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## Scorched Earth: Unlocking the Mysteries of Shakespeare's Greatest Villain, Iago in Othello

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Scorched Earth:  
Unlocking the Mysteries of Shakespeare's Greatest Villain,  
Iago in Othello

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
Film and Theatre  
Theatre Performance

by

Patrick Hunter

B.F.A. Ithaca College, 2010

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## **ABSTRACT:**

The following thesis is an in-depth actor analysis chronicling my approach to the role of Iago in TheatreUNO's 2019 production of *Othello* by William Shakespeare. This thesis will include analysis of the text, character objectives, techniques used, observations about the application of contemporary realistic acting technique to classical verse text, self-evaluation and personal reflection. This thesis will be supported by production materials including a fully scored script.

This play was directed by David W. Hoover, and performed April 25- May 4, 2019, as part of the TheatreUNO 2018-2019 academic season, presented by the Department of Film and Theatre in the School of the Arts, at the University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana. Scenic Design was by Kevin Griffith, Lighting design was by Diane Baas, Costume design was by Anthony French, Vocal coaching was by L. Kalo Gow, and Alexandra Marie Rainey served as the Stage Manager.

## INTRODUCTION:

For my graduate thesis production, I was assigned the role of Iago in William Shakespeare's *Othello*. Widely regarded as one of the great villains in the history of Western theatre, the list of actors to have attempted the role reads as a pantheon of excellence, beginning with Robert Armin, Shakespeare's resident tragic fool, and passing through the likes of Ian McKellen, Simon Russell Beale, Kenneth Branagh, and Philip Seymour Hoffman, among countless others.

“He is the ideal forerunner of so many contemporary dissemblers — the deceitful politician, clergyman, athlete or entertainer; the conniving money manager; the prevaricating realtor; the online sexual predator. Iago takes deception to the highest possible level. He becomes the ultimate creature of secrets, the man whose petty grievance doesn't match his outsize fury. He is driven by ‘motiveless malignity’ in the phrase coined for him by the 19th-century poet and critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Iago's love of secrecy is all the more disturbing because it contrasts so starkly with the openness and candor personified by Othello, who not only believes all men ‘shouldst be honest’ but seems to think many really are”(Lee Siegel). Iago is objectively evil, acting purely out of malice, intentionally bringing chaos and misfortune to the other characters in the play. This presents the actor with a great challenge: to get on his side in order to champion his cause. We actors should always be looking to find sympathy for our characters, approaching them without judgement so that we can use our minds and bodies to bring them to life. Only then can we take the printed word from the page and render their truth as a three-dimensional, living, breathing human being.

But where does one find sympathy for pure evil? How can one create malevolence without judgement? We have all seen the bad version of this: the mustache-twirling, sneering, stock-villain that serves no purpose other than to give the hero an obstacle to vanquish. That is not particularly captivating, dramatic, or difficult to accomplish. I like to think that I can achieve more than that. This journey for me began where all of my theatrical journeys begin: with the text. I believe the keys to understanding the cipher of Iago's villainy can be found through a thorough textual analysis of Shakespeare's words. Throughout this thesis, I will outline my approach to textual analysis, my scene-by-scene actor analysis, and how the two analyses work in tandem. From there, I will draw broader conclusions about the relationship between contemporary actor analysis and classical verse text analysis. I will also explore the techniques and approaches I used to take my analysis off of the page and into a physical, urgent, and compelling performance. Finally, I will critique my own performance, reflect upon lessons learned, and knowledge gleaned from my experience working on this play.

### **MY PROCESS:**

The primary acting technique I employ in my work is known as Practical Aesthetics. This is a technique that was derived as a distillation of Stanislavsky's work that focuses on physical action, rather than on a character's emotional life. Simplified, the philosophy behind this approach is that our emotions serve as an impulse to act, therefore by focusing on the *action*, the emotional life will follow. It was developed and codified by a group of actors at The Atlantic Theatre Company, and published in *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. This technique is not a rejection of the emotional memory- based Stanislavsky work that is so popular among American



actors, but a refinement thereof; a way to help the actor to focus entirely on the character's situational needs, which in turn informs the emotional arc of the character.

This technique begins with the idea of objective, also called goal, intention or motivation. This is the thing the character is fighting for that drives them throughout the play. Iago, for instance, wants to exact revenge upon Othello. There are infinite ways to go about achieving that objective, but it begins there. All of the choices made by the actor must serve a singular overarching objective, as well as smaller, more immediate objectives in each scene, in order to create a cohesive performance. In *Acting Power*, Robert Cohen, using "intention" as his preferred nomenclature, offers three principles, "1. The actor must play intentions, not attitudes or indications. 2. There is a hierarchy of intentions, including large intentions (superintentions) and small, moment-to-moment intentions (subintentions). 3. Intentions are only positive. You cannot play a negative intention."

The primary moment-to-moment building block of Practical Aesthetics is the action. Actions are verbs or verb phrases that define the physical pursuit of a specific goal, and they must satisfy the following nine rules, as laid out in [The Practical Handbook for the Actor](#). An Action Must:

1. Be physically capable of being done
2. Be fun to do
3. Be specific
4. Have its test in the other person
5. Not be an errand
6. Not presuppose any physical or emotional state

7. Not be manipulative
8. Have a “cap”
9. Be in line with the intentions of the playwright

Finding a good action makes the scene vibrant and exciting, but most of all it takes the actor out of their head and into the moment. By focusing on the physical pursuit of a specific goal, the actor can silence the internal critic, and take pressure off of themselves to create a complex inner emotional life by concentrating on what is happening right “here and now”. If the actor has done their homework, and chosen objectives and actions wisely, the inner life and the emotional depth will fall into place based on their successes and failures in pursuit of their goals. “By getting to the essential action of what the character is doing, the actor has stripped away the emotional connotations that might be suggested by the given circumstances of the play... the actor will find himself in the world of the concretely doable, not in the nebulous world of feelings outside the actor’s control. The essential action, then, is what exists in the scene when you eliminate all ideas about what you think the author is saying the character feels at any given moment in favor of what he is trying to accomplish”(Bruder, et al).

The next important tentpole of the technique is the obstacles. If objective asks the actor “what are you fighting for?” then obstacle asks the actor “what are you fighting against?” Obstacles can come in many forms. Most clearly, obstacles come in the form of the other characters in the scene. If the other actors are doing their jobs, they are also engaged in the pursuit of a specific goal, which is often in direct opposition to the goal that you are pursuing. The navigation thereof and the resulting tug-of-war is a massive piece of what “in the moment” acting is all about. Obstacles can also be societal, such as a character attempting to overcome

their socioeconomic circumstances; internal, such as a character struggling with mental illness; or they can be a physical obstacle, such as being handcuffed, or having a physical disability.

Identifying all of the potential obstacles is helpful to the actor because it prepares them to listen and react “in the moment”, maintaining flexibility in their performance.

In her book Beyond Stanislavsky, Bella Merlin describes her time working with Stanislavsky’s company after his late career revelations about physical actions. She describes the method of physical actions, or psycho-physical acting, thus, “In a nutshell, the basis of psycho-physical acting is that *inner feeling* and *outer expression* happen at the same time. In other words, whatever emotion you may be experiencing, your physical response to that emotion is instantaneous. And *vice versa*: whatever physical action you execute, the inner sensation aroused by that action is spontaneous.” In his later career, Stanislavsky, as documented in this case by Merlin, became less concerned with the “inside/out” approach that begins with emotion above all (i.e. “The Method”), and more focused on the inextricable relationship between the internal and the external. “The actor was drawn *towards* physical actions and *away* from worrying about emoting in performance, so that the process actually freed up the actor’s subconscious, inducing it to work spontaneously and creatively. Through this *forward-moving* impulse, all the physiological, psychological, and emotional components of the actor’s apparatus were aligned almost effortlessly, making it a truly psycho-physical technique, where body and psychology were mutually dependent.” (Merlin).

For my purposes in this thesis, I am using the term objective to describe the character’s overarching goal in the entirety of the play, or what Cohen referred to as “superintention”. For each scene, I will identify the Essential Action that Iago is pursuing with each character in the

scene, which will be a verb phrase reflecting his primary pursuit for the scene, or Cohen's "subintention". I will then identify possible tactics, which will be action-verbs representing my arsenal of possible approaches that I can play depending on what my fellow actors are playing in response to me. Finally, I will identify my score of physical actions, which is a list of possible movements and physical activities that can be employed to help me play my tactics, in pursuit of my essential action that will serve my overall objective. As with any technical analysis, this serves as a starting place for the actor. This can and will change depending on direction, other actors, audience responses, and the infinite variables present in any live theatrical event. However, the actor must thoughtfully and thoroughly prepare for each scene in the play, by identifying these core elements and making choices that will help them to commit fully to the circumstances of the character.

### **MY IAGO:**

For our production of Othello, the director David Hoover chose to use contemporary military clothing and neutral theatrical scenery that evoked the ruins of an ancient city, but did not clearly define a time or a place. This obviously informed the physical life of the character by removing the character from an Elizabethan social structure and placing them into our contemporary world. Through discussion with Professor Hoover, we concluded that Iago is the most trusted advisor and strategist to the general, Othello. Iago, being played by me, a slightly older and less physically fit actor than the actors we cast as Cassio and Othello, would not have been known for his physical prowess on the field of battle, but for his sharp mind for political and military strategy, making him an essential advisor for Othello, who is a naturally charismatic leader, but does not possess the analytical mind that Iago does.

I decided to give myself a comparison to someone in our political sphere today upon whom to base my character, and the person that I settled on was political strategist Steve Bannon, who was instrumental to the election of Donald Trump. Bannon reminds me of Iago, because he does not possess the charm, good looks, or polished oratory skills that a political candidate running for elected office would typically possess, and yet his sharp intellect and his strategic mind are highly valued by those in his circle. He does most of his work behind the scenes, often being spoken of as a puppet master, pulling strings in the shadows behind Donald Trump. This reminded me directly of Iago because Iago is so skilled at manipulating others into acting for his own interests, while believing they are acting on their own behalf.

I studied and employed a lot of Bannon's physicality, particularly in the way he wears his clothes loose and unkempt, as if he has no time to focus on his physical appearance, and he carries himself with a grounded, weighty countenance. In Joshua Green's 2015 *Bloomberg* profile of Bannon, he described him as "the sort of character who would stand out anywhere, but especially in the drab environs of Washington. A mile-a-minute talker who thrums with energy, his sentences speed off ahead of him and spin out into great pileups of nouns, verbs, and grins. With his swept-back blond hair and partiality to cargo shorts and flip-flops, he looks like Jeff Spicoli (Sean Penn's famous stoner-beach bum character from *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*) after a few decades of hard living, and he employs 'dude' just as readily." This characterization of Bannon as a slovenly, casual, albeit brilliant and incisive operative led me towards my physicalization of Iago. While the other male characters were upright and controlled, the way military figures are typically depicted, I was earthen and heavy, using indirect physical motions and a slower gait. In Laban terms, this character was a Wring, representing sustained onset,

heavy weight and indirect movement. I felt that these physical changes, inspired by Steve Bannon, helped to put me in to Iago's observant and calculating posture. Also the physical contrast between my Iago and our Othello and Cassio helped me to tap into the resentment that Iago harbors of the younger, more agile, physically fit military officers.

Finding the character's voice was a challenge for me, due to a necessary departure from my typical vocal quality. As a classically trained tenor, I have a crystal clear timbre that sits higher in pitch than the average male voice, and I employ a large amount of forward mask resonance. This creates a voice that is unmistakably that of a singer's and allows me to approach vocal work with precision and clarity. For this character, I wanted to match the physicality and give the character more weight, edge, and obstacle without losing the clarity of the text. I consulted Patsy Rodenburg's *Speaking Shakespeare* for some advice on how to employ a voice that is healthy and free, but still communicates the character. Rodenburg says "A free voice isn't necessarily beautiful or elegant; it is one that will move with the intention and sound appropriate to the content of the text. This means a free voice can be ugly or beautiful as required...If your voice is free we will hear the complexities of the text, not your voice. The text will change your voice but you should always start from yourself." Rodenburg goes on to offer a warm-up to free the voice and body, which I used before rehearsals and performances:

"BODY

- Release tensions in shoulders, neck, jaw and face.
- Release and move the spine gently.
- Unlock any holds in the upper chest and lower abdomen.
- Centre the body

- Enter into the state of readiness

## BREATH

- Avoiding any force or pumping in the breath, or tension in the shoulders or upper chest.
- Breathe in calmly without noise.
- Stretch the breath muscles.
- Side stretches and back stretch.
- Release lower breath by pushing a wall.
- Increase capacity on *s* and introduce *z* to develop control.
- Full recoveries: count five to seven on *z*.
- Fast recoveries: low and fast, count one, one-two, one-two-three, up to fifteen.

## WARM UP VOICE

- Hum: *oo* into *ha*.
- Intone to a point above eyeliner. Feel it leave you on *ha* and stop it outside you so that you sustain it.

## WARM UP RESONATORS

- Head, nose, face, throat and chest.

## WARM UP RANGE

- Glide down through the voice on *ha* several times before going back up through the voice.

## WARM UP SPEECH MUSCLES

- Release jaw, stretch tongue.
- Tongue Twisters”(Rodenburg).

Some specific ways I approached my vocal characterization were to overly accentuate the consonants in the text, to give an aggressive quality of chewing and spitting out the words. To generate a sneer without tension, I dug in to nasal consonants such as M's and N's, and hung on to an aggressive "R" coloring. I felt this created an uneasiness and an unpleasant buzzsaw quality that underlined my character's status as a manipulator, corruptor and provocateur.

