

## OTHELLO ACT III

### Before the Citadel.

*[Enter CASSIO and IAGO]*

**CASSIO**

Iago!

**IAGO**

Cassio. You have not been to bed, then?

**CASSIO**

Why, no; the day had broke before we parted. I have made bold, Iago, to send in to your wife. My suit to her is that she will to virtuous Desdemona procure me some access.

**IAGO**

I'll send her to you presently, and I'll devise a means to draw the Moor out of the way, so that your converse and business may be more free.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank you for it.

*[Exit IAGO]*

I never knew a man more kind and honest than Iago.

*[Enter EMILIA]*

**EMILIA**

Good morrow, good Lieutenant: I am sorry for your displeasure, but all will be well. The general and his wife are talking of it, and she speaks for you. The Moor replies that he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus; but he protests he loves you and needs no other suitor but his likings to take the safest occasion to bring you in again.

**CASSIO**

I beseech you, give me advantage of some brief discourse with Desdemona alone.

**EMILIA**

Come in.

**CASSIO**

I am much bound to you.

*[Enter DESDEMONA]*

**DESDEMONA**

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

**CASSIO**

Bounteous madam, whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, I'm never anything but your true servant.

**DESDEMONA**

I know it; I thank you.

**CASSIO**

But, lady, I fear that being absent and my place supplied, my general will forget my love and service.

**DESDEMONA**

Do not doubt that; I give thee warrant of thy place. If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it to the last article. My lord shall never rest. I'll watch him. I'll tame and talk him out of patience. I'll intermingle everything he does with Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio, for I shall rather die than give thy cause away.

**EMILIA**

Madam, here comes my lord.

**CASSIO**

Madam, I'll take my leave.

*[ Enter OTHELLO and IAGO looking on from a distance ]*

**IAGO**

Ha! I like not that.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say? Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

**IAGO**

Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think that he would steal away so guilty-like, seeing you coming.

**OTHELLO**

I do believe it was he.

**DESDEMONA**

How now, my lord! I have been talking with a man that languishes in your displeasure.

**OTHELLO**

Who is it you mean?

**DESDEMONA**

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord, if he be not one that truly loves you, I have no judgment in an honest face. Call him back.

**OTHELLO**

Went he hence now?

**DESDEMONA**

Ay. Call him back.

**OTHELLO**

Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But shall it be shortly?

**OTHELLO**

The sooner, sweet, for you.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, then, tomorrow night; or Tuesday morn. On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn. I prithee, name the time, but let it not exceed three days. Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul, what you would ask me, that I should deny.

**OTHELLO**

Prithee, no more: let him come when he will. I will deny thee nothing. Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this, 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.

*[Exit DESDEMONA and EMILIA]*

**OTHELLO**

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**

Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd your lady, know of your love?

**OTHELLO**

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

**IAGO**

Just for a satisfaction of my thought.

**OTHELLO**

Why of thy thought, Iago?

**IAGO**

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

**OTHELLO**

O, yes, and went between us very oft.

**IAGO**

Indeed!

**OTHELLO**

Indeed! Ay, indeed. Discernst thou aught in that? Is he not honest?

**IAGO**

Honest, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Honest! Ay, honest.

**IAGO**

My lord, for aught I know.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou think?

**IAGO**

Think, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me, as if there were some monster in his thought too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something. I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that, when Cassio left my wife. What didst not like? If thou dost love me, show me thy thought.

**IAGO**

My lord, you know I love you.

**OTHELLO**

I think thou dost - Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more.

**IAGO**

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

**OTHELLO**

I think so too.

**IAGO**

Men should be what they seem.

**OTHELLO**

Certain, men should be what they seem.

**IAGO**

Why, then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, yet there's more in this. I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings, and give thy worst of thoughts the worst of words.

**IAGO**

I do beseech you - 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 there. It were not for your good to let you know my thoughts.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou mean?

**IAGO**

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, is the immediate jewel of their souls -

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

**IAGO**

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand.

**OTHELLO**

Ha!

**IAGO**

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy. It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on.

**OTHELLO**

O misery!

**IAGO**

Good heaven, defend from jealousy!

