

## OTHELLO

### Act I, scene 1, opening lines

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 bombast 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 practise,  
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 be-lee'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 affined  
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 lined  
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 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 thicklips owe  
If he can carry't thus!

**a few lines later . . .**

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 topping 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?

## Scene 2

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 stow'd my daughter?  
Damn'd 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,  
So opposite to marriage that she shunned  
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,  
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,  
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.  
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense  
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,  
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
That weaken motion: I'll have't disputed on;  
'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.  
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee  
For an abuser of the world, a practiser  
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.  
Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,  
Subdue him at his peril.

## Scene 3

DUKE OF VENICE

Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence,  
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers  
Into your favour.  
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended  
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.  
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone  
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.  
What cannot be preserved when fortune takes

Patience her injury a mockery makes.  
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;  
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

DUKE OF VENICE

What would You, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

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

Let her have your voices.  
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,  
To please the palate of my appetite,  
Nor to comply with heat--the young affects  
In me defunct--and proper satisfaction.  
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  
For she is with me: no, when light-wing'd toys  
Of feather'd Cupid seal with wanton dullness  
My speculative and officed instruments,  
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!

**later in the same scene**

RODERIGO

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 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 preposterous 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; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,-- put money in thy purse,--nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, 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 error of her choice: she must have change, she must: 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 a supersubtle Venetian not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

RODERIGO

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 to-morrow. Adieu.

RODERIGO

Where shall we meet i' the morning?

IAGO

At my lodging.

RODERIGO

I'll be with thee betimes.

IAGO

Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

RODERIGO

What say you?

IAGO

No more of drowning, do you hear?

RODERIGO

I am changed: I'll go sell all my land.

*Exit*

IAGO

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:  
For I mine own gain'd 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  
He has 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:  
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  
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 the nose  
As asses are.  
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

*Exit*

## Act II, scene I: The Syllogism

IAGO

Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. 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.

RODERIGO

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: and will she 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, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, 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 not mark that?

RODERIGO

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

IAGO

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. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion, Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; 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 favourably minister.

RODERIGO

Well.

IAGO

Sir, he is 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 I 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

Adieu.

*Exit*

IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;  
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,  
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;  
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure  
I stand accountant for as great a sin,  
But partly led to diet my revenge,  
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
Hath leap'd 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 even'd with him, wife for wife,  
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 trash  
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb--  
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too--  
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me.  
For making him egregiously an ass  
And practising upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused:  
Knavery's plain face is never seen tin used.

*Exit*

### Scene 3

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;  
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,  
The one as long as the 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?

IAGO

'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  
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,  
And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

### Act III, Scene III

IAGO

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

*Exit EMILIA*

I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,  
And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.  
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 Sulphur. I did say so:  
Look, where he comes!

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

Not poppy, nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

#### **Act IV, Scene I**

IAGO  
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!

*later in the same scene*

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  
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.

#### **Act V, Scene I**

IAGO  
I have rubb'd 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,  
Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo,  
He calls me to a restitution large  
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,  
As gifts to Desdemona;  
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,  
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.

**Enter CASSIO**

RODERIGO  
I know his gait, 'tis he. Villain, thou diest!

*Makes a pass at CASSIO*

CASSIO  
That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,  
But that my coat is better than thou know'st  
I will make proof of thine.

*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO*

RODERIGO  
O, I am slain!

*IAGO from behind wounds CASSIO in the leg, and exit*

CASSIO  
I am maim'd for ever. Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Falls*

## **Scene II**

LODOVICO  
O thou Othello, thou wert once so good,  
Fall'n in the practise of a damned slave,  
What shall be said to thee?

OTHELLO  
Why, any thing:  
An honourable murderer, if you will;  
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

LODOVICO  
This wretch hath part confess'd his villany:  
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

OTHELLO  
Ay.

CASSIO  
Dear general, I never gave you cause.

OTHELLO  
I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.  
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil  
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

IAGO

Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:  
From this time forth I never will speak word.