.

OTHELLO

Damn her, the wicked whore! Oh, damn her, damn her! Come away with me. I'm going inside to think up some way to kill that beautiful devil. You're my lieutenant now.

IAGO

I'm yours forever.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 4

Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and CLOWN

DESDEMONA

Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

CLOWN

I dare not say he lies anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why, man?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

5 Go to. Where lodges he?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA, EMILIA and the CLOWN enter.

DESDEMONA

Excuse me, do you know which room Lieutenant Cassio *lies in*?

CLOWN

I wouldn't dare say he lies anywhere.

DESDEMONA

Why do you say that?

CLOWN

He's a soldier. If I accused a soldier of lying, he'd stab me.

DESDEMONA

Oh, come on. Where does he sleep?

CLOWN

Telling you where he's sleeping is like telling you

Original Text

DESDEMONA

Can anything be made of this?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

Can you inquire him out and be edified by report?

CLOWN

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

DESDEMONA

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

CLOWN

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

Exit

Modern Text

where I'm lying.

DESDEMONA

What on earth does that mean?

CLOWN

I don't know where he's staying, so if I told you he's sleeping here or there, I'd be lying.

DESDEMONA

Can you ask around and find out?

CLOWN

I'll go ask questions everywhere.

DESDEMONA

Find him and tell him to come here. Tell him I've spoken to my husband on his behalf, and I think everything will be all right.

CLOWN

I think I can do that. It's not too much to ask.

CLOWN exits.

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 2

DESDEMONA

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

I know not, madam.

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

- 20 Is he not jealous?

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

Look where he comes.

Enter OTHELLO

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Well, my good lady.—*(aside)* Oh, hardness to
dissemble!—

How do you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Well, my good lord.

DESDEMONA

Where could I have lost that handkerchief,
Emilia?

EMILIA

I don't know, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I'd rather have lost a purse full of
gold coins. This would be enough to make my
husband suspect me, if he wasn't so free of
jealousy.

EMILIA

He's not jealous?

DESDEMONA

Who, him? I think all tendencies to jealousy were
burned out of him by the sun of his native land.

EMILIA

Look, here he comes.

OTHELLO enters.

DESDEMONA

I won't leave him alone until he gives Cassio his
job back.—How are you, my lord?

OTHELLO

I'm fine, my lady.—*(to himself)* Oh, it's so hard to
pretend!—How are you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

I'm fine, my lord.

Original Text**OTHELLO**

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

DESDEMONA

It hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

OTHELLO

- 30 This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart.
Hot, hot, and moist. This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting, and prayer,

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 3

Much castigation, exercise devout,
For here's a young and sweating devil here,
35 That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,
A frank one.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

What promise, chuck?

DESDEMONA

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO

- 45 That which I gave you.

DESDEMONA

I have it not about me.

OTHELLO

Not?

DESDEMONA

No, indeed, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's a fault. That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give,
She was a charmer and could almost read

Modern Text**OTHELLO**

Give me your [hand](#). Your hand's moist, my lady.

DESDEMONA

It's moist because it's still young and
inexperienced.

OTHELLO

It says you're fertile, and you've got a giving
heart. Hot, hot and moist. With a hand like this
you need to

fast and pray to stave off temptations. Someone
with a young sweating hand like this one is bound
to act up sooner or later. It's a nice hand, an open
one.

DESDEMONA

You're right to say that. This was the hand that
gave you my heart.

OTHELLO

This hand gives itself away very freely. In the old
days, people used to give their hearts to each
other when they joined their hands in marriage.
But these days, people give each other their
hands without their hearts.

DESDEMONA

I don't know about that. Now, don't forget, you
promised me something.

OTHELLO

What did I promise, my dear?

DESDEMONA

I sent for Cassio to come talk with you.

OTHELLO

I have a bad cold that's bothering me. Lend me
your handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

Here, my lord.

OTHELLO

No, the one I gave you.

DESDEMONA

I don't have it with me.

OTHELLO

You don't?

DESDEMONA

No, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's not good. An Egyptian woman gave that
handkerchief to my mother. She was a witch, and
she could

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 4

Original Text

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

DESDEMONA

Is 't possible?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Indeed? Is 't true?

OTHELLO

Most veritable, therefore look to 't well.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Ha! Wherefore?

DESDEMONA

70 Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

Bless us!

Modern Text

almost read people's thoughts. She told my mother that as long as she kept it with her, my father would love and desire her. But if she lost it or gave it away, my father would start hating her and looking at other women. When she was dying she gave it to me and told me to give it to my wife when I got married. I did. So pay attention. Treat it as something precious. Losing it or giving it away would be an unspeakable loss, a loss like none other.

DESDEMONA

Is that possible?

OTHELLO

Yes, it's true. There's magic in its fabric. A two-hundred-year-old witch sewed it while she was in a fevered trance. The silk came from sacred silkworms, and it was dyed with fluid made from embalmed virgins' hearts.

DESDEMONA

Really? Is that true?

OTHELLO

It's absolutely true, so take good care of it.

DESDEMONA

I wish I had never seen it!

OTHELLO

Ha! Why?

DESDEMONA

Why are you yelling at me so angrily?

OTHELLO

Is it lost? Is it gone? Tell me, is it missing?

DESDEMONA

God help me!

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 5

OTHELLO

Say you?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

75 How!

DESDEMONA

I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO

Fetch 't, let me see 't.

DESDEMONA

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
 This is a trick to put me from my suit.

OTHELLO

What do you have to say for yourself?

DESDEMONA

It's not lost, but what if it were?

OTHELLO

What do you mean?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Then bring it here. Let me see it.

DESDEMONA

I could, sir. But I don't want to now. This is just a trick to take my mind off what I'm asking you for.

Original Text

Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHELLO

80 Fetch me the handkerchief—my mind misgives.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

In sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO

Away!

EMILIA

Is not this man jealous?

Modern Text

Please hire Cassio again.

OTHELLO

Bring me the handkerchief—My mind is full of
doubt.

DESDEMONA

Come on. You know you'll never find a more
capable man.

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

He's counted on your friendship for his success.
He's shared dangers with you—

OTHELLO

The handkerchief!

DESDEMONA

Really, I don't think you're behaving very well.

OTHELLO

Damn it!

Exit

OTHELLO exits.

EMILIA

And you say he's not jealous?

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 6

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man.
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food.
To eat us hungerly, and when they are full,
95 They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!

Enter CASSIO and IAGO

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

Madam, my former suit. I do beseech you
100 That by your virtuous means I may again
Exist, and be a member of his love
Whom I, with all the office of my heart
Entirely honor. I would not be delayed.
If my offence be of such mortal kind
105 That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,
Nor purposed merit in futurity,
Can ransom me into his love again,

DESDEMONA

I never saw him like this before. There must be
some magic in that handkerchief. I'm miserable
that I lost it.

EMILIA

Men are all the same, but it takes longer than a
year or two to see how bad they are. They're like
stomachs and we're just the food. They eat us up
hungrily, and when they're full, they vomit us up.
Look, here comes Cassio and my husband.

IAGO and CASSIO enter.

IAGO

There's no other way. She's the one who's got to
do it. And what luck, she's here! Go ahead and
ask her.

DESDEMONA

Hello, Cassio. How are you?

CASSIO

Nothing, madam. Just my earlier request. I'm
begging you to help me get back on his good
side. I'm devoted to him with all my heart. I can't
wait any longer. If my wrongdoing was so serious
that I can't get back into his good graces either
by my past service, or my present situation, or
the promise of devoted service in the future, just
knowing that would help me. Then I could stop
wondering, and find some other career.

Original Text

Modern Text

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

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 7

DESDEMONA

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

IAGO

Is my lord angry?

EMILIA

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

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

I prithee, do so.

Exit IAGO

Something, sure, of state,
 130 Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice
 Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,
 Hath puddled his clear spirit, and in such cases
 Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,
 Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so,
 135 For let our finger ache and it endues
 Our other healthful members even to that sense
 Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,
 Nor of them look for such observances
 As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,
 140 I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,
 Arraigning his unkindness with my soul,
 But now I find I had suborned the witness,
 And he's indicted falsely.

DESDEMONA

I'm sorry, dear Cassio, but now is not the right
 time to bring up your case. My husband's not
 himself. If his face changed as much as his
 personality has, I wouldn't recognize him. God
 knows I have done my best to argue for you, and
 made him angry at me for being so aggressive.
 You'll just have to be patient for a little while. I'll
 do what I can, more than I'd do for myself. Let
 that be enough for you.

IAGO

Is Othello angry?

EMILIA

He just left, clearly upset about something.

IAGO

Can he even get angry? It's hard to believe. I've
 seen him stay calm when cannons were blowing
 his soldiers to bits, even killing his own brother
 without him batting an eyelid—is he really upset?
 It must be about something important. I'll go talk
 to him. If he's angry, there must be something
 seriously wrong.

DESDEMONA

Please, do so.

IAGO exits.

There must be some political news from Venice,
 or some dangerous plot here in Cyprus has
 ruined his good mood. Men always get angry
 about little things when they're really worried
 about bigger ones. That's the way it goes. When
 our finger hurts, it makes the rest of the body
 hurt too. We shouldn't expect men to be perfect,
 or for them to be as polite as on the weddingday.
 Oh, Emilia, I'm so inexperienced that I thought
 he was being unkind, but actually I was judging
 him harshly.

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 8

EMILIA

Pray heaven it be

EMILIA

I hope to God it's something political, like you

Original Text

State matters, as you think, and no conception
145 Nor no jealous toy concerning you.

DESDEMONA

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

Heaven keep the monster from Othello's mind!

EMILIA

Lady, amen.

DESDEMONA

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

CASSIO

I humbly thank your ladyship.

Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA

Enter BIANCA

BIANCA

Save you, friend Cassio!

Modern Text

think, and not jealousy involving you.

DESDEMONA

Oh no! I never gave him reason to be jealous.

EMILIA

But jealous people don't think like that. They're never jealous for a reason; they're just jealous. It's like a monster that just grows and grows, out of nothing.

DESDEMONA

I hope God keeps that monster from growing in Othello's mind!

EMILIA

Amen to that, lady.

DESDEMONA

I'll go look for him—Cassio, stay around here. If he's in a good mood I'll mention you again, and do everything I can.

CASSIO

I thank you, lady.

DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.

BIANCA enters.

BIANCA

Hello, Cassio!

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 9

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

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

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

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

CASSIO

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

CASSIO

Why are you so far from home? How are you, my pretty Bianca? To tell you the truth, I was just going to your house.

BIANCA

And I was just going to yours. You've kept away from me for a week? Seven days and seven nights? A hundred and sixty-eight hours? And lovers' hours are a hundred and sixty times longer than normal ones! What a tedious wait!

CASSIO

I'm sorry, Bianca. All this time I've been depressed and had problems on my mind. When I get some free time I'll make it up to you. (he gives her DESDEMONA's handkerchief) Sweet Bianca, would you copy this embroidery pattern for me?

BIANCA

Oh, Cassio, where did you get this? This is a gift from another woman, a new lover! Now I know why you've been staying away from me. Has it come to this? Well, well.

CASSIO

Oh, come on, woman. Stop jumping to silly conclusions. Now you're jealous, thinking that

Original Text

From whence you have them. You are jealous now
 175 That this is from some mistress, some remembrance.

No, in good troth, Bianca.

BIANCA

Why, whose is it?

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

Leave you! Wherefore?

Modern Text

this is from some mistress of mine, but I swear
 it's not, Bianca.

BIANCA

Well, whose is it?

CASSIO

I don't even know. I found it in my room. It's pretty. Someone is certainly looking for it, and I'll have to give it back. So I'd like it copied. Take it and do that for me, and leave me alone for a while.

BIANCA

Leave you alone! Why?

Act 3, Scene 4, Page 10

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

Why, I pray you?

CASSIO

185 Not that I love you not.

BIANCA

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

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

190 'Tis very good. I must be circumstanced.

CASSIO

I'm waiting here for the general, and I don't want him to see me with a woman.

BIANCA

And why's that?

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

But you don't love me. Please, just walk with me a little ways, and tell me if I'll see you later tonight.

CASSIO

I can only walk a little way with you, since I'm waiting here. But I'll see you soon.

BIANCA

All right, have it your way. I have to make do.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 1

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

IAGO

Will you think so?

OTHELLO

Think so, Iago?

IAGO

What,
 To kiss in private?

OTHELLO

An unauthorized kiss!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO and IAGO enter.

IAGO

Do you really think so?

OTHELLO

What do you mean, do I think so?

IAGO

What, just because they kissed in private?

OTHELLO

An illicit kiss!

IAGO

Maybe she was just naked in bed with him for an hour or so, but they didn't do anything.