Psychologically speaking, Iago is a tough nut to crack. Over centuries, many have theorized about his motives, leading scholars to make conclusions ranging from Iago being sexually impotent, madly in love with Desdemona, madly in love with Othello, or a personification of the devil himself. What all of these scholars do agree on, is that Iago is purely evil, and largely irredeemable. Working with this script, it would be irresponsible not to mention the racial element to the story. Othello is an outsider, a Moor, not a white European man. He is likely a prince from northern Africa, who has made his name as a warrior and converted to Christianity. The problem with the racist interpretation of Iago is that it is largely unsupported by the text. The only time that Iago invokes race as a weapon against Othello is to rile up others against him. When Iago is disguising his identity, speaking to Brabantio, he employs imagery of cross-breeding, horses, animals, and deformed offspring that will result from Desdemona mating with a black man. This is the only direct reference to Othello's otherness in the play, and it is used to radicalize Brabantio. In Iago's private moments, he never once mentions Othello's race, therefore I believe Iago's motives are not race-related. The suspicion that Othello has slept with Emilia is also barely explicated by Iago in his private moments, and then later Emilia all but debunks it, so that as a motivation for Iago's revenge is also unfounded. Harold Bloom, in his book, Iago: The Strategies of Evil, poses that Iago is making up the suspicion of Emilia's



infidelity to give himself further ammunition, “Iago, who can dupe everyone else, does not deceive himself. He knows that he is creating murderous fictions. The absurdity of Othello and Cassio at work cuckolding Emilia is a private joke, but one that destroys”(Bloom).

When we meet Iago, he is ruminating on the major professional slight he has received: Othello has passed him over for the lieutenantcy, in favor of Cassio. Everything Iago does for the remainder of the play stems from this one incident. Thinking through the lens of 2019, using the modern political climate as a background for the production, I thought about Iago as a personification of toxic masculinity and white male privilege. Iago is so used to getting exactly what he wants in life, that when he is passed over, he becomes utterly consumed with righting the perceived wrong that has been perpetrated unto him. Iago is ruthlessly pragmatic, and Machiavellian in the truest sense, that is he believes in pursuit of personal gain, it is not only *acceptable*, but *necessary* to commit misdeeds upon others. Iago, with his obsessive personality, decides that correcting the wrong of Othello passing him over for Cassio as his Lieutenant is worth tearing down the entirety of the structure within which they are operating. Iago adopts a scorched-earth philosophy, taking himself down with the ship and happily so. This also mirrors Steve Bannon’s ideology, as he is frequently characterized as a chaos-agent, intent on disrupting the political hierarchy even at the expense of breaking down societal institutions in the process. In my approach to Iago, I found it less helpful to focus on where the obsession comes *from*, and more on where it *leads*, as is my tendency as an actor who focuses on action, and not on emotion. Ruthless obsession postures Iago into a state of permanent offense, playing god, a puppet master who can manipulate anyone in the play. Iago is on a constant manipulation feedback-loop, observing each and every person’s behavior, deciding how he wants it to change, and acting to

change it. He masterfully persuades each person into doing exactly what he wants, resulting in successes beyond his wildest imagination, even though he takes himself down with Othello.

### **APPROACHING VERSE TEXT:**

A primary challenge for the contemporary actor when approaching Shakespeare or any classical text, is how to give a performance that feels authentic, connected and (for lack of a better term) *real*, while honoring the technical demands of the text itself. The contemporary American actor struggles mightily with the tension between heightened language and realistic behavior-based technique. Throughout the process of *Othello*, I set out to test some of my own personal opinions on the relationship between classical text and contemporary acting technique.

My belief is that the actor's primary hang-up is not in the execution of the material but in the approach. Having been reared on the gritty, mumbling performances, made iconic by the likes of James Dean and Marlon Brando, American actors have a self-defeating obsession with the *real* and the *truth*. Their tendency is to look at verse text and immediately write it off, because that is not how the actor would speak in their real life, but the fact of a life in the theatre is that we are often asked to play a character who behaves in a manner completely different from our own. If an actor can wrap their mind around portraying a super hero or serial killer, for instance, isn't it just as plausible the same actor can wrap their mind around playing a character who speaks in verse? Sometimes the difference between a performance that feels authentic and one that feels fake is simply within the actors frame of mind.

One thing actors must do in order to deliver classical text as if it is their own is to confront the verse head-on, not hide away from it, thinking of it as some foreign body they are inserting in to their work. By this, I mean they must find the clues from the playwright.

Shakespeare's text is absolutely loaded with instructions for the actor, if they know what to look for. For example, Shakespeare is very intentional with his use of verse structure. If a character is speaking in a perfectly metric iambic pentameter, that communicates something different from a character whose verse lines are chopped up and arhythmic, or a character speaking in prose, or sharing iambic pentameter lines with other characters. Every one of these choices made by Shakespeare is intentional, and must be treated as such by the actor. One thing I like to do as I score my scenes is to find where the verse structure changes, and ask myself why. Usually a change in structure reflects a change in the character's emotional state, which of course mandates a change in tactic. The actor then gets to align their character choices with the choices made by Shakespeare, so when the beat changes come, they are actively played by the actor with the support of the text. Too often, contemporary actors treat Shakespearian text like a runaway train that they are chasing behind, rather than owning their role as the engineer. If Shakespeare chooses a specific image, then the actor must let the character choose that image, and ask his or herself why. If Shakespeare writes an incomplete verse line, the actor must decide why their character does not finish their thought. If each irregularity in the structure of the writing, or literary device employed by Shakespeare is taken by the actor as instruction to make a choice, in performance it will feel vital, urgent, and most importantly, it will feel as if it comes from the character. Shakespeare's plays contain some of the most beautiful and famous language ever written, but it was written to be acted, not read from a page. That means the actor gets to own the language, not the other way around.

Educator David Montee, with whom I studied in my teenage years, in his Translating Shakespeare: A Guidebook for Young Actors says, "It is not only Shakespeare's literary style - so

intimidating to most young students as well as the oft-befuddled educators who struggle to introduce the plays effectively to them - that has insured his plays' survival over 400 years; it is the psychology of the characters, the essential passion and universal humanity of the stories and how they are told." His conclusion, in a nutshell, is that despite the grandeur of the language and a literary style that is 400 years removed from our own, Shakespeare wrote plays about human beings with human problems. Every person, young or old, can relate to the feelings of unrequited love, betrayal, injustice, lust or victory that pervade Shakespeare's work. The secret to unlocking ones potential as a Shakespearian actor is in regarding the language as an ally, not an antagonist.

In my scored script, I have provided scansion for each of Iago's verse lines, denoting an unstressed syllable with an underscore ( \_ ), and a stressed syllable with a comma ( , ) in the line above. This text analysis works in tandem with the actor-analysis I provided at the beginning of each scene, as well as annotations marking particular literary devices or structural changes I found noteworthy or helpful to my creation of Iago.

SCORED SCRIPT

ACT I SCENE I. Venice. A street.  
Enter RODERIGO and IAGO

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:

- A. Shore up my allegiance with Roderigo
- B. Provoke Brabantio's outrage against Othello

POSSIBLE TACTICS:

With Roderigo: Affirm, Defend, Reassure, Patronize, Entice, Agitate, Irritate  
With Brabantio: Terrorize, Torment, Incense, Arrest, Provoke, Unsettle

PHYSICAL ACTIONS:

With Roderigo: Encircle him, speak loudly and quickly to overwhelm him, use my flashlight to unsettle him or amuse him, physically place him on the step to assert my dominance over him  
With Brabantio: Use my voice to unsettle him by shouting, grating, snarling. Use my flashlight to terrorize him by shining it in his eyes, or shaking it at him.

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,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Who never set a squadron in the field,

’ — — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Nor the division of a battle knows

— — — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
More than a spinster; mere prattle, without practice,

— ’ — ’ — ’  
Is all his soldiership.

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
But Cassio, must his lieutenant be,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
And I--God bless the mark!--his Moorship's ensign.

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.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare gives Iago a short verse line here. This indicates a finality in Iago's point, and a break in the action before Roderigo picks back up with his response, "I would not follow him then," which Iago then immediately picks up in a shared verse line with "O, sir, content you..." to express his exasperation with Roderigo.

RODERIGO

I would not follow him then.

IAGO

O, sir, content you;

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:

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!

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.

RODERIGO

Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.  
What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves!²

' — — ' — — ' — — ' — — '  
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 lock'd?

BRABANTIO

Why, wherefore ask you this?

IAGO

' — — ' — ' — ' — — ' — — '  
'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

— ' — — ' — ' — ' — — '  
Is tugging 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.

---

² Throughout this section, Iago uses many spondaic (double-stressed) rhythms mixed in with the typical iambic rhythm structure. These double-stressed feet, such as the repeated “Thieves! thieves!”, “doors lock’d,” and “black ram,” are used to unsettle Brabantio, spurring him on to act against Othello.



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.

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

<sup>3</sup>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

---

<sup>3</sup> This passage is the first example of many in the play in which Shakespeare transitions Iago from verse to prose. This is absolutely intentional on Iago's part, because he is disguising his identity in order to trick Brabantio in to confronting Othello without knowing who it was that brought him the information. Characters that speak in common prose are typically much lower in social status than Iago or Brabantio, so the change here serves to lead Brabantio away from suspicion of Iago's identity.

with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to you.<sup>4</sup>

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 any thing. But, I beseech you,  
If't be your pleasure 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. Your daughter  
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;  
Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes  
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger.

BRABANTIO

Give me a taper!- call up all my people!  
This accident is not unlike my dream:

---

<sup>4</sup> The horse imagery used here, coupled with the previous mention of the "old black ram.. tugging your white ewe," and the forthcoming "beast with two backs" is Iago's most overt invocation of Othello's race, or racist imagery. The idea of cross-breeding is brought up by design to provoke tribalist feelings within Brabantio, and disgust him at the thought of his daughter mating with a man of a different race.

Belief of it oppresses me already.  
Light, I say! light!

*BRABANTIO Exit*

IAGO

<sup>5</sup>Farewell; for I must leave you:

It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,

To be produced--as, if I stay, I shall—

Against the Moor.

Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains.

Yet, for necessity of present life,

I must show out a flag and sign of love,

Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;

And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

*IAGO Exit*

*Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants*

BRABANTIO

It is too true an evil: gone she is;  
And what's to come of my despised time  
With the Moor, say'st thou? Are they married, think you?

RODERIGO

Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO

Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!  
Do you know where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

RODERIGO

I think I can discover him, if you please,  
To get good guard and go along with me.

---

<sup>5</sup> Upon the exit of Brabantio, Iago immediately switches back to his native blank verse. He is coming back to himself, or back to his standard mode of communication, in order to reassure Roderigo of their alliance and to continue carrying out their plan.

BRABANTIO

Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;  
I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!  
And raise some special officers of night.  
On, good Roderigo: I'll deserve your pains.

*Exeunt*

---

ACT I SCENE II. Another street.  
Enter OTHELLO, IAGO

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:

- A. Cover my ass with Othello before Roderigo and Brabantio come to arrest him
- B. Assess if Michael Cassio can be corrupted
- C. Display public allegiance to Othello against Brabantio and Roderigo

POSSIBLE TACTICS:

With Othello: Bait, Defer, Warn, Protect, Alert, Confide

With Cassio: Tease, Corrupt, Provoke, Asses

With Brabantio and Roderigo: Defend, Rebuke, Challenge

PHYSICAL ACTIONS:

With Othello: Show my deference by making myself shorter than him. Assist him in preparing for a fight. Smile at him. Look Upwards at him to give him the impression of power.

With Cassio: Provoke him with lewd gestures. Laugh with him to excite him.

With Brabantio and Roderigo: Protect Othello. Draw my weapon. Stand my ground.

IAGO

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,

Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience

To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity

Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times

I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

OTHELLO

'Tis better as it is.

IAGO

Nay, but he prated,

And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms

- ' - ' -  
 Against your honour<sup>6</sup>  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 That, with the little godliness I have,  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 Are you fast married? Be assured of this,  
 - - - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 That the magnifico is much beloved,  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 And hath in his effect a voice potential  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 As double as the duke's: he will divorce you;  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 Or put upon you what restraint and grievance  
 - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - ' - '  
 The law, with all his might to enforce it on,  
 - ' - ' - ' - '  
 Will give him cable.

OTHELLO

Let him do his spite:  
 My services which I have done the signiory  
 Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,--  
 Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,  
 I shall promulgate--I fetch my life and being  
 From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
 As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,  
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
 I would not my unhoused free condition  
 Put into circumscription and confine  
 For the sea's worth.

*Enter CASSIO, and Officers*

But, look! what lights come yond?

---

<sup>6</sup> This is an interesting example of a short verse line within a longer, more regular speech. I interpreted this as a test-balloon on Iago's part. He is testing Othello to see how he will react to news of Brabantio speaking out against him. Once he realizes that Othello is not perturbed by the news, then Iago must change tactics, as evidenced by his invocation of his own religious beliefs in the following line.

IAGO

Those are the raised father and his friends:

You were best go in.

OTHELLO

Not I I must be found:

My parts, my title and my perfect soul  
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

IAGO

By Janus, I think no.

OTHELLO

The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.  
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
What is the news?

CASSIO

The duke does greet you, general,  
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,  
Even on the instant.

OTHELLO

What is the matter, think you?

CASSIO

Something from Cyprus as I may divine:  
It is a business of some heat: the galleys  
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers  
This very night at one another's heels,  
And many of the consuls, raised and met,  
Are at the duke's already: you have been hotly call'd for;  
When, being not at your lodging to be found,  
The senate hath sent about three several guests  
To search you out.

OTHELLO

'Tis well I am found by you.  
I will but spend a word here in the house,  
And go with you.

*Exit OTHELLO*

CASSIO

Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — — ' ' —  
'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:

— ' ' — ' — ' — ' —  
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

CASSIO

I do not understand.

IAGO

— ' —  
He's married.