**OTHELLO**

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 say my wife is fair, loves company, sings, plays and dances well - these are virtues. Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw the smallest fear or doubt of her revolt, For she had eyes, and chose me.

**IAGO**

I am glad of it. For now I shall have reason to show the love and duty that I bear you. I speak not yet of proof, but... look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio. Look to it. I know our country's disposition well: In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks they dare not show their husbands. Their best conscience is not to leave it undone, but keep it unknown.

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou say so?

**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**

I see this hath a little dashed your spirits.

**OTHELLO**

No, I do not think but that 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 - not to take many proposed matches of her own clime, complexion, and degree, whereto we see in all things nature tends - one may sense thoughts unnatural. But pardon me; I do not in position distinctly speak of her -though I may fear.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, farewell: If more thou dost perceive, let me know more. Leave me, Iago:

**IAGO**

My lord, I take my leave. *[Exits]*

**OTHELLO** *[Alone]*

Why did I marry? This honest Iago doubtless sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds. This fellow's of exceeding honesty, and knows all qualities, with a learned spirit, of human dealings.

If she's gone, I am abused; and my relief must be to loathe her.

O curse of marriage, that we can call these delicate creatures ours, and not their appetites!

*[Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA]*

**OTHELLO** *[to himself]*

If she be false, Oh, then heaven mocks itself! I'll not believe it.

**DESDEMONA**

How now, my dear Othello! 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**

I have a pain upon my forehead here.

**DESDEMONA**

In faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again: Let me but bind it hard, within this hour it will be well.

**OTHELLO**

Your napkin is too little:.

*[He puts the handkerchief away from himself; and it drops to the floor]*

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

**DESDEMONA**

I am very sorry that you are not well.

*[Exit OTHELLO and DESDEMONA]*

**EMILIA** *[alone]*

The handkerchief! I am glad I have found this napkin. This was her first gift from the Moor. My husband hath a hundred times asked me to steal it. I'll give it to Iago: What he will do with it heaven knows, not I.

*[Re-enter Iago]*

**IAGO**

How now! What do you here alone?

**EMILIA**

What will you give me now for the same handkerchief?

**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

**EMILIA**

What handkerchief? Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona; that which so often you did bid me steal.

**IAGO**

Hast stolen it from her?

**EMILIA**

No, she let it drop by negligence. And I, being here, took it up. Look, here it is.

**IAGO**

Your a good wench; give it me. I have use for it. Go, leave me.

*[Exit EMILIA – leaving Iago alone]*

**IAGO**

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. Not poppy nor all the drowsy syrups of the world shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep which thou ownedst yesterday.

*[Re-enter OTHELLO]*

How now lord.

**OTHELLO**

Avaunt! be gone! Thou hast set me on the rack. I swear it is better to be much abused than but to know it a little.

**IAGO**

How now, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

What sense had I of her stolen hours of lust? I saw it not, thought it not; it harmed not me. I slept the next night well, was free and merry. I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips. He that is robbed, not knowing what is stolen, feels not robbed at all. I would have been happy as long as I had nothing known. But no! Thanks to you, farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell!

**IAGO**

My lord?

**OTHELLO** *[enraged]*

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore, be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof, or by the worth of man's eternal soul, thou hadst been better have been born a dog than answer my waked wrath!

**IAGO**

Is't come to this?

**OTHELLO**

Make me to see it; or, at the least, so prove it 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; on horror's head horrors accumulate; nothing canst thou to damnation add greater than that!

**IAGO**

O grace! O heaven forgive me! O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world: to be direct and honest is not safe since love breeds such offence.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stay. Thou shouldst be honest.

**IAGO**

I should be wise, for honesty's a fool and loses what it works for.

**OTHELLO**

By the world, I think my wife be honest and think she is not; I think that thou art just and think thou art not. I'll have some proof!

**IAGO**

I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion. I do repent me that I put it to you. You would be satisfied?

**OTHELLO**

Would! Nay! I will!

**IAGO**

And may. But, how? How satisfied, my lord? Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on - behold her topped by her sinful lover?

**OTHELLO**

Death!

**IAGO**

It were a tedious difficulty, I think, to bring them to that prospect. 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.

**OTHELLO**

Damnation!