Original Text

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What then?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 2

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Ay, what of that?

OTHELLO

That's not so good now.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

Hath he said any thing?

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

What hath he said?

IAGO

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

Modern Text

OTHELLO

Naked in bed together, but without doing anything? Come on, Iago. That would be like playing a trick on the devil: they'd make him think they're going to commit adultery, but then back off. Anyone who acted like that would be letting the devil tempt them, and tempting God to condemn them.

IAGO

As long as they didn't do anything, it would only be a minor sin. But if I gave my wife a handkerchief—

OTHELLO

Then what?

IAGO

Then it's hers. And if it's hers, I guess she can give it to any man she wants.

OTHELLO

Her reputation is also her own. Can she give that away too?

IAGO

You can't see a reputation. A lot of people don't even deserve the reputations they have. But a handkerchief—

OTHELLO

God, I wish I could forget about the handkerchief! What you told me it haunts me like a nightmare—he's got my handkerchief!

IAGO

Yes, what about it?

OTHELLO

That's not good.

IAGO

What if I'd said I saw him do something to hurt you? Or heard him say something about it. You know there are jerks out there who have to brag about bedding some woman.—

OTHELLO

Has he said anything?

IAGO

Yes, but he'd deny it all.

OTHELLO

What did he say?

IAGO

He said he did—I don't know.

Original Text

OTHELLO

What? what?

IAGO

Lie—

OTHELLO

With her?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 3

IAGO

With her, on her, what you will.

OTHELLO

Lie with her? lie on her? We say “lie on her” when they belie her! Lie with her—that’s fulsome. Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief! To confess, and be hanged for his labor. First to be hanged, and then to confess—I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips. Is ’t possible? Confess!—Handkerchief!—Oh, devil!—

*(falls in a trance)***IAGO**

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

Enter CASSIO

How now, Cassio!

CASSIO

What’s the matter?

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Rub him about the temples.

IAGO

No, forbear.

The lethargy must have his quiet course.
If not, he foams at mouth and by and by

45 Breaks out to savage madness. Look, he stirs.
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

Modern Text

OTHELLO

He what?

IAGO

He was in bed with—

OTHELLO

With her?

IAGO

With her, on top of her—however you want to say it.

OTHELLO

In bed with her? On top of her? I would have thought people were telling lies about her rather than believe he was lying on her. My God, it’s nauseating! Handkerchief—confessions—handkerchief! I’ll kill him first, and then let him confess—I’m trembling with rage. I wouldn’t be trembling like this if I didn’t know deep down this was all true. Noses, ears, lips. Is it possible? Tell me the truth—Handkerchief—Damn it!

*(he falls into a trance)***IAGO**

Keep working, poison! This is the way to trick gullible fools. Many good and innocent women are punished for reasons like this.—My lord? My lord, Othello!

CASSIO enters.

Hey, Cassio!

CASSIO

What’s the matter?

IAGO

Othello’s having some kind of epileptic fit. This is his second fit like this. He had one yesterday.

CASSIO

Rub his temples.

IAGO

No, don’t. This fit has to run its course. If you interrupt it, he’ll foam at the mouth and go crazy. Look, he’s moving. Why don’t you go away for a bit? He’ll get

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 4

He will recover straight. When he is gone
I would on great occasion speak with you.

Exit CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

better right away. When he leaves, it’s very
important that I talk to you.

CASSIO exits.

What happened, general? Did you hit your head?

OTHELLO

Original Text

Modern Text

50 Dost thou mock me?

IAGO

I mock you not, by heaven.
Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

OTHELLO

A hornèd man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

55 Did he confess it?

IAGO

Good sir, be a man,
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you. There's millions now alive
That nightly lie in those unproper beds
Which they dare swear peculiar. Your case is better.

60 Oh, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,

To lip a wanton in a secure couch,
And to suppose her chaste. No, let me know,
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

OTHELLO

Oh, thou art wise! 'Tis certain.

IAGO

Stand you awhile apart,

65 Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmèd with your grief—
A passion most resulting such a man—
Cassio came hither. I shifted him away
And laid good 'scuses upon your ecstasy,

Are you making fun of me?

IAGO

Making fun of you? No, I swear! I wish you could
face your bad news like a man!

OTHELLO

A man who's been cheated on isn't a real man.
He's subhuman, like an animal.

IAGO

In that case there are a lot of animals on the
loose in this city.

OTHELLO

Did he confess?

IAGO

Sir, be a man. Every married man has been
cheated on. Millions of men sleep with wives who
cheat on them, wrongly believing they belong to
them alone. Your case is better than that. At least
you're not ignorant. The worst thing of all is to
kiss your wife thinking she's innocent, when in
fact she's a whore. No, I'd rather know the truth.
Then I'll know exactly what she is, just as I know
what I am.

OTHELLO

You're wise! That's for sure.

IAGO

Go somewhere else for a while. Calm down.
While you were dazed by grief—which isn't
appropriate for a man like you—Cassio showed
up here. I got him to leave, and made up an
excuse for your trance. I told him to come back
and talk to me in a bit, and he promised he would.
So hide here and watch how he sneers

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 5

70 Bade him anon return and here speak with me,
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns
That dwell in every region of his face.
For I will make him tell the tale anew

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

He hath, and is again to cope your wife.
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience,
Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,
And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO

Dost thou hear, Iago?

80 I will be found most cunning in my patience,
But—dost thou hear?—most bloody.

IAGO

That's not amiss,
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

OTHELLO *withdraws*

at you. I'll make him tell me the whole story
again—where, how often, how long ago—and
when he plans to sleep with your wife in the
future. I'm telling you, just watch his face. But
stay calm, and don't get carried away by rage, or
I'll think you're not a man.

OTHELLO

Do you hear what I'm saying, Iago? I'll be very
patient, but—do you hear me?—I'm not done with
him yet

IAGO

That's fine, but for now keep your cool. Will you
go hide?

OTHELLO *hides.*

Original Text

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

Enter CASSIO

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

Modern Text

Now I'll ask Cassio about Bianca, a prostitute
who sells her body for food and clothes. She's
crazy about Cassio. That's the whore's curse, to
seduce many men, but to be seduced by one.
Whenever he talks about her he can't stop
laughing.

CASSIO enters.

And when he laughs, Othello will go crazy. In his
ignorant jealousy, he'll totally misunderstand
Cassio's smiles, gestures, and jokes.—How are
you, lieutenant?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 6**CASSIO**

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Alas, poor caitiff!

OTHELLO

Look how he laughs already!

IAGO

100 I never knew woman love man so.

CASSIO

Alas, poor rogue, I think indeed she loves me.

OTHELLO

Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

IAGO

Do you hear, Cassio?

OTHELLO

Now he importunes him
To tell it o'er. Go to, well said, well said.

IAGO

105 She gives it out that you shall marry her.
Do you intend it?

CASSIO

Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Do ye triumph, Roman? Do you triumph?

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO**CASSIO**

It doesn't make me feel any better when you call
me lieutenant. I'm dying to have that title back
again.

IAGO

Just keep asking Desdemona, and it'll be yours.
If it was up to Bianca to get you your job back,
you'd have had it already!

CASSIO

The poor thing!

OTHELLO

He's laughing already!

IAGO

I never knew a woman who loved a man so
much.

CASSIO

The poor thing, I really think she loves me.

OTHELLO

Now he denies it a bit, and tries to laugh it off.

IAGO

Have you heard this, Cassio?

OTHELLO

He's asking him to tell the story again. Go on, tell
it.

IAGO

She says you're going to marry her. Are you?

CASSIO

Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Are you laughing because you've won? Do you
think you've won?

CASSIO

Me, marry her? That whore? Please give me a
little credit! I'm not that stupid. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Original Text**Modern Text**

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

So, so, so, so! The winner's always got the last laugh, hasn't he?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 7**IAGO**

Why the cry goes that you shall marry her.

CASSIO

Prithee say true!

IAGO

I am a very villain else.

OTHELLO

Have you scored me? Well.

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

120 Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. Oh, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

CASSIO

Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO

Before me! Look, where she comes.

Enter BIANCA

IAGO

I swear, there's a rumor going around that you'll marry her.

CASSIO

You're kidding!

IAGO

If it's not true, you can call me a villain.

OTHELLO

Have you given me bastard children to raise? All right, then.

CASSIO

The little monkey must have started that rumor herself. She thinks I'll marry her because she loves me. She's just flattering herself. I never promised her anything.

OTHELLO

Iago is gesturing for me to come closer. Now he's telling the story.

CASSIO

She was here just now. She hangs around me all the time. I was talking to some Venetians down by the shore, and the fool showed up. I swear to you, she put her arms around me like this—

OTHELLO

Saying, "Oh, Cassio," it seems, judging by his gestures.

CASSIO

She hangs around me and dangles from my neck and cries, shaking me and pulling at me. Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Now he's saying how she took him into our bedroom. Oh, I can see your nose now. But I can't see the dog I'm going to throw it to.

CASSIO

I have to get rid of her.

IAGO

Look out, here she comes.

BIANCA enters.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 8**CASSIO**

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

BIANCA**CASSIO**

It's a whore like all the others, stinking of cheap perfume.—Why are you always hanging around me?

BIANCA

Original Text

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

CASSIO

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

OTHELLO

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

BIANCA

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

Exit

IAGO

After her, after her.

CASSIO

130 I must, she'll rail in the street else.

IAGO

Will you sup there?

CASSIO

Yes, I intend so.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

Prithee come, will you?

IAGO

135 Go to! Say no more.

Exit CASSIO

Modern Text

Damn you! What did you mean by giving me this handkerchief? I was an idiot to take it! You want me to copy the embroidery pattern? That was a likely story, that you found it in your room and didn't know who it belonged to. This is a love token from some other slut, and you want me to copy its pattern for you? Give it back to her, I won't do anything with it.

CASSIO

What is it, my dear Bianca? What's wrong?

OTHELLO

My God, that's my handkerchief!

BIANCA

If you want to come have dinner with me, you can. If you don't want to, then good riddance.

BIANCA exits.

IAGO

Go after her, go.

CASSIO

Actually, I should. She'll scream in the streets if I don't.

IAGO

Will you be having dinner with her tonight?

CASSIO

Yes, I will.

IAGO

Well, maybe I'll see you there. I'd really like to speak with you.

CASSIO

Please come. Will you?

IAGO

Don't talk anymore, go after her.

CASSIO exits.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 9

OTHELLO

(advancing) How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTHELLO

O Iago!

IAGO

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO

140 Was that mine?

IAGO

Yours by this hand. And to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! She gave it him, and he

OTHELLO

(coming forward) How should I murder him, Iago?

IAGO

Did you see how he laughed about sleeping with her?

OTHELLO

Oh Iago!

IAGO

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO

Was it mine?

IAGO

It was yours, I swear. And do you see how much your foolish wife means to him? She gave it to

Original Text

hath given it his whore.

OTHELLO

I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman!
A fair woman! A sweet woman!

IAGO

Nay, you must forget that.

OTHELLO

Ay, let her rot and perish and be damned tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone. I strike it and it hurts my hand. Oh, the world hath not a sweeter creature, she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

IAGO

145 Nay, that's not your way.

OTHELLO

Hang her! I do but say what she is. So delicate with her needle, an admirable musician. Oh, she will sing the savageness out of a bear! Of so high and plenteous wit and invention!

IAGO

She's the worse for all this.

Modern Text

him, and he gave it to his whore.

OTHELLO

I wish I could keep killing him for nine years straight. Oh, she's a fine woman! A fair woman! A sweet woman!

IAGO

No, you have to forget all that now.

OTHELLO

Yes, let her die and rot and go to hell tonight. She won't stay alive for long. No, my heart's turned to stone—when I hit it, it hurts my hand. Oh, the world never saw a sweeter creature. She could be married to an emperor, and he'd be like her slave!

IAGO

But that's not how you're going to be.

OTHELLO

Damn her, I'm just describing her truthfully! She's so good at sewing, and a wonderful musician. Oh, she could sing a wild bear to sleep! Oh, she's so witty and creative!

IAGO

All the worse that she stooped this low, then.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 10

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

Ay, too gentle.

OTHELLO

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

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

I will chop her into messes! Cuckold me?

IAGO

Oh, 'tis foul in her.

OTHELLO

With mine officer!

IAGO

155 That's fouler.

OTHELLO

Get me some poison, Iago, this night. I'll not expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty unprovide my mind again—This night, Iago!

IAGO

OTHELLO

Oh, a thousand times worse, a thousand times—and what a sweet personality she has!

IAGO

Yes, a little too sweet.

OTHELLO

Yes, that's for sure. Oh, it's dreadful, dreadful, Iago!