CASSIO

To who?

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

IAGO

' — — ' — — — ' —  
Marry, to--Come, captain, will you go?<sup>7</sup>

OTHELLO

Have with you.

CASSIO

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

IAGO

— ' — ' — — ' — — ' —  
It is Brabantio. General, be advised;

Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers

---

<sup>7</sup> When Cassio does not respond to Iago's lewd joke, referring to Desdemona as a boat upon which Othello has ridden, Iago and Cassio then share a verse line, "I do not understand- She's married- to who?". Following the shared line, Iago has a verse line that becomes interrupted when Othello comes in. It becomes a line of Iambic Quadrameter with the missing foot representing the interruption of the private conversation, signaling to the actor an abrupt beat change from "Marry to-" to "Come captain will you go?"



RODERIGO  
Signior, it is the Moor.

BRABANTIO

Down with him, thief!

*They draw on both sides*

IAGO

' \_ ' \_ ' \_ ' \_ ' \_ ' \_ '  
You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.

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,  
Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,  
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.  
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee.  
Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,  
Subdue him at his peril.

OTHELLO

Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining, and the rest:  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

BRABANTIO

To prison, till fit time  
Of law and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

OTHELLO

What if I do obey?  
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,  
Whose messengers are here about my side,

Upon some present business of the state  
To bring me to him?

CASSIO

'Tis true, most worthy signior;  
The duke's in council and your noble self,  
I am sure, is sent for.

BRABANTIO

How! the duke in council!  
In this time of the night! Bring him away:  
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;  
For if such actions may have passage free,  
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

*Exeunt*

---

**ACT I SCENE III. A council-chamber.  
The DUKE and 3 SENATORS**

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:**

- A. Entice Roderigo to join me in plotting revenge against Othello
- B. Enlist the audience's help to devise a plan of action

**POSSIBLE TACTICS:**

**With Roderigo:** Entice, disillusion, bolster, entreat, enlist, confirm, prod, provoke, puncture, fuel, ignite

**With the Audience:** Confess, plot, revel, justify, plead, invite, welcome, celebrate

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS**

**With Roderigo:** Roll my eyes at him. Challenge him physically. Calm his nerves by sitting down and relaxing him. Approach him slowly. Take him under my arm. Touch my hand to his chest. Straighten his tie. Motion him to leave me.

**With the Audience:** Make eye contact. Find interested parties and put them on the hook by truly asking them questions with the expectation of an answer. Open my body language up to them to invite them in to my scheme. Work the room to include them all.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

There is no composition in these news  
That gives them credit.

**FIRST SENATOR**

Indeed, they are disproportion'd;  
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

And mine, a hundred and forty.

**SECOND SENATOR**

And mine, two hundred:  
But though they jump not on a just account,--  
Yet do they all confirm  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Nay, it is possible enough to judgment:  
When we consider th' imporantcy of Cyprus  
To the Turks.

**THIRD SENATOR**

Here is more news.

*Enter MESSENGER*

My lord! A message from the Galleys.

MESSENGER

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
Steering with due course towards the isle of Rhodes,  
Have there enjoined them with an after fleet.

SECOND SENATOR

How many, as you guess?

MESSENGER

Of thirty sail: and now they do restem  
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,  
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,  
With his free duty recommends you thus,  
And prays you to believe him.

DUKE OF VENICE

'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus.  
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

FIRST SENATOR

He's now in Florence.

DUKE OF VENICE

Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.

FIRST SENATOR

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Exit, MESSENGER, Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO*

DUKE OF VENICE

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the general enemy Ottoman.  
[*To BRABANTIO*] I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;  
We lack'd your counsel and your help tonight.

BRABANTIO

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;  
For my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature  
That it engluts and swallows other sorrows  
And it is still itself.

DUKE OF VENICE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO

My daughter! O, my daughter!

DUKE OF VENICE

Dead?

BRABANTIO

Ay, to me;  
She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;  
For nature so preposterously to err,  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,  
Sans witchcraft could not.

DUKE OF VENICE

Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding  
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself  
And you of her, the bloody book of law  
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter  
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son  
Stood in your action.

BRABANTIO

Humbly I thank your grace.  
Here is the man-- this Moor.

DUKE OF VENICE

[To OTHELLO] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

BRABANTIO

Nothing, but this is so.

OTHELLO

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approved good masters,  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true; true, I have married her:  
The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace:  
Yet, by your gracious patience,  
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
What conjuration and what mighty magic,  
For such proceeding I am charged withal,  
I won his daughter.

BRABANTIO

A maiden never bold;  
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at herself; and she, in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,  
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!  
I therefore vouch again  
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,  
He wrought upon her.

DUKE OF VENICE

To vouch this, is no proof.

SECOND SENATOR

But, Othello, speak:  
Did you by indirect and forced means  
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?

OTHELLO

I do beseech you,  
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,  
And let her speak of me before her father:  
If you do find me foul in her report,  
The trust, the office I do hold of you,  
Not only take away, but let your sentence  
Even fall upon my life.

DUKE OF VENICE

Fetch Desdemona hither.

OTHELLO

Ancient, conduct them: you best know the place.

*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants*

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven  
I do confess the vices of my blood,  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,  
And she in mine.

DUKE OF VENICE

Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO

Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
Still question'd me the story of my life,  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field  
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe  
And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my travels' history:  
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven  
It was my hint to speak,--such was the process;  
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline,  
And with a greedy ear devour up  
My discourse. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:  
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,

I should but teach him how to tell my story.  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used:  
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

*Enter DESDEMONA, IAGO, and Attendants*

DUKE OF VENICE  
I think this tale would win my daughter too.  
Good Brabantio,  
Take up this mangled matter at the best:  
Men do their broken weapons rather use  
Than their bare hands.

BRABANTIO  
I pray you, hear her speak:  
If she confess that she was half the wooer,  
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame  
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress:  
Do you perceive in all this noble company  
Where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA  
My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty:  
To you I am bound for life and education;  
My life and education both do learn me  
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;  
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,  
And so much duty as my mother show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord.

BRABANTIO  
God be wi' you! I have done. Moor:  
I here do give thee that with all my heart  
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart  
I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,  
I am glad at soul I have no other child:



For thy escape would teach me tyranny,  
To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord.

DUKE OF VENICE

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

BRABANTIO

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;  
We lose it not, so long as we can smile.  
But beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

DUKE OF VENICE

The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus. Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

OTHELLO

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnise  
A natural and prompt alacrity  
I find in hardness, and do undertake  
These present wars against the Ottomites.  
Most humbly therefore bending to your state,  
I crave fit disposition for my wife.  
Due reference of place and exhibition,  
With such accommodation and besort  
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE OF VENICE

If you please,

Be't at her father's.

BRABANTIO

I'll not have it so.

OTHELLO

Nor I.

DESDEMONA

Nor I; I would not there reside,  
To put my father in impatient thoughts  
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke-

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.-  
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.

DUKE OF VENICE

Be it as you shall privately determine,  
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,  
And speed must answer it.

FIRST SENATOR

You must away to-night.

DESDAMONA

Tonight, my lord!

OTHELLO  
With all my heart.

DUKE OF VENICE  
At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.  
Othello, leave some officer behind,  
And he shall our commission bring to you.

OTHELLO  
So please your grace, my ensign;  
A man he is of honest and trust:  
To his conveyance I assign, my wife.

DUKE OF VENICE  
Let it be so.  
Good night to every one.  
[To BRABANTIO] And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

FIRST SENATOR  
Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO  
Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:  
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

*Exeunt DUKE OF VENICE, Senators, Officers.*

OTHELLO  
My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,  
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:  
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her:  
And bring them after in the best advantage.  
Come, Desdemona: I have but an hour  
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,  
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

RODERIGO  
Iago, what will I do, thinkest thou?

IAGO<sup>8</sup>

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

RODERIGO

I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO

If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

RODERIGO

It is silliness to live when to live is torment?

IAGO

O villainous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years; and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

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. 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 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

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<sup>8</sup> Iago uses prose with Roderigo in this scene, lowering himself to Roderigo's level and abandoning pretense. He desperately needs to recruit Roderigo's financial help to enact his plan, and to have Roderigo as a pawn to play as he sees fit. By lowering himself to prose, he can create an impression of familiarity with Roderigo, building trust and camaraderie. Throughout this scene, Iago continues to repeat the instructions "put money in thy purse," Shakespeare does nothing by accident, so the repetition of the phrase is a clue for the actor that this is extremely important to Iago. Iago uses it as a mantra for Roderigo, nearly hypnotic in its repetition, and ultimately finds success when Roderigo promises to sell his land.

Moor. 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!

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. 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. But 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<sup>9</sup>

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:

---

<sup>9</sup> Here, Iago begins the first of several direct-address soliloquies to the audience. He is showing them his hand, and letting them see his machinations at work. Iago switches back to the formal verse structure, employing rhythmic regularity, thus displaying his control and mastery of the situation at hand.

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.<sup>10</sup>  
 I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night  
 Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

*Exeunt*

---

<sup>10</sup> Shakespeare gives Iago a short verse line before his concluding rhyming couplet. This pause in the action after “as asses are” and before “I have’t” indicates to the actor that a major decision has been made. It is here that Iago transitions from searching, observing, plotting into action. This brief caesura can help the actor to underline that transition.

**ACT II SCENE I. A Sea-port in Cyprus. A quay.  
Enter MONTANO and GENTLEMAN**

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:**

1. **Corrupt Desdemona with my dirty jokes, therefore enticing Cassio to lust after her.**
2. **Present to the audience and to Roderigo my evidence of Cassio's love for Desdemona.**
3. **Provoke Roderigo to take revenge on Cassio by attacking him.**

**POSSIBLE TACTICS:**

**With Desdemona: Arouse, Provoke, Goad, Amuse, Leer**

**With Cassio: Spark, Excite, Entice**

**With Roderigo: Disquiet, Unsettle, Impassion, Inspire, Provoke, Prick, Prod, Poke**

**With the Audience: Rationalize, Debate, Unfold, Unearth, Endear, Engender**

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS:**

**With Desdemona: Stare at her, smile at her, force eye contact, make obscene gestures to shock her.**

**With Cassio: Make sure he sees everything I am doing to Desdemona.**

**With Roderigo: Whisper, check that we are alone to give the impression of secrecy, thus building trust. Pat him on the back. Poke at his chest. Mock Othello and Cassio.**

**With the Audience: Open my body language to them. Make them laugh. Use my cigarette as a tool to show them my passionate hatred for Othello to gain sympathy. As I use it to calm my nerves and comfort myself with the habitual repetitive action, they get to see me at a weakened state and therefore feel sympathy for me. Ask for their support and reassurance in my planning to make them complicit in my scheme.**

MONTANO

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing at all: it is a highwrought flood;  
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,  
Descry a sail.

MONTANO

If that the Turkish fleet  
Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd:  
It is impossible they bear it out.

*Enter a SECOND GENTLEMAN*

SECOND GENTLEMAN

The ship is here put in,  
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,

Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,  
Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,  
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

MONTANO

I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.  
For I have served him, and the man commands  
Like a full soldier.  
Well met at Cyprus, Luitenant.

*Enter CASSIO*

CASSIO

Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,  
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens  
Give him defence against the elements,  
For I have lost us him on a dangerous sea.

MONTANO

Is he well shipp'd?

CASSIO

His bark is stoutly timber'd, his pilot  
Of very expert and approved allowance;

*A cry within 'A sail, a sail, a sail!'*

CASSIO

What noise?

MONTANO

They do discharge their shot of courtesy:  
Our friends at least.

CASSIO

I pray you, sir, go forth,  
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I shall.

*Exit*

CASSIO

This desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks  
That their designment halts.

MONTANO

But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?



CASSIO

Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid  
That paragons description and wild fame;

*Re-enter Second Gentleman*

How now! who has put in?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

CASSIO

He's had most favourable and happy speed:  
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
As having sense of beauty, do omit  
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by  
The divine Desdemona.

MONTANO

What is she?

CASSIO

She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,  
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,  
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts  
A se'nnight's speed. O, behold,

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Attendants*

The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
Hail to thee, lady!

DESDEMONA

I thank you, valiant Cassio.  
What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

CASSIO

He is not yet arrived: nor know I aught  
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

DESDEMONA

O, but I fear--How lost you company?

CASSIO

The great contention of the sea and skies  
Parted our fellowship--But, hark! a sail.

*Within 'A sail, a sail!', cannons heard*

SECOND GENTLEMAN

They give their greeting to the citadel;  
This likewise is a friend.

CASSIO

See for the news.

*Exit Gentleman*

Good ensign, you are welcome. [To EMILIA] Welcome, mistress.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,

That I extend my manners.

*Kisses Emilia*

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Sir, would she give you so much of her lips

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,

— ' — ' — '  
You'll have enough.

DESDEMONA

Alas, she has no speech.

IAGO

— ' — ' — '  
In faith, too much;

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:

' — — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,

— ' — ' — '  
And chides with thinking.

EMILIA

You have little cause to say so.

IAGO

Come on, come on; you are wild-cats in your kitchens, devils being offended,  
and housewives' in your beds.

DESDEMONA

O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

IAGO

’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
You rise to play and go to bed to work.<sup>11</sup>

EMILIA

You shall not write my praise.

IAGO

’ ’ – ’  
No, let me not.

DESDEMONA

What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?

IAGO

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
O gentle lady, do not put me to't;

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
For I am nothing, if not critical.

DESDEMONA

Come on assay. There's one gone to the harbour?

IAGO

’ ’ –  
Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA

I am not merry; but I do beguile  
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.  
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

---

<sup>11</sup> Here begins a section in which Iago uses rhyming couplets to tell dirty jokes. The rhymes can be used for a teasing, schoolyard-bullying effect. His intention is to sexualize Desdemona in front of the men, in order to render his scheme more effective.

