

Prep 1: You are in charge of designing the next 'Level' on memrise. Put together a list of what you consider to be the 30 most important quotations for Act 3 Scene 3, adding a short explanation for each that explains the quotation's significance.

Prep 2: With the help of the notes below, read Act 3 Scene 4 and annotate the text. Make sure that you a) know exactly what happens in the scene and b) fully understand all of the ideas below – you will be questioned on these next week.

Notes on Act 3 Scene 4

- Focus on character of Desdemona
- Opening: D's conversation with the clown – foreshadows her helplessness and confusion in the rest of the scene
 - *Why, man? Can anything be made of this?*
 - = does not understand the clown's prattling puns
 - = begins to cast her as a victim
- Emphasis on D's naivety – she has realised that something has broken between her and Othello, but refuses to see his jealousy
 - *My advocacy is not now in tune*
 - = echoes musical metaphor Iago used in II.1 when he threatened to break up the *well tuned* couple
 - = **sense of inevitability of tragedy** is established – Iago's plans manifest themselves in the characters' reality
 - *My lord is not my lord*
 - = echoes Iago's *I am not what I am*
 - = hints at Iago's influence over Othello
 - BUT – she is naive
 - *I think the sun where he was born drew all such [jealous] humours from him*
 - *Something sure of state...hath puddled his clear spirit*
 - = reduces O's state to a momentary confusion about the political situation – does not believe in his jealousy
- **Contrast** of Desdemona and Emilia:
 - Both lie about the handkerchief
 - BUT – Emilia is revealed to be sound of judgement and practical
 - **Repetition** of *Is not this man jealous?* – she has correctly identified O's problem
 - *They are not ever jealous for the cause* – she understands the emotion and its irrational core
 - *'Tis a monster begot upon itself, born on itself*
 - = **echoes Iago's metaphor** that likens jealousy to a *green-eyed monster*
 - = exonerates D from any guilt
 - = **suggests the fault lies with Othello, not Iago** – jealousy is an internally created state
 - AND – Emilia judges men realistically and is aware of the danger they can pose
 - *We all but food; they eat us hungrily, and when they are full, they belch us*
 - = underlines women's helpless position in this patriarchal society – they are **passive objects in her image**

- = image of vomiting – suggests the danger of D – she will be eaten up and destroyed by Othello's jealousy
- Handkerchief – Othello
 - Links it to story telling and mythic qualities that represent himself
 - *Magic in the web*
 - = hint at the magic of O and D's marriage
 - = BUT: the image of a *web* also echoes Iago's metaphorical web in which he entraps his victims
 - Is obsessed with the 'ocular proof' of it
 - *Is't lost? Is't gone? Speak; is't out of th'way?* – fractured sentences and repeated questions reveal O's anxiety linked to it
 - Repeatedly asks for *The handkerchief!*
 - Exclamation marks reflect the urgency this issue has for him
 - *Zounds!* – he exits on a curse – mirrors Iago's influence and O's extremely short temper at this point
- Handkerchief as an ominous symbol for all characters
 - To O – symbolises D's honour and virtue
 - To D – no longer a love token but a frightening object linked to marital discord
 - Strawberries
 - = symbolise O's passion (*O, blood, blood, blood!*)
 - = symbolise D's blood that will be spilled
 - To E – a test of her loyalty – she prefers Iago to Desdemona
 - To C – an insignificant object – reflects the way he views women, particularly Bianca – he uses and abuses women
 - = asks her to do work for him, then does not wish to be seen with her in public
 - *I think it no addition...to have him see me womaned*
 - To Bianca – a sign of her jealousy – mirrors Othello in that she believes it belongs to another lover of C
 - To I – a symbol of his evil power
- Bianca's role at this point – a victim:
 - Her name – means 'white' – is she a foil to Desdemona?
 - A courtesan (= prostitute) – BUT: she is more honest than most other characters in the play
 - Adds to key themes:
 - = position and treatment of women – she is only ever seen in relation to male characters and is abused by them (partly because of her social standing)
 - = jealousy – a foil for Othello – she also becomes jealous because of the handkerchief, but her feelings for Cassio are real whereas Desdemona's 'feelings' for Cassio are a fiction of O's imagination
 - Her interaction with Cassio reveals a more negative side to Cassio's character – he is selfish, cares only for his own reputation and only plays games with her
 - Time scheme of play – *Keep a week away?*