IAGO

If you still feel so affectionate toward her, then why not give her permission to cheat on you? If it doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else.

OTHELLO

I'll chop her into pieces. How could she cheat on me?

IAGO

Oh, it's horrible of her.

OTHELLO

And with my own officer!

IAGO

That's worse.

OTHELLO

Get me some poison tonight, Iago. I won't argue with her, so her beautiful body won't disarm me.—Tonight, Iago.

IAGO

Original Text

Do it not with poison. Strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated.

OTHELLO

Good, good, the justice of it pleases! Very good!

IAGO

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

OTHELLO

160 Excellent good.

A trumpet within

Modern Text

Don't do it with poison. Strangle her in her bed, the same bed she's contaminated.

OTHELLO

Good, good, I like that—it's only fair! Very good!

IAGO

And let me kill Cassio. You'll hear more from me by midnight.

OTHELLO

Excellent, good.

A trumpet sounds offstage.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 11

What trumpet is that same?

IAGO

I warrant something from Venice. 'Tis Lodovico, this, comes from the duke. See, your wife's with him.

Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and attendants

LODOVICO

Save you, worthy general!

OTHELLO

With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

(gives him a letter)

OTHELLO

165 I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

DESDEMONA

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO

I am very glad to see you, signior. Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO

I thank you. How does lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO

Lives, sir.

DESDEMONA

170 Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord
An unkind breach, but you shall make all well.

OTHELLO

Are you sure of that?

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

(reads) "This fail you not to do, as you will—"

What's that trumpet for?

IAGO

I think someone's coming from Venice. It's Lodovico. He must be coming from the duke. Look, your wife is with him.

LODOVICO, DESDEMONA and attendants enter.

LODOVICO

Greetings, good general!

OTHELLO

Greetings, sir.

LODOVICO

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

(he hands OTHELLO a piece of paper)

OTHELLO

I'll do whatever they order me to do in this letter.

DESDEMONA

What's new, cousin Lodovico?

IAGO

Very nice to see you, sir. Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO

Thank you. How is lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO

Well, he's alive.

DESDEMONA

Cousin, there's been a falling out between him and Othello. An unfortunate rift, but you can fix it.

OTHELLO

Are you sure of that?

DESDEMONA

Excuse me?

OTHELLO

(reading) "Don't fail to do this, since you'll—"

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 12

Original Text

LODOVICO

175 He did not call, he's busy in the paper.
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

DESEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Fire and brimstone!

DESEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

Are you wise?

DESEMONA

180 What, is he angry?

LODOVICO

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

DESEMONA

Trust me, I am glad on 't.

OTHELLO

Indeed!

DESEMONA

185 My lord?

OTHELLO

I am glad to see you mad.

DESEMONA

Why, sweet Othello—

OTHELLO

(striking her) Devil!

DESEMONA

I have not deserved this.

Modern Text

LODOVICO

He didn't say anything, he's reading. So there's a
rift between Othello and Cassio?

DESEMONA

Yes, unfortunately. I'd do anything to bring them
back together, since I really care for Cassio.

OTHELLO

Damn it all!

DESEMONA

Excuse me, my lord?

OTHELLO

Are you in your right mind?

DESEMONA

Is he angry?

LODOVICO

Maybe the letter upset him. I think they want him
to go home and appoint Cassio governor in his
place.

DESEMONA

I'm happy about that.

OTHELLO

Oh, are you really!

DESEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

I'm glad you're insane enough to admit it in front
of me.

DESEMONA

Why, sweet Othello—

OTHELLO

(striking her) You devil!

DESEMONA

I haven't done anything to deserve this!

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 13

LODOVICO

190 My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw 't. 'Tis very much.
Make her amends, she weeps.

OTHELLO

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

195 Out of my sight!

DESEMONA

I will not stay to offend you.

LODOVICO

Truly, an obedient lady.
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

LODOVICO

My lord, no one will believe this in Venice, even
though I'd swear I saw it with my own eyes. That
was too much. You should apologize. She's
crying.

OTHELLO

Oh, you devil, you devil! You can cry all day and
all night, and I still won't believe you're sad. Get
out of my sight!

DESEMONA

I wouldn't want to stay here and make you angry.

LODOVICO

She's obedient—a fine lady. Please, my lord, call
her back.

Original Text

OTHELLO

Mistress!

DESDEMONA

200 My lord?

OTHELLO

What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Who, I, my lord?

OTHELLO

Ay, you did wish that I would make her turn.

Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,

205 And turn again. And she can weep, sir, weep.

And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,

Very obedient.—Proceed you in your tears.—

Concerning this, sir—Oh, well-painted passion!—

I am commanded home.—Get you away,

210 I'll send for you anon.—Sir, I obey the mandate

And will return to Venice.—Hence, avaunt!

Exit DESDEMONA

Modern Text

OTHELLO

Madam!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

What do you want with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Who, me?

OTHELLO

Yes, you asked me to call her back. See how

well she can turn? She can turn and turn, and

then turn on you again. And she can cry, sir—oh,

how she can cry! And she's obedient, as you

say, obedient. Very obedient—keep crying.—

Concerning this—oh, what fake emotion!—I am

being ordered home—Get away from me, I'll

send for you later.—Sir, I'll obey the order and

return to Venice. Get away from me, you witch!

DESDEMONA exits.

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 14

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight

I do entreat that we may sup together.

You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus. Goats and
monkeys!*Exit**OTHELLO exits.***LODOVICO**

215 Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate

Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature

Whom passion could not shake? Whose solid virtue

The shot of accident nor dart of chance

Could neither graze nor pierce?

IAGO

He is much changed.

LODOVICO

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

IAGO

He's that he is. I may not breathe my censure

What he might be. If what he might he is not,

I would to heaven he were!

LODOVICO

What? Strike his wife?

IAGO

'Faith, that was not so well. Yet would I knew

225 That stroke would prove the worst!

LODOVICO

Is it his use?

Or did the letters work upon his blood

And new-create his fault?

LODOVICO

Is this the same Moor whom the senate

considers so capable? Is this the guy who's

supposed to never get emotional, and who never

gets rattled, no matter what disaster happens?

IAGO

He's changed a great deal.

LODOVICO

Is he sane? Is he losing his mind?

IAGO

He is what he is. I won't say anything negative

about what he might be. If he isn't what he might

be, then I wish to God he were!

LODOVICO

Hitting his wife?

IAGO

It's true, that wasn't such a nice thing to do. But I

wish I could say that's the last time he'll do it!

LODOVICO

Is it a habit of his? Or did the letter make him

emotional somehow, and this is the first time he's

done it?

Act 4, Scene 1, Page 15

Original Text

Modern Text

IAGO

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

LODOVICO

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

*Exeunt***IAGO**

Oh, it's too bad! It wouldn't be right for me to tell
you everything I've seen and heard. You'll see
what he's like. His own actions will show you
what kind of person he is, so I won't have to
bother telling you. Just go after him and watch
what he does next.

LODOVICO

I'm sorry I was so wrong about him.

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 2

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

You have seen nothing then?

EMILIA

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

OTHELLO

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

EMILIA

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard
5 Each syllable that breath made up between them.

OTHELLO

What, did they never whisper?

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

Nor send you out o' th' way?

EMILIA

Never.

OTHELLO

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

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's strange.

EMILIA

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other
15 Remove your thought, it doth abuse your bosom.
If any wretch have put this in your head
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse
For if she be not honest, chaste, and true
There's no man happy. The purest of their wives
20 Is foul as slander.

OTHELLO

You haven't seen anything, then?

EMILIA

No, and I didn't hear anything either, or suspect
anything at all.

OTHELLO

But you've seen her and Cassio together.

EMILIA

Yes, but I didn't see anything wrong, and I heard
every syllable they said.

OTHELLO

Didn't they ever whisper?

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

Or ask you to leave the room?

EMILIA

Never.

OTHELLO

Not even to get her fan, or her gloves, or her
mask, or anything?

EMILIA

No, my lord.

OTHELLO

That's strange.

EMILIA

I'd swear to you on my soul that she's a good,
honest person, sir. If you suspect otherwise, stop
thinking that right now because you're wrong. If
any jerk has tried to convince you she's bad, I
hope God curses him. If she's not honest, faithful,
and true, then there's no such thing as a faithful
wife or a happy husband.

Original Text

OTHELLO

Bid her come hither. Go.

Exit EMILIA

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

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA***DESDEMONA**

25 My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO

Pray, chuck, come hither.

DESDEMONA

What is your pleasure?

OTHELLO

Let me see your eyes.
Look in my face.

DESDEMONA

What horrible fancy's this?

OTHELLO

(to EMILIA) Some of your function, mistress,

30 Leave procreants alone and shut the door.

Cough or cry "hem" if any body come.

Your mystery, your mystery! Nay, dispatch!

*Exit EMILIA***DESDEMONA**

Upon my knee, what doth your speech import?

I understand a fury in your words,

35 But not the words.

OTHELLO

Why, what art thou?

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 3

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Come, swear it, damn thyself.

Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves

Should fear to seize thee. Therefore be double

40 damned,

Swear thou art honest!

DESDEMONA

Heaven doth truly know it.

OTHELLO

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

DESDEMONA

To whom, my lord? With whom? How am I false?

OTHELLO

Modern Text

OTHELLO

Tell her to come here. Go.

EMILIA exits.

She says all the right things, but the dumbest
brothel-keeper would tell the same story.
Desdemona's a tricky whore with a closet full of
awful secrets, but still she'll kneel and pray like an
honest woman. I've seen her do it.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA enter.***DESDEMONA**

My lord, what do you want?

OTHELLO

Please, dear, come here.

DESDEMONA

What can I do for you?

OTHELLO

Let me see your eyes. Look at my face.

DESDEMONA

What horrible thing are you imagining?

OTHELLO

(to EMILIA) Go do what you do best, madam.

Leave us alone for our hanky-panky, and shut the
door behind you. If somebody comes, give a
shout. That's your job, your job. Go on, hurry!

*EMILIA exits.***DESDEMONA**

I'm begging you on my knees to tell me what your
words mean. I can tell you're furious, but I don't
understand what you're saying.

OTHELLO

Why? Who are you?

DESDEMONA

I'm your wife, your true and loyal wife.

OTHELLO

Go ahead, swear to that, so you'll be damned to
hell for lying. Otherwise the devils will mistake
you for an angel and be too scared to grab you.
Go ahead, make sure you damn yourself by
swearing you've been faithful to me.

DESDEMONA

Heaven knows I am.

OTHELLO

Heaven knows you're as unfaithful as hell.

DESDEMONA

Unfaithful, my lord? With whom? How am I
unfaithful?

OTHELLO

Original Text

Ah, Desdemona, away, away, away!

DESDEMONA

Alas the heavy day, why do you weep?

45 Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?

If haply you my father do suspect

An instrument of this your calling back,

Lay not your blame on me. If you have lost him,

Why, I have lost him too.

OTHELLO

Had it pleased heaven

50 To try me with affliction, had they rained

All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head,

Steept me in poverty to the very lips,

Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,

I should have found in some place of my soul

55 A drop of patience. But, alas, to make me

Modern Text

Leave me alone, Desdemona, go away!

DESDEMONA

Oh, what a horrible day! Why are you crying?

Because of me? If you've been ordered back to

Venice because of my father, don't blame me.

You may have lost his respect, but so have I.

OTHELLO

If God had decided to treat me like Job, making

me sick and covered with sores, reducing me to

abject poverty, selling me into slavery and

destroying all my hopes, I would have found

some way to accept it with patience. But instead

He's made me a laughingstock for everyone in

our time to point at and scorn! Even that I could

put up with. But instead, my wife, who's supposed

to

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 4

The fixèd figure for the time of scorn

To point his slow and moving finger at!

Yet could I bear that too, well, very well.

But there where I have garnered up my heart,

60 Where either I must live or bear no life,

The fountain from the which my current runs

Or else dries up—to be discarded thence!

Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads

To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,

65 Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin,—

Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DESDEMONA

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO

Oh, ay, as summer flies are in the shambles,

That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,

70 Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet

That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er
been born!

DESDEMONA

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,

Made to write "whore" upon? What committed?

75 Committed? O thou public commoner!

I should make very forges of my cheeks

That would to cinders burn up modesty

Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed?

Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,

80 The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets

Is hushed within the hollow mine of earth

And will not hear 't. What committed!

be like the fountain that my children and all my

descendants flow from, has rejected me! Worse

than that, she's polluted herself, so that the

fountain is a place where disgusting toads

copulate and reproduce! Even the goddess of

patience couldn't look at this and be patient—it's

too horrifying!

DESDEMONA

I hope you think I'm faithful to you.