IAGO

— ' — ' — — ' — ' — ' — '  
My Muse labours, and thus she is deliver'd.

— ' — ' — ' — ' — — ' — ' — '  
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
The one's for use, the other useth it.

DESDEMONA

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
If she be black, and thereto have a wit,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

DESDEMONA

Worse and worse.

EMILIA

How if fair and foolish?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
She never yet was foolish that was fair;

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

DESDEMONA

These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i' the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for her that's foul and foolish?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

DESDEMONA

O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best. Do not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal counsellor?

CASSIO

He speaks home, madam: You may relish him more in the soldier than in the scholar.

IAGO

[Aside] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said, whisper: with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do; If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, -Would they were clyster-pipes for your sake!<sup>12</sup>

*Trumpet within*

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

CASSIO

'Tis truly so.

CASSIO

Lo, where he comes!

*Enter OTHELLO and Attendants*

OTHELLO

O my fair warrior!

DESDEMONA

My dear Othello!

OTHELLO

It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!  
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas  
Olympus-high and duck again as low  
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,  
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute  
That not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate.

---

<sup>12</sup> This aside to the audience is different from the soliloquy at the end of the first act in that Iago is not alone onstage, but commenting to the audience during continuous action. There is more of an urgent secrecy in this type of communication, perhaps informing the decision to descend to prose instead of his customary verse.

DESDEMONA

The heavens forbid  
But that our loves and comforts should increase,  
Even as our days do grow!

OTHELLO

Amen to that, sweet powers!  
I cannot speak enough of this content;  
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:  
And this, and this, the greatest discords be  
That e'er our hearts shall make!

*Kissing her*

IAGO

[Aside] O, you are well tuned now!  
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,  
As honest as I am.

OTHELLO

News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks  
are drown'd. Our wars are done!  
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?  
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;  
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,  
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,  
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers:  
Bring thou the master to the citadel;  
He is a good one, and his worthiness  
Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,  
Once more, well met at Cyprus.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

IAGO<sup>13</sup>

Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. 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.

---

<sup>13</sup> This is another example, as in Act I Scene iii, of Iago using prose to lower himself to the level of Roderigo while ensnaring him in to the web of corruption.

IAGO

Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? 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! But, sir, be you ruled by me. 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 the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires the impediment most profitably removed.

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<sup>14</sup>

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
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

---

<sup>14</sup> Again, as in Act 1 scene iii, Iago finds himself alone with the audience and begins a blank verse soliloquy in order to bring them up to speed on his plans. His transition back to a measured, regular verse structure is an indication that he still feels well in control at this moment in the play.



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 practicing upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused:  
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

*Exeunt*

---

**ACT II. SCENE III. Party**  
**Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants**

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:**

- A. Corrupt Cassio, so he will get drunk and embarrass himself.
- B. Endear myself to the gentlemen of Cyprus.
- C. Warn Montano of Cassio's weakness.
- D. Bait Othello in to demoting Cassio.
- E. Dupe Cassio in to pleading his case to Desdemona.
- F. Celebrate my success in having Cassio demoted with the audience.
- G. Shame Roderigo in to continuing his quest.

**POSSIBLE TACTICS:**

**With Cassio, before the drinking scene: Goad, Lead-on, Shame, Embarrass, Pressure**

**With the Cyprus gentlemen: Rouse, Entertain, Endear, Delight, Transfix**

**With Montano: Disquiet, Alert, Aarn**

**With Othello: Assure, Impress, Disclose, Confess, Support**

**With Cassio, after Othello's exit: Comfort, Calm, Redirect, Entrap, Ensnare, Embrace**

**With the audience: Celebrate, Revel, Peacock, Delight, Plot, Scheme**

**With Roderigo: Guilt, Shame, Embarrass, Soothe, Quell**

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS:**

**With Cassio, before the drinking scene: Unbutton my shirt, assume a relaxed posture, make eye contact, roll my eyes, show him the wine.**

**With the Cyprus gentlemen: Sing, dance, put my arm around them, raise the canteen, challenge them to drink.**

**With Montano: hang my head, shuffle back and forth, pick up Cassio's cup, shake my head.**

**With Othello: Return Cassio's dagger, stand up straight, place myself between Othello and Cassio, put my hand on Cassio's shoulder.**

**With Cassio, after Othello's exit: Rub his back, whisper, pat his back, gesture towards Desdemona, place my hand on his chest, hug him.**

**With the audience: Chew my words, smile, sneer at Cassio, make eye contact.**

**With Roderigo: Look away from him, poke at his wound, put him down on the chair, get him a drink, usher him offstage.**

**OTHELLO**

Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:

Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,

Not to outsport discretion.

CASSIO

Iago hath direction what to do;  
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye  
Will I look to't.

OTHELLO

Iago is most honest.  
Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest  
Let me have speech with you.

To DESDEMONA

Come, my dear love,  
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;  
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA Enter IAGO*

CASSIO

Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

IAGO<sup>15</sup>

Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove.

CASSIO

She's a most exquisite lady.

IAGO

And, I'll warrant her, fun of game.

CASSIO

Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

IAGO

What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

CASSIO

An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

---

<sup>15</sup> Iago speaks to Cassio, an officer who is above him in rank, in common prose. This is Iago's attempt to establish his dominance over Cassio. Although Cassio is in greater favor with Othello, Iago refuses to show him the courtesy and deference that befits his station. Again Iago attempts to corrupt Cassio with lewd humor, and overly sexualizes Desdemona in order to provoke some feelings of attraction or arousal in Cassio, once more to no avail.

IAGO

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

CASSIO

She is indeed perfection.

IAGO

Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to the health of black Othello.

CASSIO

Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

IAGO

O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for you.

CASSIO

I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was craftily qualified too, and, behold, what innovation it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity, and dare not task my weakness with any more.

IAGO

What, man! 'tis a night of revels: the gallants desire it.

CASSIO

Where are they?

IAGO

Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

CASSIO

I'll do't; but it dislikes me.

*Exit*

IAGO<sup>16</sup>

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
If I can fasten but one cup upon him,

' ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,

---

<sup>16</sup> This speech is another example of a direct address, blank-verse monologue between Iago and the audience.

He'll be as full of quarrel and offence  
 As my young mistress' dog.  
 Now, my sick fool Roderigo,  
 Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,  
 To Desdemona hath to-night caroused  
 Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch:  
 Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,  
 That hold their honours in a wary distance,  
 The very elements of this warlike isle,  
 Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,  
 And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,  
 Am I to put our Cassio in some action  
 That may offend the isle.--But here they come:  
 If consequence do but approve my dream,  
 My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

*Re-enter CASSIO; MONTANO and Gentlemen with wine*

CASSIO

'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already.

MONTANO

Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am a soldier.

IAGO<sup>17</sup>

Some wine, ho!

[Sings] And let me the canakin clink, clink;  
And let me the canakin clink  
A soldier's a man;  
A life's but a span;  
Why, then, let a soldier drink.

Some wine, boys!

CASSIO

'Fore God, an excellent song.

IAGO

I learned it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander--Drink, ho!--are nothing to your English.

CASSIO

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

IAGO

Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

CASSIO

To the health of our general!

MONTANO

I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.

IAGO

O sweet England! [sings]  
King Stephen was a worthy peer,  
His breeches cost him but a crown;  
He held them sixpence all too dear,  
With that he call'd the tailor lown.  
He was a wight of high renown,  
And thou art but of low degree:

---

<sup>17</sup> The following passage has Iago switching from common prose to rousing drinking songs. Iago wants to put the Cyprus Gentlemen at ease and get everyone drunk, so he is baiting them with crude humor and music.

'Tis pride that pulls the country down;  
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.  
Some wine, ho!

CASSIO

Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

IAGO

Will you hear't again?

CASSIO

No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, God's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

IAGO

It's true, good lieutenant.

CASSIO

For mine own part,--no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,--I hope to be saved.

IAGO

And so do I too, lieutenant.

CASSIO

Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ensign. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs.—Forgive us our sins!--Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen. I am drunk: this is my ensign; this is my right hand, and this is my left: I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

ALL

Excellent well.

CASSIO

Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk.

*Exit*

MONTANO

To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

IAGO<sup>18</sup>

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
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;  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
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.

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.

IAGO

[Aside to RODERIGO] How now, Roderigo!  
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.

*Exit RODERIGO*

MONTANO

And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor  
Should hazard such a place as his own second  
With one of an ingraft infirmity:  
It were an honest action to say  
So to the Moor.

---

<sup>18</sup> Iago finds himself alone with Montano, a nobleman who could become a powerful ally, so Iago transitions back in to verse in order to show Montano respect and be taken seriously as he expresses concerns about Cassio's drinking habits.



IAGO

Not I, for this fair island:

I do love Cassio well; and would do much

[Cry within: 'Help! help!']

To cure him of this evil--But, hark! what noise?

*Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO*

CASSIO

You rogue! you rascal!

MONTANO

What's the matter, lieutenant?

CASSIO

A knave teach me my duty! I'll beat the knave into a wicker bottle.

RODERIGO

Beat me!

CASSIO

Dost thou prate, rogue?

*Striking RODERIGO*

MONTANO

Nay, good lieutenant; I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

CASSIO

Let me go, sir, or I'll knock you o'er the mazard.

MONTANO

Come, come, you're drunk.

CASSIO

Drunk!

*They fight*

IAGO [Aside to RODERIGO] <sup>19</sup>

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
Away, I say; go out, and cry a mutiny.

*Exit RODERIGO*

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Nay, good lieutenant,--alas, gentlemen;—

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Help, ho!—Lieutenant,--sir,--Montano,--sir;

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Help, masters!--Here's a goodly watch indeed!

*Bell rings*

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Who's that which rings the bell?--Diablo, ho!

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant, hold!

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
You will be shamed for ever.

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

OTHELLO

What is the matter here?

MONTANO

'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death.

*Faints*

OTHELLO

Hold, for your lives!

IAGO

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
Hold, ho! Lieutenant,—sir—Montano!

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
The general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!

OTHELLO

From whence ariseth this?

Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that

Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?

For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:

He that stirs next to carve for his own rage

Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.

---

<sup>19</sup> This fragmented, choppy verse structure is unlike much of what we have seen from Iago up until this point. Iago is shouting to wake the citizens of the city, and hoping to make a scene, so he is using the irregularity in his voice to cause alarm.

Silence that dreadful bell: it frights the isle  
From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?  
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,  
Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

MONTANO [to IAGO]  
If partially affined, or leagued in office,  
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,  
Thou art no soldier.

IAGO<sup>20</sup>

  '    -    '    -    '  
Touch me not so near:

-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '  
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -  
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '  
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    '    '    -    '  
Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.  
-    '    -    '    -    '    '    -    -    '  
Montano and myself being in speech,  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '  
There comes a fellow crying out for help:  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    -    '    -    '  
And Cassio following him with determined sword,  
-    '    -    '    -    '    '    '    '    -    '  
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman  
-    '    -    '    -    -    -    '    -    '  
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause:  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '  
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,  
-    '    -    '  
When I came back—  
-    '    -    '    -    '    -    '    -    '  
For this was brief--I found them close together,  
-    '    -    '    '    -    -    '    -    '  
At blow and thrust; even as again they were

---

<sup>20</sup> Iago, a masterful linguist, returns to his practiced, mannered verse speech here as he describes the scene to Othello, indicating his deft manipulation and the degree of success that he has already found in his short time in Cyprus.

When you yourself did part them.

More of this matter cannot I report:

But men are men; the best sometimes forget:

Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,

Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received

From him that fled some strange indignity,

Which patience could not pass.

OTHELLO

I know, Iago,  
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,  
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee  
But never more be officer of mine.

*Re-enter DESDEMONA*

DESDEMONA  
What's the matter?

OTHELLO

All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.  
Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:  
Lead him off.  
Iago, look with care about the town,  
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.  
Come, Desdemona: 'tis the soldiers' life  
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

*To MONTANO, who is led off*

*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO*

IAGO<sup>21</sup>

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Ay, past all surgery.

---

<sup>21</sup> Iago's return to prose once Cassio is stripped of his title creates a camaraderie with Cassio, and additionally it helps him use his language to shame Cassio further, placing himself in a position above Cassio.

IAGO

Marry, heaven forbid!

CASSIO

Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO

As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition: oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice, sue to him again, and he's yours.

CASSIO

I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse fustian with one's own shadow? O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

IAGO

Who was he that you followed with your sword? What had he done to you?

CASSIO

I know not.

IAGO

Is't possible?

CASSIO

I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

IAGO

Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

CASSIO

I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

IAGO

You or any man living may be drunk! at a time, man.  
I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general: confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: this broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

CASSIO

You advise me well.

IAGO

I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

CASSIO

I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they check me here.

IAGO

You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

CASSIO

Good night, honest Iago.

*Exit*

IAGO<sup>22</sup>

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
When this advice is free I give and honest,  
' — — ' — — — ' — '  
Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful  
— — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
As the free elements. And then for her  
— ' — ' — — — ' — ' —  
To win the Moor--were't to renounce his baptism,

---

<sup>22</sup> This passage is another blank-verse soliloquy.

All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
 His soul is so enfetted to her love,  
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
 Even as her appetite shall play the god  
 With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
 To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
 Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
 When devils will the blackest sins put on,  
 They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
 As I do now: for whiles this honest fool  
 Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes  
 And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
 I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,  
 That she repeals him for her body's lust;  
 And by how much she strives to do him good,  
 She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
 So will I turn her virtue into pitch,  
 And out of her own goodness make the net  
 That shall enmesh them all.  
 How now, Roderigo!

*Re-enter RODERIGO*

RODERIGO

I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I

shall have so much experience for my pains, and so, with no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

IAGO<sup>23</sup>

How poor are they that have not patience!

What wound did ever heal but by degrees?

Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;

And wit depends on dilatory time.

Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee.

And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio:

Though other things grow fair against the sun,

Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:

Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning;

Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.

Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:

Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:

Nay, get thee gone.

*Exit RODERIGO*

Two things are to be done:

My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;

I'll set her on;

---

<sup>23</sup> In the two previous scenes with Roderigo, Iago employed a common prose as his preferred method of communication. Interestingly, here Roderigo initiates the conversation by speaking prose as he interrupts Iago's soliloquy, yet Iago remains in verse for his reply to Roderigo. This, to me, indicates that Iago is feeling true resistance from Roderigo for the first time, and feels it necessary to lay-it-on-thick, so to speak, in order to bring him back into the fold. When Iago is most in control, blank verse is his preferred method of communication, so here when he needs to regain control by dialing up the manipulation, it is an opportunity to employ verse.



Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,

And bring him jump when he may Cassio find

Soliciting his wife: ay, that's the way

Dull not device by coldness and delay.

*Exeunt*

---

ACT III SCENE II+III. Office in Cyprus  
Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, MONTANO

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:**

- A. Lure Othello in to my trap.
- B. Coerce Emilia in to giving me the handkerchief.

**POSSIBLE TACTICS:**

**With Othello:** Goad, Bait, Entrap, Dangle, Torture, Prod, Poke, Shame, Rile, Embrace, Encircle

**With Emilia:** Demand, Flatter, Challenge

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS:**

**With Othello:** Circle around him as I weave my tale, Avoid his gaze in order to discomfort him, Repeat his vocal cadences in order to use his own words to lead him to my conclusions, Assume the posture of begging and pleading in order to keep Othello in the belief that he controls this interaction, retreat into false exits to force Othello to ask me back for further information, Finally kneel next to Othello and make physical contact in order to confirm our alliance.

**With Emilia:** Smile at her, Lift her up, spin her around, Cast her away.

OTHELLO

These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;  
And by him do my duties to the senate:  
That done, I will be walking on the works;  
Repair there to me.

IAGO

Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

*Exeunt*

OTHELLO

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?

MONTANO

We'll wait upon your lordship.

*Exeunt All*

*Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA*

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my husband,  
As if the case were his.

DESDEMONA

O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,  
But I will have my lord and you again  
As friendly as you were.

CASSIO

Bounteous madam,  
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,  
He's never any thing but your true servant.

DESDEMONA

I know't; I thank you. You do love my lord:  
You have known him long; and be you well assured  
He shall in strangeness stand no further off  
Than in a polite distance.

CASSIO

Ay, but, lady,  
That policy may either last so long,  
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,  
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,  
That, I being absent and my place supplied,  
My general will forget my love and service.

DESDEMONA

Do not doubt that; before Emilia here  
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,  
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it  
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;  
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;  
I'll intermingle every thing he does  
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away.

EMILIA

Madam, here comes my lord.

CASSIO

Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESDEMONA

Why, stay, and hear me speak.

CASSIO

Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,  
Unfit for mine own purposes.

DESDEMONA

Well, do your discretion.

*Exit CASSIO and Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

IAGO

’ – ’ – ’  
Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO

<sup>24</sup>What dost thou say?

IAGO

’ – – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Nothing, my lord: or if--I know not what.

OTHELLO

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO

’ – – ’ ’ ’ – ’ – ’  
Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
That he would steal away so guilty-like,  
’ – – ’ –  
Seeing you coming.

---

<sup>24</sup> This is the moment when Iago begins his direct attack on Othello's psyche. The text helps Iago do this by giving him choppy rhythms, often with the stress on the first syllables of the line. The first line "Ha - I like not that," is a shared verse line with a missing foot, and the first syllable stressed. This is a clear departure from his usual level of linguistic control, which Othello notices and comments on. This is a prime example of Iago's use of rhythm for the purposes of manipulation.

OTHELLO  
I do believe 'twas he.

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

OTHELLO  
Who is't you mean?

DESDEMONA  
Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,  
If I have any grace or power to move you,  
His present reconciliation take;  
For if he be not one that truly loves you,  
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,  
I have no judgment in an honest face:  
I prithee, call him back.

OTHELLO  
Went he hence now?

DESDEMONA  
Ay, sooth; so humbled  
That he hath left part of his grief with me,  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTHELLO  
Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

DESDEMONA  
But shall't be shortly?

OTHELLO  
The sooner, sweet, for you.

DESDEMONA  
Shall't be to-night at supper?

OTHELLO  
No, not to-night.

DESDEMONA

To-morrow dinner, then?

OTHELLO

I shall not dine at home;  
I meet the captains at the citadel.

DESDEMONA

Why, then, to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;  
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:  
I prithee, name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,  
What you would ask me, that I should deny,  
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do  
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,--

OTHELLO

Prithee, no more: let him come when he will;  
I will deny thee nothing.

DESDEMONA

Why, this is not a boon;  
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit  
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,  
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight  
And fearful to be granted.

OTHELLO

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.

DESDEMONA

Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

OTHELLO

Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.

IAGO<sup>25</sup>

— ' — ' — '  
My noble lord—

OTHELLO

What dost thou say, Iago?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,  
Know of your love?

OTHELLO

He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
But for a satisfaction of my thought;  
— ' — ' — '  
No further harm.

OTHELLO

Why of thy thought, Iago?

---

<sup>25</sup> Shakespeare gives Othello and Iago many shared verse lines during this part of the scene, building to a short verse line when Iago lands on "Indeed!". What this tells the actor, is that Iago is driving Othello to a realization, and once he feels that Othello can make that realization on his own, he lets the moment linger. After the first "Indeed!", Iago has several short lines in a row, which causes Othello to become suspicious of what Iago might be hiding.

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: discern'st 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?  
And when I told thee he was of my counsel  
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!'  
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,



As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,  
Show me thy thought.

IAGO

— ’ — ’ — ’ —  
My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO

I think thou dost;  
And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,  
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:  
For such things in a false disloyal knave  
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just  
They are close delations, working from the heart  
That passion cannot rule.

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;  
— ’ — ’ ’ — ’ — ’  
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

OTHELLO

Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO

— ’ — ’ ’ — — ’ — ’  
Why, then, I think<sup>26</sup> Cassio's an honest man.

---

<sup>26</sup> Iago repeats the word “think”, which Othello first used in opposition to “know” earlier in the scene. Iago does this on purpose to sow doubt in Othello’s mind.

OTHELLO

Nay, yet there's more in this:  
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,  
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts  
The worst of words.

IAGO

Good my lord, pardon me:  
Though I am bound to every act of duty,  
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.  
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;  
As where's that palace whereinto foul things  
Sometimes intrude not?

OTHELLO

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,  
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

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--that your wisdom yet,  
From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble

Out of his scattering and unsure observance.

It were not for your quiet nor your good,

Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,

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:

Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:

But he that filches from me my good name

Robs me of that which not enriches him

And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;

Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

OTHELLO

Ha!

IAGO<sup>27</sup>

’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss  
’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o’er  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

OTHELLO

O misery!

IAGO

’ – – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Poor and content is rich and rich enough,  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
But riches fineless is as poor as winter  
– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
To him that ever fears he shall be poor  
’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Good god, the souls of all my tribe defend  
– ’ – ’ – ’  
From jealousy!

OTHELLO

Why, why is this?  
Think'st thou I'd make a lie of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt  
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,  
When I shall turn the business of my soul

---

<sup>27</sup> This speech (perhaps the most famous in the play) is particularly interesting because of where it is situated in the scene. Until this point, jealousy, as it relates to Othello has not been mentioned, and here Iago pulls it out with such strong and visceral imagery that he is taking a great risk even by making this attempt. Further, for him to use the word “cuckold,” one of the most feared things that a man could become, for the first time in the play, is a dangerous gamble for Iago. Iago knows that he has Othello on the hook, and he uses this speech to gauge how far.

To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,  
 Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous  
 To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
 Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;  
 Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:  
 Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
 The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;  
 For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;  
 I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;  
 And on the proof, there is no more but this,--  
 Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO<sup>28</sup>

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 To show the love and duty that I bear you  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.  
 ' — — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;  
 ' — ' ' ' ' ' — ' —  
 Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 I would not have your free and noble nature,  
 — ' ' ' — ' — ' —  
 Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to't:  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 I know our country disposition well;  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
 They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience

---

<sup>28</sup> Once Othello has rejected the notion of jealousy, Iago sees an opportunity to up the ante. Throughout the next section of the scene, culminating with Othello sending Iago away, Iago speaks in long, convoluted phrases, weaving in and out of imagery and metaphor while Othello offers very little in response. Iago is quick to finish Othello's lines and lead him down the path of suspicion a little farther with each speech. When Iago is sent away, he overhears Othello speaking to himself, expressing regret for having married and Iago knows that his seeds have taken root and he is free to dial up the momentum of his treachery.

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

OTHELLO  
Dost thou say so?

IAGO  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
She did deceive her father, marrying you;  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,  
— ’ — ’ — ’  
She loved them most.

OTHELLO  
And so she did.

IAGO  
— ’ ’ ’  
Why, go to then;  
’ — ’ ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
To seal her father's eyes up close as oak-  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
He thought 'twas witchcraft--but I am much to blame;  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
For too much loving you.

OTHELLO  
I am bound to thee for ever.

IAGO  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

OTHELLO  
Not a jot, not a jot.

IAGO

— ' — ' — '  
I' faith, I fear it has.

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
I hope you will consider what is spoke

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved:

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
I am to pray you not to strain my speech

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
To grosser issues nor to larger reach

— ' — ' — '  
Than to suspicion.

OTHELLO

I will not.

IAGO

— ' — ' — '  
Should you do so, my lord,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
My speech should fall into such vile success

— — ' ' ' ' — — ' — '  
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend—

— ' — ' — '  
My lord, I see you're moved.

OTHELLO

No, not much moved:

I do not think but 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 affect many proposed matches

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Whereto we see in all things nature tends—  
 ' ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,  
 ' — — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Foul disproportion thoughts unnatural.  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 But pardon me; I do not in position  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 May fall to match you with her country forms  
 — ' — ' — ' — '  
 And happily repent.

OTHELLO

Farewell, farewell:  
 If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;  
 Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago.

IAGO

[Going] — ' — ' — ' — '  
 My lord, I take my leave.

OTHELLO

Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless  
 Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

IAGO

[Returning]

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 My lord, I would I might entreat your honor  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 For sure, he fills it up with great ability,



Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,  
 You shall by that perceive him and his means:  
 Note, if your lady strain his entertainment  
 With any strong or vehement importunity;  
 Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,  
 Let me be thought too busy in my fears—  
 As worthy cause I have to fear I am—  
 And hold her free, I do beseech your honor.

OTHELLO

Fear not my government.

IAGO

I once more take my leave.

*Exit*

OTHELLO

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
 And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,  
 Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
 Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,  
 I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,  
 To pray at fortune. Haply, for I am black  
 And have not those soft parts of conversation  
 That chamberers have, or for I am declined  
 Into the vale of years,—yet that's not much—  
 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! I had rather be a toad,  
 And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,  
 Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
 For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;  
 Prerogatives are they less than the base;  
 'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:

Even then this forked plague is fated to us  
When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

*Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

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

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

'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 from him; and it drops  
Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

DESDEMONA

I am very sorry that you are not well.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

EMILIA

I am glad I have found this napkin:  
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,  
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,  
And give't Iago: what he will do with it

Heaven knows, not I;  
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

*Re-enter Iago*

IAGO  
How now! what do you here alone?

EMILIA  
Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

IAGO  
— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
A thing for me? it is a common thing--

EMILIA  
Ha!

IAGO  
— ’ — ’ — ’  
To have a foolish wife.

EMILIA  
O, is that all? 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 stol'n it from her?

EMILIA  
No, 'faith; she let it drop by negligence.  
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.  
Look, here it is.

IAGO

— ' — ' — '  
A good wench; give it me.

EMILIA

What will you do with 't, that you have been so earnest  
To have me filch it?

IAGO

[Snatching it] ' — ' — '  
Why, what's that to you?

EMILIA

If it be not for some purpose of import,  
Give't me again: poor lady, she'll run mad  
When she shall lack it.

IAGO<sup>29</sup>

— ' — ' — '  
Be not acknownd on 't;

— ' — ' — ' — '  
I have use for it. Go, leave me.

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
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.

I will

---

<sup>29</sup> Iago shares verse lines with Emilia in his short scene with her. He speaks to her in short phrases, not showing her the respect of formalized speeches, although he does use verse with his wife. Regular verse picks up when Emilia leaves, and Iago addresses the audience, to assure them that he is still in control.

’ – – ’ – ’ – – ’ – ’  
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 owest yesterday.

OTHELLO

Ha! ha! false to me?

IAGO

– ’ ’ ’ – ’ ’ – ’  
Why, how now, general! no more of that.

OTHELLO

Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:  
I swear 'tis better to be much abused  
Than but to know't a little.

IAGO

’ ’ – ’  
How now, my lord!

OTHELLO

What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?  
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:  
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;  
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:  
He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,  
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

IAGO

I am sorry to hear this.

OTHELLO

I had been happy, if the general camp,  
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,

So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!  
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,  
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!  
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner, and all quality,  
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!  
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
The immortal Jove's dead clamours counterfeit,  
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

IAGO

Is't possible, my lord?

OTHELLO

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't; 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;  
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;  
For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.

IAGO<sup>30</sup>

— ' — ' — ' —  
O grace! O heaven forgive me!

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?

' — — ' — — ' — — ' — — '  
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool.

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
That livest to make thine honesty a vice!

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
To be direct and honest is not safe.

