

Othello, the Moor of Venice

William Shakespeare

[illegible]

OTHELLO, THE MOOR OF VENICE

by William Shakespeare

PERSONS REPRESENTED:

DUKE OF VENICE.

BRABANTIO, a Senator.

Other Senators.

GRATIANO, Brother to Brabantio.

LODOVICO, Kinsman to Brabantio.

OTHELLO, a noble Moor, in the service of Venice.

CASSIO, his Lieutenant.

IAGO, his Ancient.

RODERIGO, a Venetian Gentleman.

MONTANO, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus.

CLOWN, Servant to Othello.

Herald.

DESDEMONA, Daughter to Brabantio and Wife to Othello.

EMILIA, Wife to Iago.

BIANCA, Mistress to Cassio.

Officers, Gentlemen, Messenger, Musicians, Herald, Sailor,
Attendants, &c.

SCENE: The First Act in Venice; during the rest of the Play at a
Seaport in Cyprus.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

[Enter Roderigo and Iago.]

RODERIGO.

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

IAGO.

'Sblood, but you will not hear me:--
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

RODERIGO.

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

IAGO.

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,
Off-capp'd to him:--and, by the faith of man,
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:--
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them, with a bumbast circumstance
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war:
And, in conclusion, nonsuits
My mediators: for, "Certes," says he,
"I have already chose my officer."
And what was he?
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practice,
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:
And I,--of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds,
Christian and heathen,--must be belee'd and calm'd
By debtor and creditor, this counter-caster;
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I--God bless the mark! his Moorship's ancient.

RODERIGO.

By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

IAGO.

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 the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself
Whether I in any just term am affin'd
To love the Moor.

RODERIGO.

I would not follow him, then.

IAGO.

O, sir, content you;
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,
For nought but provender; and when he's old, cashier'd:
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,

Do well thrive by them, and when they have lin'd their coats,
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;
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:
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
In complement 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,
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
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.

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

IAGO.

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

[Brabantio appears above at a window.]

BRABANTIO.

What is the reason of this terrible summons?
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 robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
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.

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;
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious bravery dost thou come
To start my quiet.

RODERIGO.

Sir, sir, sir,--

BRABANTIO.

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

RODERIGO.

Patience, good sir.

BRABANTIO.

What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a grange.

RODERIGO.

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

IAGO.

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

BRABANTIO.

Strike on the tinder, ho!

Give me a taper!--Call up all my people!--

This accident is not unlike my dream:

Belief of it oppresses me already.--

Light, I say! light!

[Exit from above.]

IAGO.

Farewell; for I must leave you:

It seems not meet nor wholesome to my place

To be produc'd,--as if I stay I shall,--

Against the Moor: for I do know the state,--

However this may gall him with some check,--

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

With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,--

Which even now stand in act,--that, for their souls,