OTHELLO

As faithful as flies in rotting meat, which give birth

to maggots every time the wind blows. You're like

a weed pretending to be a flower, so beautiful

and sweet-smelling that I ache when I look at

you. Oh, I wish you'd never been born!

DESDEMONA

Have I done something to offend you without

knowing it?

OTHELLO

Was someone as beautiful as you meant to be a

whore? What have you done? What have you

done? Oh, you streetwalker! If I said out loud

what you've done, you'd burn up with shame.

What have you done? Heaven has to hold its

nose when it sees you! The pure moon in the sky

has to shut its eyes when you go by! Even the

wind that blows over everything on earth is

ashamed to visit you. You brazen whore!

Original Text

Modern Text

Impudent strumpet!

DESDEMONA

By heaven, you do me wrong!

DESDEMONA

I swear to God you're accusing me wrongly!

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 5

OTHELLO

85 Are you not a strumpet?

DESDEMONA

No, as I am a Christian.
If to preserve this vessel for my lord
From any other foul unlawful touch
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO

90 What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA

No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO

Is 't possible?

DESDEMONA

Oh, heaven forgive us!

OTHELLO

I cry you mercy, then,
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice
95 That married with Othello.—You, mistress,
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter
And keep the gate of hell!

Enter EMILIA

You, you, ay, you!

We have done our course. There's money for your
pains.

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

Exit

EMILIA

100 Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?
How do you, madam? How do you, my good lady?

DESDEMONA

Faith, half asleep.

EMILIA

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

OTHELLO

So you're saying you're not a whore?

DESDEMONA

No, I'm as honest as I am Christian. If only letting
my husband touch my body means I'm not a
whore, I'm not a whore.

OTHELLO

What, you're not a whore?

DESDEMONA

No, I swear it.

OTHELLO

Is that possible?

DESDEMONA

Oh, heaven help us!

OTHELLO

I beg your pardon then. I must have the wrong
woman. I mistook you for that sly Venetian
woman who married Othello.—You whorehouse-
keeper.

EMILIA enters.

You're in charge of this hell! You! We've finished
our business. Here's some money for you.
Please lock the door and keep quiet.

OTHELLO exits.

EMILIA

What's he talking about? How are you, madam?

DESDEMONA

I'm stunned, to tell you the truth.

EMILIA

My lady, what's wrong with your husband?

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 6

DESDEMONA

With who?

EMILIA

Why, with my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA

105 Who is thy lord?

EMILIA

He that is yours, sweet lady.

DESDEMONA

With who?

EMILIA

Why, with your husband, madam. My lord.

DESDEMONA

Who's your lord?

EMILIA

My lord is your lord.

Original Text

DESEMONA

I have none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.
 I cannot weep, nor answers have I none,
 But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight
 Lay on my bed my wedding sheets. Remember,
 110 And call thy husband hither.

EMILIA

Here's a change indeed!

Exit

DESEMONA

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

Enter EMILIA with IAGO

IAGO

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

DESEMONA

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

IAGO

What is the matter, lady?

Modern Text

DESEMONA

I don't have a lord. Don't talk to me, Emilia. I
 can't even cry, though tears are the only answers
 I could give to all your questions. Tonight put my
 wedding sheets on my bed, and tell your
 husband to come to me now.

EMILIA

Things have certainly changed!

EMILIA exits.

DESEMONA

It's fair for him to treat me like this, very fair.
 What have I ever done that he has anything to
 complain about?

IAGO and EMILIA enter.

IAGO

What can I do for you, madam? How are you?

DESEMONA

I don't know. When grown-ups teach little
 children, they do it gently and easily. He might
 have treated me like that, because I'm as unused
 to abuse as a little child.

IAGO

What's the matter, lady?

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 7

EMILIA

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

DESEMONA

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, fair lady?

DESEMONA

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

EMILIA

125 He called her "whore." A beggar in his drink
 Could not have laid such terms upon his callet.

IAGO

Why did he do so?

DESEMONA

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

IAGO

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

EMILIA

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

DESEMONA**EMILIA**

He called her a whore so many times, and
 heaped up so much abuse on her that good
 people can't stand to hear it.

DESEMONA

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, madam?

DESEMONA

What my lord said I was.

EMILIA

He called her a whore. A beggar couldn't have
 called his slut worse names.

IAGO

Why did he do that?

DESEMONA

I don't know. I just know I'm not one.

IAGO

Don't cry, don't cry. What a day this is!

EMILIA

Did she give up all those chances to marry
 noblemen, give up her father and country and
 friends, just to be called a whore? Doesn't that
 make you want to cry?

DESEMONA

Original Text

It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO

Beshrew him for 't!

How comes this trick upon him?

DESDEMONA

Nay, heaven doth know.

EMILIA

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

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 8

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

140 If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMILIA

A halter pardon him and hell gnaw his bones!
Why should he call her "whore"? Who keeps her
company?

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

IAGO

Speak within door.

EMILIA

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

IAGO

You are a fool. Go to.

DESDEMONA

Alas Iago,

What shall I do to win my lord again?

155 Good friend, go to him. For, by this light of heaven,
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
160 Delighted them, or any other form,
Or that I do not yet, and ever did,

Modern Text

It's just my bad luck.

IAGO

Damn him! How did he get such an idea?

DESDEMONA

Heaven knows.

EMILIA

I bet my life some evil busybody, some meddling,
lying jerk made up this rumor to get some
position. I bet my life on it.

IAGO

Nobody's that bad. It's impossible.

DESDEMONA

If there is, then heaven help him!

EMILIA

A hangman's noose will help him! Let hell chew
him up! Why should he call her a whore? Who's
been with her? When has she had the time, the
place, or the means to sleep with anyone? How
is this at all likely? The Moor is being tricked by
some crook, some terrible villain, some rotten
bastard. Oh, I wish we could unmask scoundrels
like that, and give a whip to every good man to
beat them senseless with!

IAGO

Keep your voice down.

EMILIA

Oh, to hell with those people! It's the same kind
of guy who got you upset and made you suspect
I'd cheated on you with the Moor.

IAGO

You're a fool. Shut up.

DESDEMONA

Oh God, Iago, what can I do to win my husband
back again? Please go to him, my friend. I swear
I have no idea why he stopped loving me. Here
I'm kneeling to swear that if I ever did anything to
destroy his love for me, either by thoughts or
actions, or if I ever took pleasure in anyone else,
or if I never did love him, or don't love him now—
even though he tries to shake me off—

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 9

And ever will—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,

then I hope I have a life of misery! Unkindness is
powerful, and his unkindness may kill me, but it'll

Original Text

Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much,
 165 And his unkindness may defeat my life,
 But never taint my love. I cannot say "whore,"
 It does abhor me now I speak the word.
 To do the act that might the addition earn
 Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

IAGO

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

DESDEMONA

If 'twere no other—

IAGO

'Tis but so, I warrant.

Trumpets sound

175 Hark, how these instruments summon to supper.
 The messengers of Venice stays the meat.
 Go in, and weep not. All things shall be well.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA**Enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

180 What in the contrary?

RODERIGO

Every day thou daff'st me with some device, Iago,
 and rather, as it seems to me now, keep'st from me
 all conveniency than suppliest me with the least
 advantage of hope.

Modern Text

never destroy my love. I can't say "whore." It
 makes me sick to say the word even now. I
 wouldn't do the thing that would make me a
 whore for all the money in the world.

IAGO

Please calm down. He's just in a bad mood.
 Political business is bothering him, and he's just
 taking it out on you.

DESDEMONA

If only that were all it is—

IAGO

It is, I promise.

Trumpets sound.

Those trumpets are calling us in to dinner. The
 Venetians are waiting for their food. Go in, and
 don't cry. Everything will be all right.

*DESDEMONA and EMILIA exit.**RODERIGO enters.*

How are you, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

I don't think you're treating me fairly.

IAGO

What makes you say that?

RODERIGO

Every day you put me off with some trick. Instead
 of finding opportunities for me, you seem to be
 preventing me from making any progress.

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 10

I will indeed no longer endure it, nor am I yet
 persuaded to put up in peace what already I have
 foolishly suffered.

IAGO

Will you hear me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

185 You charge me most unjustly.

RODERIGO

With naught but truth. I have wasted myself out of
 my means. The jewels you have had from me to
 deliver Desdemona would half have corrupted a
 votaress. You have told me she hath received them
 and returned me expectations and comforts of
 sudden respect and acquaintance, but I find none.

IAGO

Well, I won't take it any longer. And I'm not going
 to sit back and accept what you've done.

IAGO

Will you listen to me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

I've listened to you too much already. Your
 words and actions don't match up.

IAGO

That's not fair.

RODERIGO

It's the truth. I've got no money left. The jewels
 you took from me to deliver to Desdemona
 would've made even a nun want to sleep with
 me. You told me she got them, and that she
 promised to give me a little something in return
 soon, but nothing like that ever happens.

IAGO

Original Text

Well, go to. Very well.

RODERIGO

"Very well," "go to!" I cannot go to, man, nor 'tis not very well. Nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fopped in it.

IAGO

Very well.

RODERIGO

190 I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation. If not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO

You have said now.

RODERIGO

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

Modern Text

Well, all right then. Fine.

RODERIGO

"Fine!" he says. "All right!" It's not fine, and I'm not all right! It's wrong, and I'm starting to realize I'm being cheated!

IAGO

Okay.

RODERIGO

It's not okay! I'm going to tell Desdemona my feelings. If she returns my jewels, I'll stop pursuing her and apologize to her. If not, I'll challenge you to a duel.

IAGO

You've said what you have to say now.

RODERIGO

Yes, and I'll do everything I just said.

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 11

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

It hath not appeared.

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

Is that true? Why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

IAGO

Oh, no, he goes into Mauritania and taketh away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident—wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

RODERIGO

IAGO

Well, all right then. Now I see that you have some guts. From this moment on I have a higher opinion of you than before. Give me your hand, Roderigo. Your complaint against me is perfectly understandable, but I still insist I've done everything I could to help you.

RODERIGO

It doesn't look that way to me.

IAGO

I admit it doesn't look that way to me, and the fact that you suspect me shows that you're smart. But Roderigo, if you're as courageous and determined as I think you are, then wait just a bit longer. If you're not having sex with Desdemona tomorrow night, then I suggest you find some way to stab me in the back and kill me.

RODERIGO

Well, what's your plan? Is it feasible?

IAGO

Venice has made Cassio governor here on Cyprus.

RODERIGO

Is that true? Then Desdemona and Othello will go back to Venice.

IAGO

Oh, no. He'll go to Mauritania and take the beautiful Desdemona with him, unless he gets stuck here for some reason. The best way to extend his stay here is to get rid of Cassio.

RODERIGO

Original Text**Modern Text**

200 How do you mean, removing of him?

IAGO

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

RODERIGO

And that you would have me to do!

What do you mean, get rid of him?

IAGO

I mean knock his brains out, so he can't take Othello's place.

RODERIGO

And that's what you want me to do!

Act 4, Scene 2, Page 12

IAGO

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him. He knows not yet of his honorable fortune. If you will watch his going thence (which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one) you may take him at your pleasure. I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me. I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high supertime, and the night grows to waste. About it!

RODERIGO

I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO

205 And you shall be satisfied.

IAGO

Yes, if you want to help yourself. He's having dinner tonight with a prostitute, and I'll go visit him. He doesn't know he's been appointed governor yet. When you see him walking by here (as I'll make sure he does between twelve and one) you can nab him. I'll be nearby to help you, and between the two of us we can handle him. Come on, don't stand there in a daze. Come along with me. I'll give you such reasons for killing him that you'll feel obliged to snuff him out. It's nearly dinner time, and the night's going to be wasted. Let's go!

RODERIGO

I want to hear more about this.

IAGO

You will. You'll hear all you want to hear.

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 4, Scene 3

*Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA
A and attendants*

LODOVICO

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

OTHELLO

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

LODOVICO

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

DESDEMONA

Your honor is most welcome.

OTHELLO

5 Will you walk, sir?—O Desdemona—

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

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

DESDEMONA

I will, my lord.

Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants

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

LODOVICO

Please, sir, don't trouble yourself.

OTHELLO

I beg your pardon; walking will make me feel better.

LODOVICO

Good night, madam. Thank you.

DESDEMONA

You're most welcome.

OTHELLO

Would you walk out with me, sir?—Oh, Desdemona—

DESDEMONA

Yes, my lord?

OTHELLO

Go to bed right this minute. I'll be there shortly. Send your maid Emilia away. Make sure you do what I say.

DESDEMONA

I will, my lord.

OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and attendants

Original Text

Modern Text

*exit.***EMILIA**

1 How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.
0

DESEMONA

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

EMILIA

Dismiss me?