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
I thank you for this profit; and from hence

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

OTHELLO

Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' —  
I should be wise, for honesty's a fool

— ' — ' — ' —  
And loses that 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. Her name, that was as fresh

As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black

As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,

Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,

I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

---

<sup>30</sup> Upon Othello's re-entrance into the scene, Othello and Iago's dialogue is constructed in an inverse relationship to the earlier part of the scene, when Iago had the bulk of the text. Othello returns with much to say and Iago interjects only small exclamations. At this moment, Iago seizes control of the narrative once more by exclaiming to the heavens "O Grace, O heaven forgive me," and proceeds to steer Othello towards his ultimate decision.

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 topp'd?

OTHELLO

Death and damnation! O!

IAGO

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
It were a tedious difficulty, I think,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster

’ — — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
More than their own! 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,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,



— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
If imputation and strong circumstances,  
— — — — — — — — — —  
Which lead directly to the door of truth,  
— — — — — — — — — —  
Will give you satisfaction, you may have’t.

OTHELLO

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

IAGO<sup>31</sup>

— ’ — — — — — — — — — —  
I do not like the office:  
— — — — — — — — — —  
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,  
— — — — — — — — — —  
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,  
— — — — — — — — — —  
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;  
— — — — — — — — — —  
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 gripe and wring my hand,

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<sup>31</sup> In this speech, Iago perpetrates his first true falsehood upon Othello. Until this point he has been leading Othello with vagaries and conjecture, but now he flat-out lies. Shakespeare has given Iago three short verse lines within this speech, "I do not like the office." "I could not sleep." and "one of this kind is Cassio." This use of short line within the larger verse structure reflects the risk that Iago is taking by lying to someone as powerful as Othello. Iago needs to take a breath at each of these moments to evaluate his degree of success and decide to move forward. It is here that we pass the point of no return and Iago's words succeed beyond even his own malicious intentions.

— ' — ' — — — ' — ' —  
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,  
— ' — ' — ' — — — ' —  
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — — ' —  
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg  
' — — ' — — ' — — ' — —  
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then  
— ' — ' — — ' — — ' — —  
Cried 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

OTHELLO

O monstrous! monstrous!

IAGO

' — ' — — ' — —  
Nay, this was but his dream.

OTHELLO

But this denoted a foregone conclusion:

IAGO

' — — ' — — — ' — — —  
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — — ' —  
And this may help to thicken other proofs  
— — ' — — ' — —  
That do demonstrate thinly.

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 to-day

— ' — ' — ' — '  
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

O, 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 cell!  
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

IAGO

Yet be content.

OTHELLO

O, blood, blood, blood!

IAGO

' — — — — ' — ' — ' — '  
Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

OTHELLO

Never, Iago: Like to the Pontic sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course

Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,  
In the due reverence of a sacred vow  
I here engage my words.

*Kneels*

IAGO

— ' ' ' '  
Do not rise yet.

' — — ' — ' — ' — '  
Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
You elements that clip us round about,  
' — — ' — ' — ' — '  
Witness that here Iago doth give up  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
And to obey shall be in me remorse,  
' ' — ' — ' — '  
What bloody business ever.

*They rise*

OTHELLO

I greet thy love,  
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,  
And will upon the instant put thee to't:  
Within these three days let me hear thee say  
That Cassio's not alive.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — '  
My friend is dead;

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
'tis done at your request: But let her live.

OTHELLO

Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!  
Come, go with me apart; 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 for ever.

*Exeunt*

---

**ACT III SCENE IV.**  
**Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA**

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS:**

- A. To navigate Desdemona's concern to Othello's mental well-being.
- B. To lead Cassio to Desdemona like a lamb to slaughter.

**POSSIBLE TACTICS:**

**With Desdemona: Disquiet, Concern, Ponder, Puzzle**

**With Cassio: Proffer, Guide, Instruct**

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS:**

**With Desdemona: Show her my surprise and consternation at Othello's outburst by furrowing my brow, turning away from her, hurrying out of the room.**

**With Cassio: Maintain a calm and collected affect, and lead him in to the room in a warm, welcoming manner.**

DESDEMONA

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

EMILIA

I know not, madam.

DESDEMONA

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse  
Full of crusadoes: 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  
Drew all such humours from him.

EMILIA

Look, where he comes.

DESDEMONA

How is't with you, my lord

*Enter OTHELLO*

OTHELLO

Well, my good lady.

[Aside]O, hardness to dissemble!--

How do you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Well, my good lord.

OTHELLO

Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.

DESDEMONA

It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

OTHELLO

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:  
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires  
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,  
Much castigation, exercise devout;  
For here's a young and sweating devil here,  
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,  
A frank one.

DESDEMONA

You may, indeed, say so;  
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

OTHELLO

A liberal hand.

DESDEMONA

Come now, your promise.

OTHELLO

What promise, chuck?

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

That which I 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,

'Twould make her amiable and 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 wive,

To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;

Make it a darling like your precious eye;

To lose't or give't away were such perdition

As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA

Is't possible?

OTHELLO

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

The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;

And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful

Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESDEMONA

Indeed! is't true?



OTHELLO

Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA

Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO

Ha! wherefore?

DESDEMONA

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHELLO

Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA

Heaven bless us!

OTHELLO

Say you?

DESDEMONA

It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO

How!

DESDEMONA

I say, it is not lost.

OTHELLO

Fetch't, let me see't.

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 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 sooth, you are to blame.

OTHELLO

Away!

*Exit*

EMILIA

Is not this man jealous?

DESDEMONA

I ne'er saw this before.  
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:  
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

*Enter CASSIO and IAGO*

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
There is no other way; 'tis she must do't:

' — ' — ' — '  
Go, and importune her.

DESDEMONA

How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?

CASSIO

Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you  
That by your virtuous means I may again  
Exist, and be a member of his love  
Whom I with all the office of my heart  
Entirely honour.

DESDEMONA

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!  
My advocacy is not now in tune;  
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,  
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.

IAGO

— ’ — ’ —  
Is my lord angry?

EMILIA

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

IAGO<sup>32</sup>

— ’ — ’ — — — ’ — ’ —  
Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
And, like the devil, from his very arm

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
Puff'd his own brother:--and can he be angry?

’ — — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
Something of moment then: I will go meet him:

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

---

<sup>32</sup> The repeated phrase of “can he be angry?” that Iago employs in this speech to Desdemona serves to feign disbelief to her while repeating the imagery of Othello as an angry person in order to corrupt her view of her husband.

DESDEMONA

I prithee, do so.

*Exit IAGO*

Something, sure, of state,  
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practise  
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
Hath puddled his clear spirit: and in such cases  
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;  
For let our finger ache, and it indues  
Our other healthful members even to that sense  
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,  
Nor of them look for such observances  
As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely.

EMILIA

Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,  
And no conception nor no jealous toy  
Concerning you.

DESDEMONA

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

EMILIA

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;  
They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster  
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

DESDEMONA

Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

EMILIA

Lady, amen.

DESDEMONA

I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout:  
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit  
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

CASSIO

I humbly thank your ladyship.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

*Enter BIANCA*

BIANCA

Save you, friend Cassio!

CASSIO

What make you from home?

How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?

I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

BIANCA

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.

What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?

Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,

More tedious than the dial eight score times?

O weary reckoning!

CASSIO

Pardon me, Bianca:

I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd:

But I shall, in a more continue time,

Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,

*Giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief*

Take me this work out.

BIANCA

O Cassio, whence came this?

CASSIO

I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.

I like the work well: ere it be demanded--

As like enough it will--I'd have it copied:

Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

BIANCA

Leave you! wherefore?

CASSIO

I do attend here on the general;

And think it no addition, nor my wish,

To have him see me woman'd.

BIANCA

Why, I pray you?

CASSIO

Not that I love you not.

BIANCA

But that you do not love me.

I pray you, bring me on the way a little,  
And say if I shall see you soon at night.

CASSIO

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you;  
For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

BIANCA

'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.

*Exeunt*

---

ACT IV SCENE I.  
Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS**

- A. To pervert Othello's imagination to the point of madness.
- B. To prepare Cassio for sacrifice.
- C. To disturb Lodovico about the state of things in Cyprus.

**POSSIBLE TACTICS**

**With Othello:** Corrupt, Pervert, Disgust, Incense, Inflammation, Ignite, Embolden, Impassion, Shake, Quake, Crumble, Destroy

**With Cassio:** Lead, Bait, Amuse, Comfort, Assist, Entrap

**With Lodovico:** Warn, Unsettle, Alarm

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS**

**With Othello:** Pace back and forth, using a twitchy unsettled physicality to keep him uncomfortable, Use my voice as lewdly as possible. Use my flashlight to prompt an epileptic episode, grow my volume to force him to get louder and more agitated, make eye contact to assure him of his path.

**With Cassio:** Put my arm around him, whisper to lead him to speak of Bianca candidly, and then put distance between us to force him to speak loudly enough for Othello to hear. Laugh and joke with him so that he appears arrogant and gleeful to Othello.

**With Lodovico:** Avoid his direct questions, create secrecy by checking that we are alone, lowering my voice, creating physical closeness.

IAGO<sup>33</sup>

— ' — ' —  
Will you think so?

OTHELLO

Think so, Iago!

IAGO

— ' —  
What,

— ' — ' —  
To kiss in private?

---

<sup>33</sup> Othello and Iago are speaking in shared verse lines throughout the beginning of this scene, with short phrases rebounding off of one another. This is a clear message from Shakespeare to the actors that Iago has penetrated Othello's psyche so deeply that they are thinking and speaking as one.

OTHELLO

An unauthorized kiss.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Or to be naked with her friend in bed

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

OTHELLO

Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!

It is hypocrisy against the devil:

They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,

The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,—

OTHELLO

What then?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

OTHELLO

She is protectress of her honour too:

May she give that?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Her honour is an essence that's not seen;

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
They have it very oft that have it not:

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
But, for the handkerchief,—



OTHELLO

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.  
Thou said'st, it comes o'er my memory,  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,  
Boding to all--he had my handkerchief.

IAGO

’ ’ – ’  
Ay, what of that?

OTHELLO

That's not so good now.

IAGO

’  
What,

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?

– ’ – ’  
Or heard him say,--

OTHELLO

Hath he said any thing?

IAGO

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,

– ’ – ’ – ’  
No more than he'll unswear.

OTHELLO

What hath he said?

IAGO

’ – – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
'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! We say lie on her, when they belie her. Lie with her! that's fulsome.  
--Handkerchief--confessions--handkerchief!--To confess, and be hanged for his labour;--first, to be hanged, and then to confess.--I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.  
--Is't possible?--Confess--handkerchief!--O devil!--

*Falls in a trance*

IAGO

Work on, My medicine, work! What, ho! my lord!

My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter CASSIO*

How now, Cassio!

CASSIO

What's the matter?

IAGO

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:

This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

CASSIO

Rub him about the temples.

IAGO

No, forbear;

The lethargy must have his quiet course:

If not, he foams at mouth and by and by

Breaks out to savage madness. Look he stirs:

Do you withdraw yourself a little while,

He will recover straight: when he is gone,

I would on great occasion speak with you.

*Exit CASSIO*

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

OTHELLO

Dost thou mock me?

IAGO

I mock you! no, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

OTHELLO

A horned man's a monster and a beast.

IAGO

There's many a beast then in a populous city,

And many a civil monster.

OTHELLO

Did he confess it?

IAGO

Good sir, be a man;

There's millions now alive

That nightly lie in those unproper beds

Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better.

O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,

To lip a wanton in a secure couch,

And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;

And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

OTHELLO

O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

IAGO

Stand you awhile apart;

Confine yourself but in a patient list.

Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief—

A passion most unsuited such a man—

Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,

And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy,

Bade him anon return and here speak with me;

The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,

And mark the flections, the gibes, and notable scorns,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 That dwell in every region of his face;  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 For I will make him tell the tale anew,  
 ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and then  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 He hath, and is again to cope your wife:  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,  
 — ' — ' — ' — '  
 And nothing of a man.

OTHELLO

Dost thou hear, Iago?  
 I will be found most cunning in my patience;  
 But--dost thou hear?--most bloody.

IAGO

— ' — ' — '  
 That's not amiss;  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?  
 ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 A housewife that by selling her desires  
 ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 That dotes on Cassio; as 'tis the strumpet's plague  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 To beguile many and be beguiled by one:  
 ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 From the excess of laughter. Here he comes:  
 — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
 As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;

*OTHELLO retires*

*Re-enter CASSIO*

How do you now, lieutenant?

CASSIO

The worser that you give me the addition  
Whose want even kills me.

IAGO

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.

Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,

How quickly should you speed!

CASSIO

Alas, poor caitiff!

IAGO

I never knew woman love man so.

CASSIO

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

IAGO

Do you hear, Cassio?

She gives it out that you shall marry her:

Do you intend it?

CASSIO

[Laughing] I marry her! 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. She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck— So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so haies, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO

Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O, I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall throw it to.

CASSIO

Well, I must leave her company.

IAGO

Before me! look, where she comes.

CASSIO

'Tis such another fitchew! marry a perfumed one.  
What do you mean by this haunting of me?

*Enter BIANCA*

BIANCA

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't.

CASSIO

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

BIANCA

An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

*Exit*

IAGO

After her, after her.

CASSIO

'Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

IAGO

Will you sup there?

CASSIO

'Faith, 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<sup>34</sup>

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTHELLO

O Iago!

IAGO

And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO

Was that mine?

IAGO

Yours by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it 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 to-night; for she shall not live: no, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

IAGO

Nay, that's not your way.

OTHELLO

Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate with her needle: an admirable musician: O! she will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high and plenteous wit and invention:--

IAGO

She's the worse for all this.

---

<sup>34</sup> This marks the first and only scene in this play in which Iago and Othello speak in prose to one another. Clearly another boundary has been crossed, and Othello is determined to commit murder against his wife. Iago has broken Othello's spirit, and has destroyed his capacity for niceties, which is reflected in Othello's crude prose, which Iago happily matches.



OTHELLO

O, a thousand thousand times: and then, of so gentle a condition!

