EMILIA

Emilia is Iago's wife. Othello appoints her to be Desdemona's maid and accompany them to Cyprus. Emilia and Desdemona become closer during the play and Emilia is loyal to her at the end of the play. Emilia steals Desdemona’s handkerchief to make Iago happy but she doesn’t know what he will do with it. She does not seem close to her husband and does not know his plans. She dies defending Desdemona’s honour and exposing the truth about her husband.

Facts we learn about Emilia at the start of the play:

Emilia goes to Cyprus to serve Desdemona at Othello’s request.

Iago suspects she has had an affair with Othello.

Roderigo

Roderigo is a young man of Venice desperately in love with Desdemona, who has been rejected both by her and her father.

He is completely under Iago’s spell, who milks his wallet for all it’s worth in the promise of furthering his suit to the lady. At Iago’s urging he wakes Brabantio to announce Desdemona’s flight to him, travels to Cyprus disguised in the hopes of gaining her favor, and in the end is willing to murder Cassio in the thought that this will bring him closer to his goal. He is rather brainless, somewhat cowardly, and only dimly perceives to what an extent he is Iago’s puppet. Wounded during his attempt on Cassio’s life, he is murdered by Iago to stop his mouth.

Brabantio

Brabantio is an old man and a Senator of Venice.

He is a genteel racist: he has been very friendly to Othello and often invited him to his house to honor him and for the sake of hearing the tales of his life, but when his daughter runs away with the Moor, however, he is appalled, and convinced that witchcraft is the only explanation. He sues to the Duke for justice, but when Desdemona admits that she was fully complicit in her escape from her father’s house, he admits his defeat and tries to change the subject back to political affairs. He does not disguise his mortification or sorrow, but gives his daughter to Othello all the same, though in terms that essentially disown her. He is incapable of resisting a parting shot at Othello warning him of her faithlessness. His sorrow over his daughter brings about an early death.

Bianca

Bianca is a courtesan in Cyprus.

Bianca is a fairly minor character in the play, but does serve a few important roles. First, in almost all of Shakespeare's plays, we encounter "rustics" or members of the lower classes. Their first purpose is comic relief. Their second purpose is often to hold up a counterexample to approved behavior in some way.

A central theme of the play is chastity. Desdemona is actually chaste but suspected of having an affair with Cassio. Bianca is actually a prostitute having an affair with Cassio, who ends up falling in love with him. She is a contrast to both Desdemona's naivety and Emilia's cynical conformity to social norms.

The handkerchief belonging to Desdemona that Iago plants and Cassio gives to Bianca becomes key evidence convincing Othello that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio

Montano is the Governor of Cyprus. He sends news to the Venetian Senate of the Turkish advance towards the island.

Esteemed by the Duke, he is however not considered as great a soldier as Othello, whom they send to replace him for the crisis. As he has served under the Moor and regards him highly, Montano has no complaints as to this. An upright soldier, he is an honorable gentleman, and disturbed at Cassio’s drunkenness. When he is gravely wounded by the latter, he charges Iago on his worth as a soldier to speak the truth about what happened during the quarrel. He is recovered enough to be on guard the night of Desdemona’s murder, and is one of those who responds to Emilia’s calls for help. He disarms Othello before he can do himself any harm, and chases after Iago, successfully capturing him.