DESEMONA

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

How are things now? He looks calmer than he did
before.

DESEMONA

He says he'll come back right away. He asked me to
go to bed and to send you away.

EMILIA

Send me away?

DESEMONA

That's what he said. So give me my nightgown,
Emilia, and I'll say goodnight. We shouldn't displease
him.

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 2

EMILIA

Ay. Would you had never seen him!

DESEMONA

So would not I. My love doth so approve him
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—
20 Prithee, unpin me—have grace and favor.

EMILIA

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

DESEMONA

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

EMILIA

Come, come! You talk!

DESEMONA

25 My mother had a maid called Barbary,
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a song of "Willow,"
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune
And she died singing it. That song tonight
30 Will not go from my mind. I have much to do
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA

Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

DESEMONA

No, unpin me here.
This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA

35 A very handsome man.

DESEMONA

He speaks well.

EMILIA**EMILIA**

Yes. I wish you'd never met him.

DESEMONA

That's not what I wish. I love him even when he's
harsh and mean—Help me unpin this, would
you?—I love even his stubbornness, his frowns,
his bad moods.

EMILIA

I put those wedding sheets on your bed, as you
asked.

DESEMONA

It doesn't matter. Oh, how silly we are! If I die
before you do make sure I'm wrapped in those
sheets in my coffin.

EMILIA

Listen to you! Don't be silly!

DESEMONA

My mother had a maid named Barbary. She was
in love, and her lover turned out to be wild and
left her. She knew an old song called "Willow"
that reminded her of her own story, and she died
singing it. I can't get that song out of my head
tonight. It's all I can do to keep myself from
hanging my head down in despair and singing it
like poor Barbary. Please, hurry up.

EMILIA

Should I get your nightgown?

DESEMONA

No, just help me unpin this. That Lodovico is a
good-looking man.

EMILIA

He's very handsome.

DESEMONA

He speaks well.

EMILIA

Original Text

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

Modern Text

I know a lady in Venice who'd walk all the way to
Palestine for a kiss from him.

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 3

DESDEMONA*(singing)*

*The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her
moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones
Sing willow, willow, willow—
Lay by these—
Willow, willow—
Prithee, hie thee, he'll come anon—
Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve—
Nay, that's not next—Hark! Who is 't that knocks?*

EMILIA

It's the wind.

DESDEMONA40 *(sings)*

*I called my love false love but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow.
If I court more women you'll couch with more men—
So, get thee gone, good night. Mine eyes do itch,
Doth that bode weeping?*

EMILIA

'Tis neither here nor there.

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA*(singing)*

*The poor soul sat singing by the sycamore tree,
Everyone sing the green willow,
She had her hand on her breast and her head
on her knee,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
The fresh streams ran by her and murmured
her moans,
Sing willow, willow, willow.
Her salt tears fell from her and softened the
stones,
Sing willow, willow, willow.—
Put these things over there.—
Please, hurry, he'll come right away.—
Everyone sing, a green willow must be my
garland.
Nobody blame him, he's right to hate me—
No, that's not how it goes.—Who's knocking?*

EMILIA

It's the wind.

DESDEMONA

*(singing) I told my lover he didn't love me, but
what did he say? Sing willow, willow, willow.
If I chase more women, you'll sleep with more
men—Okay, go away now. Good night. My eyes
itch—is that an omen I'll be crying soon?*

EMILIA

No, it doesn't mean anything.

DESDEMONA

I heard someone say that's what it means. Oh,
these men, these men! Do you honestly think—
tell me, Emilia—there are women who'd cheat on
their husbands in such a disgusting manner?

EMILIA

There are women like that out there, no question.

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 4

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

50 Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA

No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA

Nor I neither, by this heavenly light.

DESDEMONA

Would you ever do such a thing for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, wouldn't you?

DESDEMONA

By the light of heaven, no, I would not!

EMILIA

I wouldn't either, by daylight. It would be easier to

Original Text

I might do 't as well i' th' dark.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

55 In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

In troth, I think I should, and undo 't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition. But for the whole world? Why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for 't.

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

60 I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA

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

But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties

Modern Text

do it in the dark.

DESDEMONA

Could you really do such a thing, for all the world?

EMILIA

The world's huge. It's a big prize for such a small sin.

DESDEMONA

I don't think you would.

EMILIA

Actually I think I would, and then I'd undo it after I did it. I wouldn't do it for a nice ring, or fine linen, or pretty gowns or petticoats or hats. But for the whole world? Who wouldn't cheat on her husband to make him king? I'd risk my soul for that.

DESDEMONA

I'd never do such a bad thing, not for the whole world!

EMILIA

Why, a bad action is just a wrong in this world, but when you've won the whole world, it's a wrong in your own world, so you can make it right then.

DESDEMONA

I don't think any woman like that exists.

EMILIA

Yes, a dozen of them—as many as there are women in the world, in fact. But I do think it's the husband's fault if we wives cheat on them. For instance, our husbands

Act 4, Scene 3, Page 5

And pour our treasures into foreign laps,

65 Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us. Or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite.
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,

70 Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see and smell

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

75 When they change us for others? Is it sport?

I think it is. And doth affection breed it?

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

It is so too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

Then let them use us well, else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

may stop sleeping with us, and give it out to other women instead. Or they may get insanely jealous, and keep us from going anywhere. Or let's say they hit us, or cut back on the money they give us out of spite. We have feelings. We may be able to forgive them, but we want to get back at them too. Husbands need to know that their wives are human beings too. They see, smell, and taste sweet and sour just like their husbands. Why do they replace us with other women? Do they do it for fun? I think they do. Is it out of lust? I think so. Is it a weakness? It is. And don't we have passions, and a taste for fun, and weaknesses, just like men? Then tell them to treat us well. Or let them figure out that the bad things we do are just what we learned from them.

Original Text

DESDEMONA

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

Exeunt

Act 5, Scene 1

Enter IAGO and RODERIGO

IAGO

- Here, stand behind this bulk, straight will he come.
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home.
Quick, quick! Fear nothing. I'll be at thy elbow.
It makes us, or it mars us. Think on that,
5 And fix most firm thy resolution.

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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

Withdraws

RODERIGO

- I have no great devotion to the deed
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons.
10 'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

IAGO

- (*aside*) I have rubbed this young quat almost to the
sense,
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
15 Every way makes my gain. Live Roderigo,
He calls me to a restitution large
Of gold and jewels that I bobbed from him
As gifts to Desdemona.
It must not be. If Cassio do remain
20 He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly. And besides, the Moor
May unfold me to him—there stand I in much peril.
No, he must die. But so, I hear him coming.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 2

Enter CASSIO

RODERIGO

I know his gait, 'tis he.—Villain, thou diest!

Thrusts at CASSIO

CASSIO

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

Draws, and wounds RODERIGO

RODERIGO

Oh, I am slain!

Modern Text

DESDEMONA

Good night, good night. I pray that God will let me
learn from women like that—not to follow their
bad example, but to avoid it!

They exit.

IAGO and RODERIGO enter.

IAGO

Here, stand behind this wall; he'll come right
away. Keep your sword out, and then stick it in as
far as it'll go. Quick, quick. Don't be afraid. I'll be
right next to you. This will either make us or break
us. Keep that in mind, and be steady.

RODERIGO

Stay right near me. I may mess it up.

IAGO

I'm right behind you. Be bold, and get ready.

IAGO moves aside.

RODERIGO

I don't really want to do this, but he's given me
good reasons. I guess it's only one man—no big
deal. My sword comes out, and he dies.

IAGO

(*to himself*) I've rubbed this young pimple until
he's ready to pop, and now he's angry. Whether
he kills Cassio, or Cassio kills him, or they kill
each other, it all works in my favor. If Roderigo
survives, though, he'll ask me for all the gold and
jewelry that I stole from him and said I gave to
Desdemona. I can't let that happen. If Cassio
survives, he's so handsome and well-spoken that
he makes me look ugly. And besides, the Moor
might tell him about my lies about him.—That
would be very dangerous for me. No, he's got to
die. Let it be so. I hear him coming.

CASSIO enters.

RODERIGO

I know the sound of his walk.—Die, villain!

RODERIGO thrusts his sword at CASSIO.

CASSIO

That thrust might really have hurt me if I didn't
have this armor on under my cloak. Now let's see
what you've got on.

CASSIO draws his sword and stabs Roderigo.

RODERIGO

Oh, I'm dead!

Original Text

Modern Text

*IAGO from behind wounds CASSIO in the legs, exits**From behind, IAGO stabs CASSIO in the leg and then exits.***CASSIO**

I am maimed for ever. Help, ho! Murder! Murder!

CASSIO

I'll be crippled forever! Help! Murder! murder!

*Enter OTHELLO**OTHELLO enters.***OTHELLO**

The voice of Cassio. Iago keeps his word.

OTHELLO

That's Cassio's voice. Iago has kept his word.

RODERIGO

Oh, villain that I am!

RODERIGO

Oh, what a villain I am!

OTHELLO

30 It is even so.

OTHELLO

That's the truth.

CASSIO

Oh, help, ho! Light! A surgeon!

CASSIO

Help me! Get some light! Get me a surgeon!

OTHELLO'Tis he. Oh, brave Iago, honest and just,
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!**OTHELLO**It's him! Brave Iago, how honest and trustworthy
you are! You even went as far as murder to help
your friend in his misfortune. You teach me how I
should act.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 3

Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,

35 And your unblest fate hies. Strumpet, I come.
For, of my heart, those charms, thine eyes, are
blotted.
Thy bed, lust-stained, shall with lust's blood be
spotted.Whore, your lover's dead now, and you'll be
going to hell soon. I'm coming, slut! I've shut the
memory of your beautiful eyes out of my heart.
You've already stained our sheets with your lust;
now I'll stain them with your whore's blood.*Exit**OTHELLO exits.**Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO**LODOVICO and GRATIANO enter.***CASSIO**

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

CASSIOHelp! Isn't there a guard around? No one passing
by? Murder! Murder!**GRATIANO**

'Tis some mischance, the cry is very direful.

GRATIANO

Something's wrong, the man sounds panicked.

CASSIO

40 Oh, help!

CASSIO

Oh, help!

LODOVICO

Hark!

LODOVICO

Listen!

RODERIGO

Oh, wretched villain!

RODERIGO

I've acted like such a villain!

LODOVICOTwo or three groan. 'Tis heavy night,
These may be counterfeits. Let's think 't unsafe
45 To come in to the cry without more help.**LODOVICO**Two or three men are groaning. But it's dark out,
and it could be a trap. It's not safe to go near
them till we get more help.**RODERIGO**

Nobody come? Then shall I bleed to death.

RODERIGO

Nobody's coming? I'll bleed to death.

LODOVICO

Hark!

LODOVICO

Look!

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

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

GRATIANO

Here's someone coming in his pajamas, with a

Original Text

weapons.

IAGO

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

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 4

LODOVICO

50 We do not know.

IAGO

Do not you hear a cry?

CASSIO

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

IAGO

What's the matter?

GRATIANO

(to LODOVICO) This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

LODOVICO

The same indeed, a very valiant fellow.

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

Oh, treacherous villains!—

60 (to LODOVICO and GRATIANO)

What are you there? Come in, and give some help.

RODERIGO

Oh, help me there!

CASSIO

That's one of them.

IAGO

O murd'rous slave! O villain!

Stabs Roderigo

Modern Text

candle and weapons.

IAGO

Who's there? Who's shouting "murder"?

LODOVICO

We don't know.

IAGO

Didn't you hear someone shouting?

CASSIO

I'm here, here! For heaven's sake, help me!

IAGO

What's the matter?

GRATIANO

(to LODOVICO) That's Othello's ensign, I think.

LODOVICO

It is. He's a good man.

IAGO

(to CASSIO) Who's shouting so loudly?

CASSIO

Is that you, Iago? I'm here, I've been destroyed
by villains! Help me.

IAGO

Oh, lieutenant! What villains did this to you?

CASSIO

I think one of them is nearby and can't get away.

IAGO

The treacherous criminals!—

(to LODOVICO and GRATIANO) Who's there?

Come here and help!

RODERIGO

Somebody help me over here!

CASSIO

That's one of them.

IAGO

(to Roderigo) Murderer! Villain!

Iago stabs Roderigo.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 5

RODERIGO

O damned Iago! O inhuman dog!

IAGO

65 Kill men i' th' dark! Where be these bloody thieves?
How silent is this town!—Ho! murder! murder!—
What may you be? Are you of good or evil?

RODERIGO

Damned Iago! You inhuman dog!

IAGO

Killing men in the dark? Where are these
murderers? This is such a quiet, sleepy town!—
Murder, murder!—Who's that coming? Are you
good or evil?

