

Othello Act IV

Scene1

IAGO

My general, Othello. So you demand proof of Cassio's love with your wife? What if I had said I had *seen* him do you wrong?

OTHELLO

Hath he said anything? What hath he said?

IAGO

In faith, that he did - -I know not what he did.

OTHELLO

What? what?

IAGO

Lie--

OTHELLO

With her?

IAGO

With her, on her; what you will.

OTHELLO

Lie with her! lie on her! Lie with her! Handkerchief! Confessions! Bodies! Lips! Is't possible? Confess! handkerchief! Oh devil! I tremble at it!

[Othello Falls into an epileptic seizure]

IAGO *[laughs]*

Work on, My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught. And many worthy and chaste women, all guiltless, meet reproach.

[Othello begins to come out of his seizure and regain consciousness]

What, my lord! My lord, I say! Othello!

[Enter CASSIO]

IAGO

How now, Cassio!

CASSIO

What's the matter?

IAGO

My lord is fallen into an epilepsy. This is his second fit.

CASSIO

Rub him about the temples.

IAGO

No, the lethargy must have his quiet course. If not, he foams at mouth and by and by breaks out to savage madness. Look: Do you withdraw yourself a little while, He will recover straight: while he is gone, I would on great occasion speak with you.

[Exit CASSIO]

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

OTHELLO

Did he confess it?

IAGO

Stand you awhile apart; Confine yourself but in a patient listening. Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief-- Cassio came hither. I shifted him away And laid good excuse upon your ecstasy. I bade him return and here speak with me. Now do but encave yourself, and mark the sneers, the gibes, and notable scorns that dwell in every region of his face. For I will make him tell where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when he hath, and is again to cope your wife.

OTHELLO

Dost thou hear, Iago? I will be found most most bloody in my vengeance.

[OTHELLO hides]

IAGO

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca - a whore-wife that by selling her desires buys herself bread and clothes. Yet she is a creature that dotes on Cassio. He, who loves her not, cannot refrain from the excess of laughter when he regards the strumpet. Here he comes.

As he shall smile at Bianca's folly, Othello shall go mad. For his jealousy must construe poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behavior as meaning Desdemona is his toy.

[Re-enter CASSIO]

How now, good Lieutenant Cassio!

CASSIO

The worse that call me by that rank - lieutenant - whose want even kills me.

IAGO

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on it.

[Iago speaking lower – so that Othello will not hear]

Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power, How quickly should you speed!

CASSIO

Alas, poor girl!

OTHELLO *[whispering alone]*

Look, how he laughs already!

IAGO

I never knew woman love man so.

CASSIO

Alas, poor rogue! I think, in faith, she loves me.

OTHELLO *[whispering alone]*

Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

IAGO

Do you hear, Cassio? She gives it out that you shall marry her. Do you intend it?

CASSIO

Ha! I marry her! what? a customer! Prithee, bear some charity to my wit. Do not think it so unwholesome. Ha!

OTHELLO

So, so, so, so: they laugh!

IAGO

In Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

CASSIO

Prithee, say true. This is the monkey's own giving out. She is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

OTHELLO [*still hiding – and imperfectly hearing*]

Now he begins the story.

CASSIO

She hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me. Ha!

OTHELLO

Oh, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

IAGO

Before me! look, where she comes.

[*Enter BIANCA*]

CASSIO

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIANCA

Let the devil haunt you! What did you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the work? A likely piece of work, that you should find it in your chamber, and not know who left it there! This is some minx's token, and I must take out the work? There; give it your hobby-horse, wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no work on it!

CASSIO

How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

OTHELLO

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

CASSIO

Sweet Bianca!

BIANCA

If you'll come to supper tonight, you may have sweets; if you will not, then come when you are next prepared for.

[She Exits]

IAGO

After her, after her. Ha!

CASSIO

In faith, I must. She'll rail in the streets else.

IAGO

Will you sup there?

CASSIO

I intend so.

IAGO

Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

[Exit CASSIO]

OTHELLO *[Advancing]*

How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice? And did you see the handkerchief? Yours! And to see how he prizes the foolish woman - your wife! She gave it to Cassio, and he hath given it to his whore.