IAGO

Ay, too gentle.

OTHELLO

Nay, that's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago! O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

IAGO

If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes near nobody.

OTHELLO

I will chop her into messes: cuckold me!

IAGO

O, 'tis foul in her.

OTHELLO

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.

What trumpet is that same?

*A trumpet within*

IAGO

Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico  
Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

*Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

LODOVICO

Save you, worthy general!

OTHELLO

With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

*Gives him a letter*

OTHELLO

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

*Opens the letter, and reads*

DESDEMONA

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO<sup>35</sup>

— ' — ' — ' — — ' ' — — ' —  
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 fall'n between him and my lord  
An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

OTHELLO

Are you sure of that?

---

<sup>35</sup> Iago, master manipulator that he is, is able to return directly to polite, regulated verse when Lodovico enters the scene. His shared lines with Lodovico at the end of the scene and their rhythmic regularity serve as a reminder that Iago knows exactly what he is doing, and believes that he remains in the driver's seat.

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

[Reads] 'This fail you not to do, as you will--'

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

May be the letter moved him;

For, as I think, they do command him home,

Deputing Cassio in his government.

DESDEMONA

Trust me, I am glad on't.

OTHELLO

Indeed!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

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't: '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.

LODOVICO

Truly, an obedient lady:  
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

OTHELLO

Mistress!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Who, I, my lord?

OTHELLO

Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:  
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,  
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;

And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,  
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.  
Concerning this, sir,--O well-painted passion!--  
I am commanded home. Get you away;  
I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,  
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!  
Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight,  
I do entreat that we may sup together:  
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.--Goats and monkeys!

*Exit DESDEMONA*

*Exit*

LODOVICO

Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate  
Call all in all sufficient?

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

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
What he might be.

LODOVICO

What, strike his wife!

IAGO

' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
'Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
That stroke would prove the worst!

LODOVICO

Is it his use?

Or did the letters work upon his blood,  
And new-create this fault?

IAGO

— ' — '  
Alas, alas!

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
It is not honesty in me to speak

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
And his own courses will denote him so

— ' — ' — '  
That I may save my speech.

LODOVICO

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

*Exeunt*

---

**ACT IV SCENE II.**  
**Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA**

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS**

- A. Comfort Desdemona to keep the plan in motion.**
- B. Reassure Roderigo of my master plan.**

**POSSIBLE TACTICS**

**With Desdemona: Console, Stroke, Assuage, Absolve, Calm**

**With Roderigo: Brush-off, Belittle, Shrug, Bolster, Reassure, Inspire, Provoke**

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS**

**With Desdemona: Stroke her shoulder, kneel next to her, help her up, smile at her.**

**With Roderigo: Brush him aside, cross away from him, then build him back up by Offering him a cigarette, slapping him on the back, and lowering myself to his height.**

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.

OTHELLO  
That's strange.

EMILIA  
I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,  
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.  
If any wretch have put this in your head,  
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!  
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,  
There's no man happy.

OTHELLO  
Bid her come hither: go.  
She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd  
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,  
A closet lock and key of villanous secrets  
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't.

*Exit EMILIA*

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA*

DESDEMONA  
My lord, what is your will?

OTHELLO  
Pray, chuck, 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] Some of your function, mistress;  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;  
Cough, or cry 'hem,' if any body come:  
Your mystery, your mystery: nay, dispatch.

*Exit EMILIA*



DESDEMONA

Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?  
I understand a fury in your words.  
But not the words.

OTHELLO

Why, what art thou?

DESDEMONA

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

OTHELLO

Come, swear it, damn thyself  
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves  
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double damn'd:  
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

Had it pleased heaven  
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd  
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head.  
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,  
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,  
I should have found in some place of my soul  
A drop of patience.

But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,  
Where either I must live, or bear no life;  
The fountain from the which my current runs,  
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!  
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads  
To knot and gender in! O thou weed,  
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet  
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

DESDEMONA

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

OTHELLO

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
Made to write 'whore' upon? What committed!  
Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,  
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets  
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,  
And will not hear it. What committed!  
Impudent strumpet!

DESDEMONA

By heaven, you do me wrong.

OTHELLO

Are you not a strumpet?

DESDEMONA

No, as I am a Christian:

If to preserve this vessel for my lord  
From any other foul unlawful touch  
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

OTHELLO

What, not a whore?

DESDEMONA

No, as I shall be saved.

OTHELLO

Is't possible?

DESDEMONA

O, heaven forgive us!

OTHELLO

I cry you mercy, then:

I took you for that cunning whore of Venice  
That married with Othello. You, mistress,  
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,  
And keep the gate of hell! 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.

*Re-enter EMILIA*

*Exit*

EMILIA

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

DESDEMONA

'Faith, half asleep.

EMILIA

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

DESDEMONA

With who?

EMILIA

Why, with my lord, madam.

DESDEMONA

Who is thy lord?

EMILIA

He that is yours, sweet lady.

DESDEMONA

I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;  
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,  
But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight  
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;  
And call thy husband hither.

EMILIA

Here's a change indeed!

*Exit*

DESDEMONA

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.

*Re-enter EMILIA with IAGO*

IAGO<sup>36</sup>

What is your pleasure, madam? How is't with you?

DESDEMONA

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes  
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:  
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,  
I am a child to chiding.

IAGO

What's the matter, lady?

EMILIA

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her.  
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
As true hearts cannot bear.

DESDEMONA

Am I that name, Iago?

IAGO

What name, fair lady?

DESDEMONA

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

EMILIA

He call'd her whore: a beggar in his drink  
Could not have laid such terms upon his callat.

---

<sup>36</sup> Iago maintains his veil of innocence by using inquisitive shared verse lines. He does not offer much in the way of help or insight until Emilia leaves he and Desdemona alone. After she opens up to him, Iago comforts Desdemona by matching her verse structure, thus reassuring her. Upon Roderigo's entrance, Iago is frustrated with Roderigo's inability to keep his head cool and stick to their plans, so he speaks to him in prose, even when he is deceiving Roderigo. This is a departure from Act 2 Scene iii, and demonstrates that Iago is beginning to scramble to keep all of his various deceptions active, and is speaking extemporaneously rather than having a planned method of attack with Roderigo.

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,  
Her father and her country and her friends,  
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

DESDEMONA

It is my wretched fortune.

IAGO

– ’ – ’  
Beshrew him for't!

’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
How comes this trick upon him?

DESDEMONA

Nay, heaven doth know.

EMILIA

I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,  
Some busy and insinuating rogue,  
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,  
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

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,  
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.

IAGO

Speak within door.

EMILIA

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?  
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form;  
Or that I do not yet, and ever did.  
And ever will--though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement--love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love. I cannot say 'whore:'  
It does abhor me now I speak the word;  
To do the act that might the addition earn  
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

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 'twere no other—

IAGO

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
'Tis but so, I warrant.

*Trumpets within*

’ — — ’ — ’ — — ’ —  
Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
The messengers of Venice stay the meat;

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA  
Enter RODERIGO*

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; and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me all conveniency than suppliest me with the least advantage of hope.

IAGO  
Will you hear me, Roderigo?

RODERIGO  
'Faith, I have heard too much, for your words and performances are no kin together.

IAGO  
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 a votarist: you have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations but I find neither.

IAGO

Well; go to; very well.

RODERIGO

Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: nay, I think it is scurvy.

IAGO

Very well.

RODERIGO

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

You have said now.

RODERIGO

Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

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

O, no; he goes into Mauritania and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode 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 making him incapable of Othello's place; 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 to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his horrible fortune. If you will watch his going thence, you may take him at your pleasure. I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it. It is now high suppertime, and the night grows to waste: about it.

RODERIGO

I will hear further reason for this.

IAGO

And you shall be satisfied.

*Exeunt*

---

**ACT IV SCENE III.  
OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA**

LODOVICO

I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTHELLO

O, pardon me: 'twill do me good to walk.

LODOVICO

Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

DESDEMONA

Your honour is most welcome.

OTHELLO

Will you walk, sir?

O,--Desdemona,--

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

DESDEMONA

I will, my lord.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO*

EMILIA

How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA

It was his bidding: therefore, good Emilia,.  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:  
We must not now displease him.

EMILIA

I would you had never seen him!

DESDEMONA

So would not I my love doth so approve him,  
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns--  
Prithee, unpin me,--have grace and favour in them.

EMILIA

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

DESDEMONA

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee prithee, shroud me  
In one of those same sheets.

EMILIA

Come, come you talk.

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:  
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her: she had a song of 'willow;'  
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,  
And she died singing it: that song to-night  
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,  
But to go hang my head all at one side,  
And sing it like poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA

Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

DESDEMONA

No, unpin me here.  
This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA  
He speaks well.

EMILIA  
I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DESDEMONA

[Singing] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing all a green willow:  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;  
Sing willow, willow, willow;  
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;

Lay by these:--

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon:--

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.  
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve,-

Nay, that's not next.--Hark! who is't that knocks?

EMILIA  
It's the wind.

DESDEMONA

[Singing] I call'd my love false love; but what  
said he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
If I court more women, you'll couch with more men!

So, get thee gone; good night Ate 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 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't as well i' 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 troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but for the whole world,--why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong  
For the whole world.

EMILIA

Why the wrong is but a wrong i' the world: and having the world for your labour, tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DESDEMONA

I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA

Yes, a dozen.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite;  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth: is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too: 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, good night: heaven me such uses send,  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

*Exeunt*

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ACT V SCENE I. Cyprus. A street.  
Enter IAGO and RODERIGO

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

- A. Carry out my plan to have Cassio killed.
- B. Lay blame upon Bianca.

POSSIBLE TACTICS

- With Roderigo: Inspire, Cheer, Coach
- With the Cyprus Gentlemen: Mourn, Lament, Assure
- With Bianca: Blame, Shame, Provoke
- With Emilia: Enlist, Embrace, Sweeten

PHYSICAL ACTIONS

- With Roderigo: Push him in to his place, hide in the shadows, kill him.
- With the Cyprus Gentlemen: Assume a posture of surrender to absolve myself of guilt, turn away in horror when the bodies are discovered, help to get Cassio safely home.
- With Bianca: Shine the flashlight in her face, shout at her, sneer at her, demonstrate her foul nature to the Cyprus Gentlemen.
- With Emilia: Shield her from the flashlight, speak sweetly to her, smile at her.

IAGO<sup>37</sup>

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — — ’  
Here, stand behind this bulk; straight will he come:

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home:

’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ —  
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow.

RODERIGO

Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

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,

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<sup>37</sup> Throughout this scene, Iago does a good job of carrying out his plan, which is reflected in his verse structure. Even when he has shared lines with others, he stays mostly regular. I think a short time has passed since his previous conversation with Roderigo, and that has been enough for Iago to formulate his plan and execute it with his typical calculated proficiency.

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  
Villain, thou diest!

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

*Wounds RODERIGO*

RODERIGO  
O, I am slain!

CASSIO  
No watch? No passage?

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

Help, ho! murder! murder!

IAGO  
Who's there? whose noise is this that cries on murder?

CASSIO  
Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!



IAGO

What's the matter?

What are you here that cry so grievously?

CASSIO

Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!

IAGO

O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

CASSIO

I think that one of them is hereabout,  
And cannot make away.

RODERIGO

O, help me here!

CASSIO

That's one of them.

IAGO

O murderous slave! O villain!

*Stabs*

*RODERIGO*

RODERIGO

Iago! O inhuman dog!

IAGO

Kill men i' the dark!

*Enter LODOVICO and MONTANO*

What may you be? are you of good or evil?

LODOVICO

As you shall prove us, praise us.

IAGO

— ' — ' —  
Signior Lodovico?

LODOVICO

He, sir.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' —  
I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

MONTANO

Cassio?

IAGO

— ' — ' —  
How is't, brother!

CASSIO

My leg is cut in two.

IAGO

' — ' — — '  
Marry, heaven forbid!

*Enter BIANCA*

BIANCA

What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?

IAGO

' ' — ' —  
Who is't that cried!

BIANCA

O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio! O Cassio,

IAGO

' ' — ' —  
O notable strumpet!

BIANCA

Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

IAGO

’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
To be a party in this injury.

’ – – – ’ – – ’ – – ’ – – ’  
Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;

’ – – – ’ – – ’ – – ’ – – ’  
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Alas my friend and my dear countryman

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Roderigo! no!--yes, sure: O heaven! Roderigo.

LODOVICO

What, of Venice?

IAGO

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Even he, sir; did you know him?

GRATIANO

Know him! ay.

How do you, Cassio?

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;  
I'll fetch the general's surgeon. [To BIANCA] For you, mistress,  
Save you your labour. He that lies slain here, Cassio,  
Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?

CASSIO

None in the world; nor do I know the man.

IAGO

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
O, bear him out o' the air.

*CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off*

’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:

– ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’ – ’  
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

*Enter EMILIA*

EMILIA

'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?

IAGO

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark

By Roderigo and fellows that are scaped:

He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

EMILIA

Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

IAGO

This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,

Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.

[To BIANCA] What, do you shake at that?

BIANCA

He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

IAGO

O, did he so? I charge you, go with me

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd.

Emilia run you to the citadel,

And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd.

Will you go on? I pray. [Aside] This is the night

That either makes me or undoes me quite.

ACT V SCENE II.  
DESDEMONA in bed; Enter OTHELLO

**ESSENTIAL ACTIONS**

- A. To deny my part in Desdemona's death.
- B. To seal my mouth and enjoy Othello's demise.

**POSSIBLE TACTICS**

**Deflect, Evade, Shrug, Steel, Stonewall, Shut-out**

**PHYSICAL ACTIONS**

**To silence Emilia, To stab Emilia, to look Othello in the eye and provide no explanation or assistance, to stand by and watch my plan enacted, to enjoy my victory.**

OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,--  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!--  
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.  
Put out the light, and then put out the light:  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore,  
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,  
I cannot give it vital growth again.  
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.  
O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.  
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:  
So sweet was ne'er so fatal.