Original Text

LODOVICO

As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO

Signior Lodovico?

LODOVICO

70 He, sir.

IAGO

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

GRATIANO

Cassio!

IAGO

How is 't, brother!

CASSIO

My leg is cut in two.

IAGO

75 Marry, heaven forbid!

Light, gentlemen, I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter BIANCA***BIANCA**

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

IAGO

Who is 't that cried?

BIANCA

Oh, my dear Cassio!

My sweet Cassio! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

80 O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect

Who they should be that have thus mangled you?

Modern Text

LODOVICO

Judge for yourself.

IAGO

Signor Lodovico?

LODOVICO

That's me.

IAGO

I beg your pardon. Cassio's been wounded.

GRATIANO

Cassio!

IAGO

How are you doing, brother?

CASSIO

My leg's been cut in two.

IAGO

God forbid! Bring me some light, gentlemen, I'll bind the wound with my shirt.

*BIANCA enters.***BIANCA**

What's the matter? Who's shouting?

IAGO

Who's shouting?

BIANCA

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

IAGO

You notorious whore! Cassio, do you know who might have stabbed you like this?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 6

CASSIO

No.

GRATIANO

I am sorry to find you thus. I have been to seek you.

IAGO

Lend me a garter. So.—Oh, for a chair,

85 To bear him easily hence!

BIANCA

Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash

To be a party in this injury.—

Patience awhile, good Cassio.—Come, come,

90 Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?

Alas, my friend and my dear countryman

Roderigo! No—yes, sure! Yes, 'tis Roderigo.

GRATIANO

What, of Venice?

IAGO**CASSIO**

No.

GRATIANO

I'm sorry to find you like this. I've been looking all over for you.

IAGO

Lend me your sash—Oh, if we only had a stretcher to carry him out of here!

BIANCA

He's fainted! Oh Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

Sir, I believe this piece of trash, Bianca, has something to do with all this trouble.—Hang in there, Cassio.—Come here, bring the light. Do you recognize this face? Oh, no, it's my friend and countryman, Roderigo.—Yes, it's Roderigo!

GRATIANO

What, Roderigo from Venice?

IAGO

Original Text

Even he, sir. Did you know him?

GRATIANO

95 Know him? Ay.

IAGO

Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon,
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners
That so neglected you.

GRATIANO

I am glad to see you.

IAGO

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

GRATIANO

100 Roderigo!

IAGO

He, he, 'tis he.

A chair is brought in

Modern Text

That's the one, sir. Do you know him?

GRATIANO

Know him? Yes.

IAGO

Signor Gratiano, I beg your pardon. I didn't mean
to ignore you—it's just because of this bloody
uproar.

GRATIANO

I'm glad to see you.

IAGO

How are you doing, Cassio?—Someone bring
me a stretcher!

GRATIANO

Roderigo!

IAGO

It's him, it's him.

A stretcher is brought in.

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 7

Oh, that's well said—the chair!
Some good man bear him carefully from hence.
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.—(to BIANCA) For
you, mistress,

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

CASSIO

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

IAGO

(to BIANCA)

What, look you pale?—Oh, bear him out o' the air.—

CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off

Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?—Stay
110 you, good gentlemen.—Look you pale, mistress?—
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.—
Behold her well. I pray you, look upon her.
Do you see, gentlemen? Nay, guiltiness
Will speak, though tongues were out of use.

Enter EMILIA

EMILIA

Alas, what is the matter? What is the matter,
husband?

IAGO

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

EMILIA

Alas, good gentleman! Alas, good Cassio!

IAGO

Good—here's the stretcher. Get somebody
strong to carry him out of here. I'll get the
general's surgeon. (to BIANCA) As for you,
ma'am, don't bother. The man lying here was my
dear friend, Roderigo.—What was the problem
between you?

CASSIO

There wasn't any problem. I don't even know
him.

IAGO

(to BIANCA) You're pale?—Get Cassio out of
here.—You look awfully pale, Bianca.

CASSIO and RODERIGO are carried away.

Do you see how afraid she is? Watch her, we'll
get the whole story. Keep an eye on her. Do you
see? The guilty speak volumes even when
they're silent.

EMILIA enters.

EMILIA

What's the matter? What's the matter, husband?

IAGO

Cassio was attacked here in the dark by
Roderigo and men who escaped. He's near
death, and Roderigo's dead already.

EMILIA

Oh, no, good gentleman! Oh no, good Cassio!

IAGO

Original Text

This is the fruits of whoring. Prithce, Emilia,
 120 Go know of Cassio where he supped tonight.—
 (to BIANCA) What, do you shake at that?

Act 5, Scene 1, Page 8

BIANCA

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

IAGO

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

EMILIA

Oh, fie upon thee, strumpet!

BIANCA

125 I am no strumpet, but of life as honest
 As you that thus abuse me.

EMILIA

As I! Fie upon thee!

IAGO

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dressed.—
 Come, mistress, you must tell 's another tale.
 Emilia, run you to the citadel

130 And tell my lord and lady what hath happed.—
 Will you go on afore?
 (aside)

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

Exeunt

Modern Text

This is what happens when you visit whores.
 Please, Emilia, ask Cassio where he was at
 dinner tonight.—(to BIANCA) What, does that
 make you nervous?

BIANCA

He ate at my house, but that doesn't make me
 nervous.

IAGO

Oh, did he? I order you to come with me.

EMILIA

Go to hell, you whore!

BIANCA

I'm no whore. I'm as moral as you are.

EMILIA

As moral as me! Damn you!

IAGO

Gentlemen, let's go make sure Cassio's wounds
 are properly dressed.—Come on, ma'am, you
 can tell us another story. Emilia, go to the castle
 and tell Othello and Desdemona what
 happened.—Will you please go now? (to
 himself) This is the night that'll either make me or
 break me.

They all exit.

Act 5, Scene 2

DESDEMONA asleep in bed Enter **OTHELLO** with a
 light

OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.
 Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,
 It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
 Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
 5 And smooth as monumental alabaster.
 Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
 Put out the light, and then put out the light.
 If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
 I can again thy former light restore
 10 Should I repent me. But once put out thy light,
 Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
 I know not where is that Promethean heat
 That can thy light relume. When I have plucked thy
 rose
 15 I cannot give it vital growth again,
 It must needs wither. I'll smell thee on the tree.
 Oh, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
 Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.

DESDEMONA is asleep in bed. **OTHELLO** enters
 with a candle.

OTHELLO

I have to do it, I have to do it. I have to keep my
 reason in mind. I won't say out loud what my
 reason is, but I have to do it. But I won't shed any
 of her blood or scar that beautiful skin, whiter
 than snow and smooth as the finest marble. But
 she's got to die, or she'll cheat on other men. Put
 out the light of the candle, and then put out the
 light of her heart. If I extinguish the candle, I can
 light it again if I regret it. But once I kill you, you
 beautiful, fake woman, I do not know the magic
 that could bring you back. When I've plucked this
 rose, I can't make it grow again; it will have no
 choice but to wither and die. Let me smell you
 while you're still on the tree. (he kisses her) Oh,
 that sweet breath almost convinces me not to kill
 you and carry out justice. One more, one more
 kiss. If you're this beautiful when you're dead, I'll
 kill you and then love you afterward. (kissing)

Original Text

Be thus when thou art dead and I will kill thee
 20 And love thee after. (*kissing her*) One more, and
 that's the last.
 So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
 But they are cruel tears. This sorrow's heavenly,
 It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO

Ay, Desdemona.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 2

DESDEMONA

25 Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO

If you bethink yourself of any crime
 Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
 30 Solicit for it straight.

DESDEMONA

Alack, my lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO

Well, do it, and be brief. I will walk by.
 I would not kill thy unprepared spirit.
 No, heavens forbid, I would not kill thy soul!

DESDEMONA

35 Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO

Ay, I do.

DESDEMONA

Then heaven
 Have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

Amen, with all my heart.

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Humh!

DESDEMONA

40 And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then
 When your eyes roll so. Why I should fear I know not,
 Since guiltiness I know not. But yet I feel I fear.

OTHELLO

Think on thy sins.

Modern Text

her) One more, and this is the last. Such a sweet
 kiss was never so deadly. I have to cry, but I have
 to be cruel too. I'm acting like God in the Old
 Testament—I have to punish the one I love.
 She's waking up.

DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO

Yes, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you said your prayers tonight, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Yes, my lord.

OTHELLO

If you can think of any crime you haven't
 confessed, then pray for forgiveness right away.

DESDEMONA

Oh, my lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO

Well, hurry up and confess. Be quick about it. I'll
 wait over here. I don't want to kill you before
 you've readied your soul. No, I don't want to send
 your soul to hell when I kill you.

DESDEMONA

You're talking about killing?

OTHELLO

Yes, I am.

DESDEMONA

Then heaven have mercy on me.

OTHELLO

Amen to that, from the bottom of my heart.

DESDEMONA

If you really feel that way, then I hope you won't
 kill me.

OTHELLO

Hmmp!

DESDEMONA

You're scaring me. You terrify me when you have
 that look in your eyes. I don't know why I should
 be afraid, since I haven't done anything wrong.
 But I'm still afraid.

OTHELLO

Think of your sins.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 3

DESDEMONA

They are loves I bear to you.

OTHELLO

45 Ay, and for that thou diest.

DESDEMONA

That death's unnatural that kills for loving.

Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?

Some bloody passion shakes your very frame.

These are portents, but yet I hope, I hope

50 They do not point on me.

OTHELLO

Peace, and be still.

DESDEMONA

I will so. What's the matter?

OTHELLO

That handkerchief

Which I so loved and gave thee, thou gav'st

To Cassio.

DESDEMONA

55 No, by my life and soul!

Send for the man and ask him.

OTHELLO

Sweet soul, take heed, take heed of perjury.

Thou art on thy deathbed.

DESDEMONA

Ay—but not yet to die!

OTHELLO

60 Presently.

Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin,

For to deny each article with oath

Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception

That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

DESDEMONA

65 Oh, heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

I say "amen."

DESDEMONA

My only sin was loving you too much.

OTHELLO

Yes, that's why you have to die.

DESDEMONA

You're wrong to kill me for loving you. Why are

you chewing on your lower lip like that? You're

shaking with emotion. These are bad omens, but

I hope, I hope, they don't predict my future.

OTHELLO

Quiet. Stay still.

DESDEMONA

I will. What's this all about?

OTHELLO

You gave that handkerchief, the one I loved and

gave to you, to Cassio.

DESDEMONA

No, I swear by my life and soul! Bring him here

and ask him.

OTHELLO

My sweet darling, don't lie. You're on your

deathbed.

DESDEMONA

I am? But I'm not dying yet!

OTHELLO

Yes, right now. So confess your sin freely now.

Even if you swear you're innocent of every

accusation, you won't change my mind or remove

the thought that's tormenting me. You're going to

die.

DESDEMONA

Then heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

Amen to that.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 4

DESDEMONA

And have you mercy too! I never did

Offend you in my life, never loved Cassio

But with such general warranty of heaven

As I might love. I never gave him token.

OTHELLO

70 By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in 's hand.

O perjured woman, thou dost stone my heart,

And mak'st me call what I intend to do

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice!

I saw the handkerchief.

DESDEMONA

And you have mercy on me too! I never did

anything wrong to you in my life. I never loved

Cassio, except with the pure love that I feel for

humankind. I never gave him any token of

romantic love.

OTHELLO

I saw him holding the handkerchief! You liar,

you're turning my heart to stone, and making me

call what I'll do murder, when I had been thinking

of it as a sacrifice! I saw the handkerchief.

Original Text

DESDEMONA

He found it then,

75 I never gave it him. Send for him hither,
Let him confess a truth.

OTHELLO

He hath confessed.

DESDEMONA

What, my lord?

OTHELLO

That he hath usèd thee.

DESDEMONA

How? Unlawfully?

OTHELLO

Ay.

DESDEMONA

80 He will not say so.

OTHELLO

No, his mouth is stopped. Honest Iago
Hath ta'en order for 't.

DESDEMONA

Oh! My fear interprets. What, is he dead?

OTHELLO

Had all his hairs been lives

85 My great revenge had stomach for them all.

Modern Text

DESDEMONA

He found it somewhere, then. I never gave it to
him. Tell him to come here. He'll tell the truth.

OTHELLO

He's already done so.

DESDEMONA

What, my lord?

OTHELLO

That he had sex with you.

DESDEMONA

What? Had sex with me?

OTHELLO

Yes.

DESDEMONA

He wouldn't say that.

OTHELLO

No. He won't say anything anymore. Honest
Iago's arranged that.

DESDEMONA

Oh, I'm scared. What, is he dead?