OTHELLO

I would have him nine years a-killing. A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

IAGO

Nay, you must forget that.

OTHELLO

Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight; for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. I will chop her into pieces. To cuckold me!

IAGO

O, 'tis foul in her.

OTHELLO

And with mine officer!

IAGO

That's fouler.

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.

OTHELLO

Excellent good.

A trumpet sounds in the distance]

What trumpet is that?

IAGO

Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico who's come from the duke. See, your wife is with him.

[Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants]

LODOVICO

Save you, worthy general!

OTHELLO

[composing himself]

With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

[Lodovico gives him a letter]

OTHELLO

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

[Opens the letter, and reads]

DESDEMONA *[She stands at a distance from Othello]*

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO

I am very glad to see you, signior Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO

I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

IAGO

Lives, sir.

DESDEMONA

Cousin, there's fallen between him and my lord an unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

OTHELLO

Are you sure of that?

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO *[Reads]*

LODOVICO

He did not call; he's busy in the paper. Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

DESDEMONA

A most unhappy one. I would do much to atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

OTHELLO

Fire and brimstone!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

Are you wise?

DESDEMONA

What, is he angry?

LODOVICO

Maybe the letter moved him, for, as I think, they do command him home, deputing Cassio in his government.

DESDEMONA

I am glad on it.

OTHELLO

Mad on it? I am glad to see you mad.

DESDEMONA

Why, sweet Othello,--

OTHELLO *[Striking her]*

Devil!

DESDEMONA

I have not deserved this.

LODOVICO

My lord, this would not be believed in Venice, though I should swear I saw it: Tis very much. Make her amends; she weeps.

OTHELLO

O devil, devil! If that the earth could teem with woman's tears, each drop she falls would prove a crocodile. Out of my sight!

DESDEMONA

I will not stay to offend you.

[Going Away]

LODOVICO

Call her back.

OTHELLO

Damnation! So Cassio shall have my place! Damnation! *[He leaves wildly enraged]*

LODOVICO

Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature that passion could not shake?

IAGO

He is much changed.

LODOVICO

Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

IAGO

He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure of what he might be.

LODOVICO

What! Strike his wife!

IAGO

In Faith, that was not so well. Alas, alas! It is not honesty in me to speak what I have seen and known. Observe him, and his own courses will show what he has become.

LODOVICO

I am sorry that I am deceived in him. *[All Exit]*

Act IV SCENE 2.

[A room in the castle]

[Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA]

OTHELLO

You have seen nothing then?

EMILIA

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

OTHELLO

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

EMILIA

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard each syllable that breath made up between them.

OTHELLO

What, did they never whisper?

EMILIA

Never, my lord.

OTHELLO

Nor send you out o' the way?

EMILIA

Never.

OTHELLO

To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

EMILIA

Never, my lord. I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest. Remove the thought; it doth abuse your bosom.

OTHELLO

Bid her come hither: go.

[Exit EMILIA]

She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd that cannot say as much. This Desdemona is a subtle whore. And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do it.

[Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA]

DESDEMONA

My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO

Pray, come hither.

DESDEMONA

What is your pleasure?

OTHELLO

Let me see your eyes. Look in my face.

DESDEMONA

What horrible fancy's this?

OTHELLO [To EMILIA]

Leave.

OTHELLO [To DESDEMONA]

What art thou?

DESDEMONA

Your wife, my lord; your true and loyal wife.

OTHELLO

Come, swear it, damn thyself. Swear thou art honest.

DESDEMONA

Heaven doth truly know it.

OTHELLO

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

DESDEMONA

To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?

OTHELLO

O Desdemona! away! away! away!

DESDEMONA

Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep? Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?

OTHELLO

O thou weed, who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet that the sense aches at thee, I would thou hadst never been born!

DESDEMONA

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book, made to write 'whore' upon? Strumpet!

DESDEMONA

By heaven, you do me wrong!

OTHELLO

Are you not a strumpet?

DESDEMONA

No, as I am a Christian!

OTHELLO

What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA

No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO

I cry you mercy, then: I took you for that cunning whore of Venice that married with Othello.

OTHELLO *[Raising his voice to Emilia, who waits nearby]*

You, mistress, that have the office opposite to Saint Peter, and keep the gate of hell!