*Kissing her*

DESDEMONA

Othello?

OTHELLO

Ay. Desdemona.

DESDEMONA

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO

If you bethink yourself of any crime  
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,  
Solicit for it straight.

DESDEMONA

Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO

Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:  
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;  
No; heaven forbend! I would not kill thy soul.

DESDEMONA

Talk you of killing?

OTHELLO

Ay, I do.

DESDEMONA

Then heaven have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

Amen, with all my heart!

DESDEMONA

If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

OTHELLO

Hum!

DESDEMONA

And yet I fear you. Why I should fear I know not,  
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

OTHELLO

Think on thy sins.

DESDEMONA

They are loves I bear to you.

OTHELLO

Ay, and for that thou diest.

DESDEMONA

That death's unnatural that kills for loving-

OTHELLO

Peace, and be still!

DESDEMONA

I will so. What's the matter?

OTHELLO

That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee  
Thou gavest to Cassio.

DESDEMONA

No, by my life and soul!  
Send for the man, and ask him.

OTHELLO

Sweet soul, take heed,  
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy deathbed.

DESDEMONA

Ay, but not yet to die.

OTHELLO

Yes, presently:  
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;  
Thou art to die.

DESDEMONA

Then Lord have mercy on me!

OTHELLO

I say, amen.





OTHELLO

Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge  
Had stomach for them all.

DESDEMONA

Alas! he is betray'd and I undone.

OTHELLO

Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

DESDEMONA

O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

OTHELLO

Down, strumpet!

DESDEMONA

Kill me to-morrow: let me live to-night!

OTHELLO

Nay, if you strive—

DESDEMONA

But half an hour!  
But while I say one prayer!

OTHELLO

It is too late.

*Smother's her*

EMILIA

[Within] My lord , my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

I would not have thee linger in thy pain: So, so.

EMILIA

[Within] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

OTHELLO

Who's there?

EMILIA

[Within] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

OTHELLO

By and by. She's dead.

'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.--

Ha! no more moving? Still as the grave.

If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:

My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.

O insupportable! O heavy hour!

Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse

Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe

Should yawn at alteration.

EMILIA

[Within] I do beseech you

That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!

OTHELLO

I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia;

Soft; by and by.

*Unlocks the door; Enter EMILIA*

EMILIA

O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

OTHELLO

What, now?

EMILIA

But now, my lord.

OTHELLO

It is the very error of the moon;

She comes more nearer earth than she was wont,

And makes men mad.

EMILIA

Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian

Call'd Roderigo.

OTHELLO

Roderigo kill'd!

And Cassio kill'd!

EMILIA

No, Cassio is not kill'd.

OTHELLO

Not Cassio kill'd! then murder's out of tune,  
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

DESDEMONA

O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

EMILIA

Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.  
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

DESDEMONA

A guiltless death I die.

EMILIA

O, who hath done this deed?

DESDEMONA

Nobody; I myself. Farewell  
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell!

*Dies*

OTHELLO

You heard her say herself, it was not I.

EMILIA

She said so: I must needs report the truth.

OTHELLO

She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell:  
'Twas I that kill'd her.

EMILIA

O, the more angel she,  
And you the blacker devil!

OTHELLO

She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

EMILIA

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

OTHELLO  
She was false as water.

EMILIA  
                          Thou art rash as fire, to say  
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

OTHELLO  
Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.  
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,  
But that I did proceed upon just grounds  
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

EMILIA  
My husband!

OTHELLO  
Thy husband.

EMILIA  
That she was false to wedlock?

OTHELLO  
Ay, with Cassio.

EMILIA  
My husband!

OTHELLO  
                  Ay, 'twas he that told me first:  
An honest man he is, and hates the slime  
That sticks on filthy deeds.

EMILIA  
                  My husband!

OTHELLO  
What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.

EMILIA  
My husband say that she was false!

OTHELLO

He, woman;  
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?  
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

EMILIA  
If he say so, may his pernicious soul  
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart:  
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

OTHELLO  
Ha!

EMILIA  
Do thy worst:  
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
Than thou wast worthy her.

OTHELLO  
Peace, you were best.

EMILIA  
Thou hast not half that power to do me harm  
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!  
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed--  
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,  
Though I lost twenty lives.--Help! help, ho! help!  
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder!

*Enter MONTANO, LODOVICO, IAGO*

MONTANO  
What is the matter? How now, general!

EMILIA  
O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,  
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

IAGO<sup>38</sup>  
What is the matter?

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<sup>38</sup> Iago does not have much to say in this final scene, but when he does speak, he transitions between short non-metered phrases, and complete blank verse lines. I take the complete lines such as "I told him what I thought, and told no more than what he found himself was apt and true" as his pre-meditated statements, and the arhythmic interjections as his impulsive reactions.

EMILIA

Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:  
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:  
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain:  
Speak, for my heart is full.

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
I told him what I thought, and told no more  
— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

EMILIA

But did you ever tell him she was false?

IAGO

I did.

EMILIA

You told a lie, an odious, damned lie;  
She false with Cassio!--did you say with Cassio?

IAGO

— ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

EMILIA

I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak:  
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed,--  
And your reports have set the murder on.

EMILIA

I smell't: O villany!--  
I thought so then:--I'll kill myself for grief:--  
O villany, villany!

MONTANO

O monstrous act!

IAGO

' ' — ' — ' — ' — '  
What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

EMILIA

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:  
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.  
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

OTHELLO

O! O! O!

*He falls on the bed*

EMILIA

Nay, lay thee down and roar;  
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent  
That e'er did lift up eye.

OTHELLO

[Rising] O, she was foul!  
'Tis pitiful; but yet Iago knows  
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame  
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:  
And she did gratify his amorous works  
With that recognizance and pledge of love  
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:  
It was a handkerchief, an antique token  
My father gave my mother.

EMILIA

O God! O heavenly powers!

IAGO

Come, hold your peace.

EMILIA

'Twill out, 'twill out: I peace!  
No, I will speak as liberal as the north:  
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,  
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

IAGO

Be wise, and get you home.

EMILIA

I will not.

*IAGO offers to stab EMILIA*

O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of  
I found by fortune and did give my husband;  
He begg'd of me to steal it.

IAGO

Villanous whore!

EMILIA

She give it Cassio? no, alas! I found it,  
And I did give't my husband.

IAGO

Filth, thou liest!

EMILIA

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.

OTHELLO

Are there no stones in heaven  
But what serve for the thunder?--Precious villain!

*He runs at IAGO IAGO, from behind, stabs EMILIA, and exit*

LODOVICO

The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

MONTANO

Take you this weapon,  
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,  
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,  
For 'tis a damned slave.

*Exeunt MONTANO and LODOVICO*

EMILIA

What did thy song bode, lady?  
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.  
And die in music.

[Singing] Willow, willow, willow,--

Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;  
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;  
So speaking as I think, I die, I die.

*Dies*



OTHELLO

I have another weapon in this chamber;  
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper:--  
Here is my journey's stop, here is my end,  
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
O ill-starr'd wench!  
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,  
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,  
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!  
Even like thy chastity. O cursed slave!  
Whip me, ye devils,  
From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!  
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!  
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead!  
O!O!O!

*Enter LODOVICO. MONTANO, CASSIO, IAGO*

LODOVICO

Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

MONTANO [To Othello]

General, you must forsake this room and go with us.

OTHELLO

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.  
If that thou best a devil, I cannot kill thee.

*Wounds IAGO*

LODOVICO

Wrench his sword from him.

*OTHELLO is disarm'd*

IAGO

*I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.*

OTHELLO

I am not sorry neither: I'd have thee live;  
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

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<sup>39</sup>

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:

— ’ — ’ — ’ — ’ — ’  
From this time forth I never will speak word.

MONTANO

Torments will ope your lips.

LODOVICO

For you, Moor,  
Your power and your command is taken off,  
And Cassio rules in Cyprus.  
You shall close prisoner rest,  
Till that the nature of your fault be known  
To the Venetian state. Come, bring him away.

*They start to go*

OTHELLO

Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;

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<sup>39</sup> Iago's final line is a perfectly metric couplet delivered to Othello. The even metric structure of this line is a testament to Iago's ability to regain control of his fate, despite having been caught, and soon to be punished. His way of recovering that control is by refusing to participate in any sort of confession or a final confrontation with Othello. He vows never to speak again, and as far as we know, he keeps that vow.

Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought  
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;  
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him, thus.  
I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this;  
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

*Stabs himself*

*Falls on the bed, and dies*

CASSIO

This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;  
For he was great of heart.  
The object poisons sight; Let it be hid.  
Lodovico, keep the house,  
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
For they succeed on you.

LODOVICO

To you, lord governor,  
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;  
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!  
Myself will straight aboard: and to the state  
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

*END OF PLAY*

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## **SELF-CRITIQUE:**

Overall, I was very pleased with my work in *Othello*. I believe I accomplished my goals of making Iago a complex, three-dimensional character and not a mere archetypal villain. My primary strength is in my work with the text. I think my thorough approach to breaking down the text was evident in my performance. I was able to highlight the intricacies of Shakespeare's writing, and use them to my advantage. For example, in Act 2 Scene iii (the drunken party), Iago seamlessly transitions from speaking to Cassio in common prose to make him comfortable and loosen him up; to speaking to the audience in extremely regular blank verse, in order to explicate the plan and display his mastery of the situation. Then Iago switches to the rousing cadence of drinking songs, once the Cyprus gentlemen are with him. When alone with Montano, Iago then transitions back into a regular, rhythmic verse, followed by percussive syllables that jolt out of consistent, expected rhythms when the bar fight begins, and settling back in when explaining the situation to Othello. Iago returns to prose when alone with Cassio and finally to a measured, symmetrical verse pattern when left alone with the audience. These changes are numerous, but in aligning them with my physical actions, and my changes in tactic, I was able to honor each individual step of Iago's scheme in a specific, deliberate way. This level of attention to detail, and marriage of textual analysis with actor analysis provided the basis for a dynamic and urgent performance.

Vocally, I was pleased with my diction and my ability to use my voice to tell the story. I attempted to fill the space with my voice and use the tonal quality to match the character's emotional state. I used vocal dynamics much to my advantage in this performance as well, deliberately choosing when to overwhelm the other characters with sound, and when to draw

them in with a softer tone. Using vocal, physical and analytical tools, I believe I was able to effectively articulate my relationship with each character, what I needed from whom, and when, infusing my performance with vocal variety and energy.

One area I feel I could have improved upon was in the soliloquy moments with the audience. That was difficult to practice without audience members in the theatre, so I felt less confident with my choices in those sections than I did in the moments when the stage was full of other actors. I believe a large component of good acting is about reacting to what others are bringing to the table, so through a rehearsal process, I will adapt and refine my own choices based on the choices of my fellow actors. When rehearsing a soliloquy, the reactions must be self-generated. John Barton, in his Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide describes the challenges of performing Shakespearian soliloquy, "Both actors and audience have to work harder with them than they do with dialogue. That's because a dialogue contains an obvious story or argument or clash or confrontation. One character persuades, another character resists and so on. This is relatively easy to follow. But with a set speech it is very easy for a play to lose its momentum and for the story to become becalmed". While I understood and executed the text based on my pre-rehearsal preparation, by the final performance, I had learned a lot about who in the audience to target with which sections of text, and how to make sure they were following along with me. Barton goes on to offer the following advice to the actor performing a soliloquy, "Here, even more than elsewhere, he must be deeply inside the situation... he must *find* the language and make his listeners feel the words are coming out for the very first time. If he does so, the audience will feel that the play is moving on and going somewhere. And so they will go with him." I think the part of Barton's point that I did successfully was in finding the language as

if it was coming out for the very first time. I used these moments to let Iago think of his plans as he explained them aloud to the audience. What I could have done more effectively was in endowing the audience as a partner from whom I had an urgent need. I think Iago needs someone to understand him in order to continue on with his treachery, and the audience becomes a proxy for his own conscience. I think I was too timid with the audience at first, not wanting to force eye contact or make them feel put on the spot, but I found that was necessary for Iago's cause. At times the audience members would shy away from me, but if I fixated on them and drove my point home, I could bring them back to my side. These are important moments for Iago, because the audience can turn on him early in the play, which creates an antagonistic relationship between actor and audience. This sort of relationship yields a less complex overall product than one in which they see his machinations for what they are, but they can, at least in small part, follow along with the logic of his misdeeds. There were some nights I could have done a better job of bringing the audience with me on that journey and not letting them off the hook by simply writing me off as a villain.

One surprise I found in performance was how physically demanding the role was. I wished I had more opportunities to run the entire show start-to-finish without stopping, to give myself the physical, emotional, and mental stamina to maintain control of the play. There were always points in the play where I would get tired, either physically or mentally, and while I was still able to accomplish what I wanted to, I learned that with a role of this magnitude I require more repetitions than I regularly need for a role. If I had another chance to do it, I would practice my text out loud while doing cardiovascular exercise, to build up my physical and vocal stamina before entering performances.

My work on *Othello* was a fantastic opportunity for me to synthesize my graduate school training with practical knowledge gained from professional experience into a complete, well-rounded performance. I was especially proud of my ability to approach the notoriously evil character with compassion, and an open mind; relying on my technical prowess to create his life, not personal judgements about his actions within the play. My methodical approach to script analysis and moment-to-moment acting technique allowed me to break the massive text down in to digestible pieces, and in performance, reassemble them into a complex, three-dimensional character. While there were challenges along the way (as there are in any theatrical endeavor), I found the process of *Othello* quite affirming for me in my ability to translate my analytical skills into physical action, resulting in a performance that was overall a great success.

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