OTHELLO

If he had as many lives as he's got hairs on his
head, I would've killed them all in revenge.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 5

DESDEMONA

Alas, he is betrayed and I undone.

OTHELLO

Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

DESDEMONA

Oh, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

OTHELLO

Down, strumpet!

DESDEMONA

90 Kill me tomorrow—let me live tonight!

OTHELLO

Nay, if you strive—

DESDEMONA

But half an hour!

OTHELLO

Being done, there is no pause.

DESDEMONA

But while I say one prayer!

OTHELLO

95 It is too late. *(he smothers her)*

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

Oh, he's been betrayed, and I've been ruined.

OTHELLO

What, you whore, are you crying for him right in
front of me?

DESDEMONA

Send me away, my lord, but don't kill me!

OTHELLO*Down*, whore!**DESDEMONA**

Kill me tomorrow—but let me live tonight.

OTHELLO

No, if you struggle with me—

DESDEMONA

Just half an hour!

OTHELLO

While I'm doing this, I can't pause for a moment.

DESDEMONA

Just let me say one prayer!

OTHELLOIt's too late. *(he smothers her)***EMILIA***(offstage)* My lord, my lord! Hello! My lord, my lord!

Original Text

OTHELLO

What noise is this?—Not dead? Not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful,
I would not have thee linger in thy pain.

100 So, so.

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

Who's there?

EMILIA

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

Modern Text

OTHELLO

What's that noise? Aren't you dead yet? I know I'm cruel, but I'm merciful too. I don't want you to linger in pain.

EMILIA

(offstage) Hello! My lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

Who's there?

EMILIA

(offstage) Oh my lord, I need to speak to you!

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 6

OTHELLO

Yes, 'tis Emilia.—*(to EMILIA)* By and by.—She's dead.—

105 'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death,
The noise was high. Ha! No more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? Were 't good?
I think she stirs again—No. What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife—

110 My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
Oh, insupportable! Oh, heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.

EMILIA

(within)

I do beseech you

115 That I may speak with you, O good my lord!

OTHELLO

I had forgot thee—Oh, come in, Emilia.
Soft, by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou?

Unlocks the door. Enter EMILIA

What's the matter with thee now?

EMILIA

O my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

OTHELLO

120 What, now?

EMILIA

But now, my lord.

OTHELLO

It is the very error of the moon,
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont
And makes men mad.

EMILIA

125 Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian
Called Roderigo.

OTHELLO

Yes, it's Emilia. *(to EMILIA)*—Just a minute!—
She's dead now.—Emilia's probably come to tell
me that Cassio's been killed. The fight outside
was loud. So! You're not moving anymore? No,
you're as still as a grave. Should I let her in? Is
that a good idea? I think she's moving again—
No. What should I do? If she comes in, she'll try
to speak to my wife. My wife, my wife! What
wife? I don't have a wife. Oh, this is unbearable!
Oh, the horror! There should be a huge eclipse
of the sun and the moon, now that Desdemona's no
longer on this earth.

EMILIA

(offstage) Please, my lord. I need to speak with you. Oh, my good lord!

OTHELLO

I'd forgotten about you—Emilia, wait a moment,
let me draw the curtains. *(closes the bed
curtains)* Where are you? *(unlocks the door)*

EMILIA enters.

What's the matter with you now?

EMILIA

Oh, my lord, terrible murders have been
committed over there!

OTHELLO

What? Just now?

EMILIA

Yes, just now, my lord.

OTHELLO

It's because of the full moon. It comes too close
to the earth and drives men crazy.

EMILIA

Cassio's killed a young Venetian named
Roderigo.

Original Text

Modern Text

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 7

OTHELLO

Roderigo killed? And Cassio killed!

EMILIA

No, Cassio is not killed.

OTHELLONot Cassio killed! Then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.**DESDEMONA**

130 Oh, falsely, falsely murdered!

EMILIA

Alas, what cry is that?

OTHELLO

That? What?

EMILIA

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

Opens the bedcurtains

Help! Help, ho, help! O lady, speak again!

135 Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

DESDEMONA

A guiltless death I die.

EMILIA

Oh, who hath done this deed?

DESDEMONA

Nobody. I myself. Farewell.

Commend me to my kind lord. Oh, farewell!

OTHELLO

Why, how should she be murdered?

EMILIA

Alas, who knows?

OTHELLO

140 You heard her say herself it was not I.

OTHELLO

Roderigo's been killed? And Cassio's killed?

EMILIA

No, Cassio wasn't killed.

OTHELLOCassio's not dead? Then the wrong man is dead,
and sweet revenge has gone wrong.**DESDEMONA**

Oh, I've been murdered unfairly!

EMILIA

Oh Lord, who's that crying?

OTHELLO

That? What?

EMILIA

Oh, no, that was my lady's voice.

EMILIA opens the bedcurtains.

Help! Help! Oh, lady, speak again.

Sweet Desdemona! Oh sweet mistress, speak!

DESDEMONA

I'm dying an innocent woman.

EMILIA

Oh, who did this thing?

DESDEMONANo one. I did it myself. Give my love to my kind
husband. Oh, goodbye!*Dies**DESDEMONA dies.***OTHELLO**

Why, how could she have been murdered?

EMILIA

My God, who knows?

OTHELLO

You heard her say it wasn't me.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 8

EMILIA

She said so. I must needs report the truth.

OTHELLOShe's like a liar gone to burning hell.
'Twas I that killed her.**EMILIA**Oh, the more angel she,
145 And you the blacker devil!**OTHELLO**

She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

EMILIA

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTHELLO**EMILIA**Yes, she said that. I must go report what
happened.**OTHELLO**She was lying even as she was going down to
hell. I did kill her.**EMILIA**Then she was even more an angel, and you're
an even blacker devil!**OTHELLO**

She cheated on me, and she was a whore.

EMILIA

You slander her, you devil.

OTHELLO

Original Text

She was false as water.

EMILIA

Thou art rash as fire,
To say that she was false. Oh, she was heavenly
true!

OTHELLO

150 Cassio did top her, ask thy husband else.
Oh, I were damned beneath all depth in hell,
But that I did proceed upon just grounds
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

Thy husband.

EMILIA

That she was false to wedlock?

OTHELLO

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

EMILIA

My husband?

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 9

OTHELLO

Ay, 'twas he that told me on her first.

160 An honest man he is, and hates the slime
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy
husband.

EMILIA

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

OTHELLO

He, woman.

165 I say "thy husband"—dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA

If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th' heart.
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTHELLO draws his sword

OTHELLO

170 Ha!

EMILIA

Do thy worst.

Modern Text

She was fickle and unfaithful, like water.

EMILIA

You've lost your mind to accuse her of cheating.
She was utterly true to you!

OTHELLO

Cassio had sex with her. Ask your husband if
you doubt me. If I didn't have a good reason to
do this, damn me to the very bottom of hell. Your
husband knew about everything.

EMILIA

My husband!

OTHELLO

Your husband.

EMILIA

He said she was unfaithful?

OTHELLO

Yes, with Cassio. If she'd been faithful to me, I
never would have given her up, not even if God
himself offered me a jewel as big as a planet in
exchange for her.

EMILIA

My husband.

OTHELLO

Yes, he's the one who first told me about her.
He's an honest man who detests evil actions.

EMILIA

My husband?

OTHELLO

Why do you keep repeating that, woman? I'm
telling you, your husband.

EMILIA

Oh, my mistress, a villain has made a mockery of
your love! My husband said she was unfaithful!

OTHELLO

Yes, him, woman. I said "your husband."—Do
you understand that word? My friend, your
husband, the honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA

If he said that, then I hope his malicious soul rots
in hell forever. He's lying through his teeth! She
was too attached to her filthy marriage ever to do
a thing like that!

OTHELLO draws his sword.

OTHELLO

Ha!

EMILIA

Go ahead, do your worst. Killing me won't send

Original Text

This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.

OTHELLO

Peace, you were best.

EMILIA

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
175 As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed—
I care not for thy sword, I'll make thee known

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 10

Though I lost twenty lives.—Help! Help, ho! Help!
The Moor hath killed my mistress! Murder, murder!

Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO

MONTANO

180 What is the matter? How now, general?

EMILIA

Oh, are you come, Iago? You have done well,
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

EMILIA

(to IAGO) Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man.
185 He says thou told'st him that his wife was false.
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain.
Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO

I told him what I thought, and told no more
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMILIA

190 But did you ever tell him she was false?

IAGO

I did.

EMILIA

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

IAGO

195 With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

EMILIA

I will not charm my tongue, I am bound to speak.
My mistress here lies murdered in her bed—

ALL

Oh, heavens forbend!

Modern Text

you to heaven. You weren't good enough for her.

OTHELLO

You'd better shut up!

EMILIA

I can endure far more pain than you could ever
give me! Oh, you idiot! You stupid fool! As dumb
as dirt! You've committed a terrible evil—I'm not
afraid of your sword. I'll tell everyone what you
did, even if it

costs me my life twenty times over.—Help, help,
help! The Moor's killed my mistress! Murder,
murder!

MONTANO, GRATIANO, and IAGO enter.

MONTANO

What's the matter? What's going on here,
general?

EMILIA

Oh, are you here, Iago? You've done a good job,
that other men can attribute their murders to you!

GRATIANO

What's the matter?

EMILIA

(to IAGO) Tell this villain he's wrong, if you're
man enough. He says you told him his wife
cheated on him. I know you didn't. You're not
that much of a villain. Speak, because I'm too
emotional to say any more.

IAGO

I told him what I thought. I didn't tell him anything
that didn't make sense or ring true to him.

EMILIA

But did you tell him she cheated on him?

IAGO

I did.

EMILIA

Then you told a lie, a sick, wicked lie. I swear on
my soul it was a lie. You said she slept with
Cassio. Did you say Cassio?

IAGO

Yes, with Cassio. Now be quiet.

EMILIA

I will not be quiet! I have to speak. My mistress
here lies murdered in her bed—

ALL

No, heaven forbid!

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 11

Original Text

EMILIA

And your reports have set the murder on.

OTHELLO

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

GRATIANO

'Tis a strange truth.

MONTANO

Oh, monstrous act!

EMILIA

Villainy, villainy, villainy!

I think upon 't, I think I smell 't, Oh, villainy!

I thought so then, I'll kill myself for grief.

205 Oh, villainy, villainy!

IAGO

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

EMILIA

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak.

'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.

Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTHELLO

210 Oh! Oh! Oh!

EMILIA

Nay, lay thee down and roar,

For thou hast killed the sweetest innocent

That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO

Oh, she was foul!—

I scarce did know you, uncle. There lies your niece,

Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly

215 stopped.

I know this act shows horrible and grim.

GRATIANO

Poor Desdemon! I am glad thy father's dead,

Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief

Shore his old thread in twain. Did he live now,

Modern Text

EMILIA

And your lies caused this murder.

OTHELLO

Don't stand there gaping, everyone. It's true.

GRATIANO

It may be true, but it's unbelievable.

MONTANO

Oh, what a horrible deed!

EMILIA

Evil, evil, evil! I can smell it! I suspected it earlier.

I'll kill myself out of grief! Oh, evil, evil!

IAGO

Are you crazy? I'm ordering you, go home.

EMILIA

Good gentlemen, give me permission to speak. I

know I ought to obey my husband, but not now.

Maybe I'll never go home again, Iago!

OTHELLO

Oh! Oh! Oh!

EMILIA

Yes, go ahead and moan, because you killed the sweetest, most innocent woman who ever lived!

OTHELLOShe was filthy! I barely knew you, Uncle [Gratiano](#).

Here's your niece lying here dead. I killed her

with these hands. I know this looks horrible.

GRATIANO

Poor Desdemona! I'm glad your father isn't alive

to see this. Your marriage made him die of grief

before his time. If he was alive now, this sight

would hurt

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 12

This sight would make him do a desperate turn,

220 Yea, curse his better angel from his side

And fall to reprobation.

OTHELLO

'Tis pitiful, but yet Iago knows

That she with Cassio hath the act of shame

A thousand times committed. Cassio confessed it,

225 And she did gratify his amorous works

With that recognizance and pledge of love

Which I first gave her. I saw it in his hand,

It was a handkerchief, an antique token

My father gave my mother.

EMILIA

him terribly. It would make him curse the heavens and be damned to hell.

OTHELLO

It's sad, but Iago knows she had sex with Cassio

a thousand times. Cassio confessed it, and she

pledged her love to him by giving him the

handkerchief I'd given her. I saw it in his hand.

It was an old memento that my father gave to my mother.

EMILIA

Original Text

Oh, heaven! Oh, heavenly powers!

IAGO

230 Zounds, hold your peace.

EMILIA

'Twill out, 'twill out.—I peace?