[Re-enter EMILIA]

You, you, ay, you! We have done our course; there's money for your pains: I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel.

[Othello exits in anger.]

EMILIA

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord? What horror does this man conceive? My husband approaches.

[Enter IAGO]

IAGO

What is your pleasure, madam? What's the matter, lady?

DESDEMONA

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, fair lady?

EMILIA

He called her whore.

IAGO

Why did he so?

DESDEMONA

I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

IAGO

Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

EMILIA

Hath she forsook so many noble matches to be call'd whore?

DESDEMONA

It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO

How comes this trick upon him?

DESDEMONA

I know not. Perchance heaven doth know.

EMILIA

I will be hanged if some eternal villain, to get some office, have not devised this slander.

IAGO

Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

DESDEMONA

If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

EMILIA

A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones! Why should he call her whore? Who keeps her company? What place? What time? What form? What likelihood? The Moor's abused by some most villanous knave.

IAGO

Speak within door.

EMILIA

O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was that turn'd your wit the seamy side without, and made you to suspect me with the Moor.

IAGO

You are a fool; go to.

DESDEMONA

O good Iago, What shall I do to win my lord again? Here I kneel: Never my will did trespass against his love. He may cast me to beggarly divorcement, but I love him dearly,

IAGO

I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour: The business of the state does him offence, And he does chide with you.

DESDEMONA

If it were no other-

IAGO

'Tis but so, I warrant.

[Trumpets sound in the distance]

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper! Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

[DESDEMONA and EMILIA leave]

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[RODERIGO steps in – angry]

IAGO

How now, Roderigo!

RODERIGO

I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

IAGO

What in the contrary?

RODERIGO

Every day thou daffest me with some device, Iago. I will indeed no longer endure it.

IAGO

Will you hear me, Roderigo? You charge me most unjustly.

RODERIGO

With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted an emporess. You have told me she hath received them and returned me expressions of love. But I find none. I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona. If she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

IAGO

Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even from this instant to build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

RODERIGO

It hath not appeared.

IAGO

I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage and valour, this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

RODERIGO

Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

IAGO

Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

RODERIGO

Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

IAGO

Oh no; he goes into Mauritania and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless he be lingered here by some accident - wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.

RODERIGO

How do you mean, removing of him?

IAGO

Why, by knocking out his brains.

RODERIGO

And that you would have me to do?

IAGO

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups tonight with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him. If you will watch his going thence, which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, you may kill him at your pleasure. I will be near to back up your attempt. I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him.

RODERIGO

I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO

And you shall be satisfied.

Act IV

Scene 3

[In Desdemona's Bedroom]

DESDEMONA

He says he will return. He hath commanded me to go to bed, and bade me to dismiss you.

EMILIA

Dismiss me!

DESDEMONA

It was his bidding.

EMILIA

I would you had never seen him!

DESDEMONA

So would not I.

EMILIA

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

DESDEMONA

Emilia, If I do die before thee prithee, shroud me in one of those sheets.

EMILIA

Come, come you talk foolishly.

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid call'd Barbara. She was in love, and he she loved proved bad - and did forsake her. She had a song of 'willow;' and she died singing it. That song to-night will not go from my mind. Emilia, mine eyes do itch. Doth that bode weeping?

EMILIA

Tis neither here nor there.

DESDEMONA

I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men! Dost thou in conscience think- tell me, Emilia,-- That there be women do abuse their husbands in such gross kind?

EMILIA

There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed as cuckolding thine husband for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA

No, by this heavenly light!

EMILIA

Nor I neither by this heavenly light; I might do it as well in the dark.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

The world's a huge thing. It is a great price for a small vice.

DESDEMONA

In truth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

In truth, I think I should! But I do think it is their husbands' faults if wives do fall.
Say that they slack their duties, or say they strike us, why, we have galls, and we have some revenge. Let husbands know: their wives have senses like them. What is it that men do when they change us for others? Is it sport? I think it is: and doth affection breed it? I think it doth. And have not we affections, desires for sport, and frailty, as men have? Then let them use us well. Else let them know, the ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DESDEMONA

Good night.

End of Act IV