**IAGO**

But yet, I say: If imputation and strong circumstances which lead directly to the door of truth, will give you satisfaction, you may have it.

**OTHELLO**

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

**IAGO**

I do not like the office: but, since I am entered in this cause so far, pricked to it by foolish honesty and love, I will go on.

I lay near Cassio lately – camped on the field of battle - and, being troubled with a raging tooth, I could not sleep.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul, that in their sleeps will mutter 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;' And then, sir, would he grip 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; then laid his leg over my thigh, and sighed, and kissed, and then cried, 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

**OTHELLO**

O monstrous! Monstrous!

**IAGO**

Nay, this was but his dream - though this may help to thicken other proofs.

**OTHELLO**

I'll tear her all to pieces!

**IAGO**

Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done. She may be honest yet. Tell me but this: Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief 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**

If it be that, or any that was hers, it speaks against her with the other proofs.

**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: all my fond love thus do I blow to heaven. 'Tis gone: Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow hell! Yield up, O love, to tyrannous hate!

**IAGO**

Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

**OTHELLO**

Never, Iago. My bloody thoughts, with violent pace, shall never look back to humble love till revenge swallow them up: Now, By yond marble heaven, In the due reverence of a sacred vow I here engage my words.

**IAGO** [*Iago Kneels*]

Witness, you ever-burning lights above: witness that here Iago doth give up the execution of his heart to wronged Othello's service! Let him command, and I to obey - what bloody business ever.

**OTHELLO**

Within these three days let me hear thee say that Cassio's not alive.

**IAGO**

My friend Cassio is dead. But let *her* live.

**OTHELLO**

No! Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her! My heart is stone!

Come, go with me - 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 forever.

[*Exit*]

*[Within the castle: Enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA]*

**DESDEMONA**

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

**EMILIA** *[worried]*

I know not, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse full of gold coins. 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**

Is he not jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born burned all such jealousies from him.

**EMILIA**

Look, where he comes.

**DESDEMONA**

I will not leave him now till Cassio be called to him.

*[Enter OTHELLO]*

How is it with you, my lord

**OTHELLO**

Well, my good lady. And how do you?

**DESDEMONA**

Well, my good lord. Come now, your promise.

**OTHELLO**

What promise?

**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**

No Give me that which I first gave you.

**DESDEMONA**

I have it not about me.

**OTHELLO**

Not?

**DESDEMONA**

No, indeed, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That is a fault! That handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give. She was a charmer, and could almost read the thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it, it would 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 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 it: make it a darling like your precious eye; to lose it or give it away were such damnation as nothing else could match.

**DESDEMONA**

Is it possible?

**OTHELLO**

'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it. Look to it well.

**DESDEMONA**

Then would to God that I had never seen it!

**OTHELLO**

Ha! Wherefore?

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

**OTHELLO**

Is it lost? Is it gone? Speak!

**DESDEMONA**

It is not lost.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch it, let me see it!

**DESDEMONA**

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now. This is a trick to put me from my suit. Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch me the handkerchief! My mind misgives.

**DESDEMONA**

Come, come, you'll never meet a more sufficient man.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

I pray, talk to me of Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

A man that all his time hath founded his good fortunes on your love, shared dangers with you -

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

In truth, you are to blame.

**OTHELLO**

Away!

*[He exits in rage]*

**EMILIA**

Is not this man jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

I never saw this before.

**EMILIA**

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man. They are all but stomachs, and we all but food. They eat us hungrily, and when they are full, they belch us.

*[Enter IAGO]*

**IAGO**

Is my lord angry?

**EMILIA**

He went hence but now, and certainly in strange unquietness.

**IAGO**

Can he be angry? I will go meet him:

**DESDEMONA**

I prithee, do so.

**IAGO**

Something, sure, of state, either from Venice, or some unhatched practice made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him, hath muddled his clear spirit.

*[Exit Iago]*

**DESDEMONA**

Alas the day! I never gave him cause for jealousy.

**EMILIA**

But jealous souls will not be answered so; they are not ever jealous for the cause, but jealous just because they are jealous. 'Jealousy is a madness – a monster born of itself.

**DESDEMONA**

Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Lady, amen.

*Exit DESDEMONA and EMILIA*