No, I will speak as liberal as the north.

Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,

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

IAGO

235 Be wise, and get you home.

Draws his sword

EMILIA

I will not.

GRATIANO

Fie! Your sword upon a woman?

EMILIA

O thou dull Moor! That handkerchief thou speak'st of
I found by fortune and did give my husband.

240 For often, with a solemn earnestness—
More than indeed belonged to such a trifle—
He begged of me to steal it.

Modern Text

Oh, God! Dear God in heaven!

IAGO

Damn it, shut your mouth.

EMILIA

No, the truth will come out—Me, shut my mouth?

Let heaven and men and devils tell me to shut
me up. I'll say what I have to say.

IAGO

If you're smart, you'll go home.

IAGO draws his sword.

EMILIA

I won't.

GRATIANO

Shame on you! Drawing your sword on a
woman?

EMILIA

Oh, you stupid Moor! I found that handkerchief
by accident and gave it to my husband. He'd
begged me to steal it many times.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 13

IAGO

Villainous whore!

EMILIA

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

And I did give 't my husband.

IAGO

Filth, thou liest!

EMILIA

245 By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.—
(to OTHELLO)

O murderous coxcomb! What should such a fool
Do with so good a wife?

OTHELLO

Are there no stones in heaven
But what serve for the thunder?—Precious villain!

He runs at IAGO IAGO stabs EMILIA

GRATIANO

250 The woman falls! Sure he hath killed his wife.

EMILIA

Ay, ay. Oh, lay me by my mistress' side.

Exit IAGO

GRATIANO

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

MONTANO

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,
Which I have recovered from the Moor.

IAGO

You evil whore!

EMILIA

You think she gave it to Cassio? No, I found it
and gave it to my husband.

IAGO

You piece of filth, you're lying!

EMILIA

I swear I'm not lying. (to OTHELLO) Oh, you
murderous fool! How did you ever get such a
good wife?

OTHELLO

Won't heaven strike this Iago dead? You
absolute villain!

OTHELLO runs at IAGO. IAGO stabs EMILIA.

GRATIANO

The woman's falling down! He's killed his wife!

EMILIA

Yes, yes! Lay me next to my mistress.

IAGO exits.

GRATIANO

He's gone, and his wife's dead.

MONTANO

He's a wicked, horrible criminal. Take the Moor's
sword and guard the door from the outside. Kill

Original Text

Modern Text

255 Come, guard the door without. Let him not pass,
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,
For 'tis a damnèd slave.

Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO

him rather than let him leave this room. I'm going
after Iago. He's a horrid criminal.

MONTANO and GRATIANO exit.

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 14

OTHELLO

I am not valiant neither,
But ever puny whipster gets my sword.
But why should honor outlive honesty?

260 Let it go all.

EMILIA

What did thy song bode, lady?
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.
And die in music.
(singing) Willow, willow, willow—
Moor, she was chaste, she loved thee, cruel Moor.
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true.

265 So speaking as I think, alas, I die.

Dies

EMILIA dies.

OTHELLO

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

GRATIANO

(within) If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear.

270 Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

OTHELLO

Look in upon me then and speak with me,
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

Enter GRATIANO

GRATIANO

What is the matter?

OTHELLO

Behold, I have a weapon.
A better never did itself sustain

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

OTHELLO

I'm not that strong, if a puny nobody can grab my
sword. But why should my reputation for honor
last longer than my honor did? Let it all go.

EMILIA

What did your song mean, lady? Can you hear
me? I'll die like a swan. They sing when they die.
(singing) Willow, willow, willow.—
Moor, she never cheated on you. She loved you,
you cruel man. I swear on my soul I'm telling the
truth, and as I say this, I die.

OTHELLO

I've got another weapon in the room. It's a
Spanish sword, hardened in ice cold water and
razor sharp. Here it is. Uncle, I'm coming out!

GRATIANO

(offstage) If you try that, you'll pay for it. You've
got no weapon, so you'll have to suffer.

OTHELLO

Look in on me, and talk with me, or I'll attack
even without a weapon.

GRATIANO enters.

GRATIANO

What's the matter?

OTHELLO

Look, I have a weapon, the best sword a soldier
could have. I've fought my way through
obstacles twenty times more terrifying than you
with this weapon. But

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 15

That with this little arm and this good sword
I have made my way through more impediments
Than twenty times your stop. But, oh, vain boast!
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.

280 Be not afraid, though you do see me weaponed.

Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.
Do you go back dismayed? 'tis a lost fear.
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,

285 And he retires. Where should Othello go?—

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

who can control his fate? I'm not like that now.
Don't be afraid, even though you see me with a
weapon. This is the end of my journey, the end
of my life. Are you backing away in fear? There's
no reason to be afraid. You could tap me with a
feather and I'd back away. Where would Othello
go?—Oh, look at you! Such cruel luck! You're as
pale as your nightgown! When we meet on
Judgment Day, that look of yours will send me
from heaven to hell, where devils will grab me.
You're cold, cold, and you were never hot with

Original Text

Pale as thy smock! When we shall meet at compt
 This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven
 And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,
 290 Even like thy chastity. O cursed, cursed slave!
 Whip me, ye devils,
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!
 Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulfur,
 Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!—
 295 Oh, Desdemona! Desdemona! dead! Oh! Oh!
*Enter **LODOVICO**, **MONTANO**, **CASSIO** carried in a
 chair, and officers with **IAGO**, prisoner*

LODOVICO

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

OTHELLO

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

LODOVICO

Where is that viper? Bring the villain forth.

***IAGO** is brought forward*

Modern Text

lust. Oh you damned villain! Whip me, you
 devils, so I don't have to look at this heavenly
 sight! Blow on me with hot winds, roast me in
 lava, drown me in liquid fire! Oh, Desdemona!
 Dead Desdemona! Oh, oh!

***LODOVICO** and **MONTANO** enter, followed
 by **CASSIO** on a stretcher, and officers
 with **IAGO**, prisoner.*

LODOVICO

Where is that poor rash man?

OTHELLO

You mean the man who used to be Othello?

Here I am.

LODOVICO

Where's that snake? Bring the villain forward.

***IAGO** is brought forward.*

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 16

OTHELLO

I look down towards his feet, but that's a fable.

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

*Stabs **IAGO*****LODOVICO**

Wrench his sword from him.

*They take **OTHELLO**'s sword***IAGO**

I bleed, sir, but not killed.

OTHELLO

I am not sorry neither. I'd have thee live,
 For in my sense 'tis happiness to die.

LODOVICO

O thou Othello, thou was once so good,

305 Fall'n in the practice of a cursèd slave,
 What shall be said to thee?

OTHELLO

Why, anything.

An honorable murderer, if you will,
 For naught I did in hate, but all in honor.

LODOVICO

This wretch hath part confessed his villainy.

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

OTHELLO

Ay.

CASSIO

Dear general, I never gave you cause.

OTHELLO

I'm looking to see if you have cloven hooves like
 the devil. But that's just a fairy tale. If you are a
 devil, I won't be able to kill you.

OTHELLO** stabs **IAGO**.LODOVICO**

Take his sword away from him.

*They take **OTHELLO**'s sword away.***IAGO**

I'm bleeding, but you didn't kill me.

OTHELLO

I'm not sorry, either. I want you to live, since to
 me, death is happiness.

LODOVICO

Oh Othello, you were once so good, then you
 were tricked by this villain. What can I say to
 you?

OTHELLO

Say anything. Call me an honorable murderer if
 you like. I did nothing out of hate, only out of
 honor.

LODOVICO

This poor guy's partly confessed his plan. Did
 you plan Cassio's death with him?

OTHELLO

Yes.

CASSIO

Dear general, I never gave you any reason to
 hate me.

Original Text**OTHELLO**

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil

315 Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 17**IAGO**

Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
From this time forth I never will speak word.

LODOVICO

What, not to pray?

GRATIANO

Torments will ope your lips.

OTHELLO

320 Well, thou dost best.

LODOVICO

Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo,
And here another. The one of them imports

325 The death of Cassio to be undertook
By Roderigo.

OTHELLO

Oh, villain!

CASSIO

Most heathenish and most gross!

LODOVICO

Now here's another discontented paper

330 Found in his pocket too, and this, it seems,
Roderigo meant to have sent this damnèd villain
But that, belike, Iago in the interim
Came in and satisfied him.

OTHELLO

O thou pernicious caitiff!

335 How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief
That was my wife's?

CASSIO

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

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 18**OTHELLO**

O fool! fool! fool!

CASSIO

340 There is besides in Roderigo's letter
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him
Brave me upon the watch, whereon it came
That I was cast. And even but now he spake,

Modern Text**OTHELLO**

I believe you, and I ask you to forgive me. Will
you please make this half-devil say why he
tricked me and damned my soul?

IAGO

Don't ask me anything. You know what you
know. From this moment on, I'll never say
another word.

LODOVICO

What, not even to pray?

GRATIANO

Torture will make you talk.

OTHELLO

Well, do your best.

LODOVICO

Sir, you'll understand everything that has
happened. I don't think you know now. Here is a
letter we found in Roderigo's pocket. And here's
another. This one talks about how Roderigo
should kill Cassio.

OTHELLO

Oh, you villain!

CASSIO

Ungodly and monstrous!

LODOVICO

Here's another letter from his pocket, addressed
to Iago and full of complaints. We think he was
going to send it to Iago, but then Iago stepped in
and answered his complaints by killing him.

OTHELLO

Oh, you wicked scoundrel! Cassio, how did you
get my wife's handkerchief?

CASSIO

I found it in my room, and Iago just confessed
that he put it there for his own purposes.

OTHELLO

Oh, what a fool I am!

CASSIO

Also, in his letter to Iago, Roderigo criticizes Iago
for telling him to get me angry while I was on
guard duty, and get me demoted. And just now
he admitted it, even though he'd seemed to be

Original Text

After long seeming dead—Iago hurt him,
 345 Iago set him on.

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

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

Act 5, Scene 2, Page 19

And say besides that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
 370 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
 I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
 And smote him, thus.

Stabs himself

LODOVICO
 Oh, bloody period!

GRATIANO
 All that is spoke is marred.

OTHELLO
 375 (to DESDEMONA)
 I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,
 Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.
Kisses DESDEMONA, dies

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

LODOVICO
 380 (to IAGO)

Modern Text

dead for a long while—Iago tricked him, Iago
 urged him to do it.

LODOVICO
 (to OTHELLO)
 You'll have to leave this room and come with us.
 You're stripped of your power and your
 command, and Cassio will govern Cyprus. As for
 this slave, Iago, if we can think of any torture that
 will hurt him a lot but keep him alive a long time,
 he'll have it. You'll remain a prisoner until we
 bring your crimes to the Venetian government.—
 Okay, take him away.

OTHELLO
 Wait. A word or two before you go. I've given the
 state of Venice a bit of help in the past, and they
 know it. But enough about that. When you record
 these sad events in your letters, please describe
 me exactly as I am. Don't tone things down or
 exaggerate them out of hostility. If you're being
 fair, you'll have to describe me as someone who
 loved too much, but who wasn't wise about it. I
 was not easily made jealous, but once I was
 tricked and manipulated, I worked myself into a
 frenzy. Describe me as a fool who threw away a
 precious pearl with his own hands, like a silly
 Indian who didn't know what it was worth. As
 someone who was not emotional, but who then
 cried a lot. Write all this

down, and then say also that in Aleppo I once
 saw a Turk beating a Venetian, so I grabbed the
 Turk by the throat and hit him like this.

OTHELLO stabs himself.

LODOVICO
 Oh, what a bloody end to all this!

GRATIANO
 Everything we've heard is bad.

OTHELLO
 (to DESDEMONA) I kissed you before I killed
 you. Now, killing myself, I'm dying while I kiss
 you again.
OTHELLO kisses DESDEMONA and dies.

CASSIO
 I was afraid this would happen, because he was
 a noble, brave man, but I didn't think he had a
 weapon.

LODOVICO
 (to IAGO) You bloodthirsty dog, you're crueler

Original Text

O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea,
Look on the tragic loading of this bed.
This is thy work. The object poisons sight,
Let it be hid.—Gratiano, keep the house
385 And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you.—To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain:
The time, the place, the torture. Oh, enforce it!
Myself will straight aboard, and to the state
390 This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

Exeunt

Modern Text

than sadness or hunger, crueler than the sea.
Look at these dead people on this bed. You did
all this. He makes me sick. Take him away.
Gratiano, take care of the house, and take the
Moor's property. You've inherited everything.—
(to CASSIO) Governor, I leave it in your hands to
punish this evil villain: just decide the time, the
place and the means of torture. And then carry it
out! I have to go back to Venice, and tell them
about these sad events.

They all exit.