

Othello

4.1

Enter Iago and Othello

IAGO

Will you think so?

OTHELLO Think so, Iago?

IAGO

What, to kiss in private?

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.

5

IAGO

If they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip.
But if I give my wife a handkerchief±± 10

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? 15

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±±O, it comes o'er my memory 20
As doth the raven o'er the infectious 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±±as knaves be such abroad, 25
Who having by their own importunate suit
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress
ConvinceÁd or supplied them, cannot choose
But they must blab±±

OTHELLO

Hath he said anything?

IAGO

He hath, my lord. But, be you well assured, 30
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? 'Swounds, that's 35
fulsome! Handkerchief±±confessions±±hankerchief. 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 shakes me thus. Pish! 40
Noses, ears, and lips! Is't possible? Confess? Hand-
kerchief? O devil!

He falls down in a trance

IAGO

Work on; my medicine works. Thus credulous fools
are caught,
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
All guiltless, meet reproach. What ho, my lord! 45
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.

50

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.

55

Exit Cassio

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

OTHELLO

Dost thou mock me?

IAGO

I mock you not, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man.

OTHELLO

A horse! A man's a monster and a beast.

60

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.

Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked
May draw with you. 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.

65

70

OTHELLO

O, thou art wise, 'tis certain.

IAGO

Stand you a while apart.

Confine yourself but in a patient list.
Whilst you were here, o'erwhelm'd with your grief±± 75
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, 80
And mark the fleers, 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 when
He hath and is again to cope your wife. 85
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience,
Or I shall say you're 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, 90

But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

Othello stands apart

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,
A hussy that by selling her desires
Buys herself bread and cloth. It is a creature
That dotes on Cassio±±as 'tis the strumpet's plague 95
To beguile many and be beguiled by one.
He, when he hears of her, cannot restrain
From the excess of laughter.

Enter Cassio

Here he

comes.

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;
And his unbookish jealousy must conster 100
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures, and light behaviours
Quite in the wrong. 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. 105
Now, if this suit lay in Bianca's power,
How quickly should you speed!

CASSIO (*laughing*) Alas, poor caitiff!

OTHELLO (*aside*) Look how he laughs already.

IAGO

I never knew a woman love man so. 110

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

OTHELLO (*aside*)
 Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

IAGO
 Do you hear, Cassio?

OTHELLO (*aside*) Now he importunes him
 To tell it o'er. Go to, well said, well said.

IAGO
 She gives it out that you shall marry her. 115
 Do you intend it?

CASSIO Ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO (*aside*)
 Do ye triumph, Roman, do you triumph?

CASSIO I marry! What, a customer? Prithee, bear some
 charity to my wit±±do not think it so unwholesome.
 Ha, ha, ha! 120

OTHELLO (*aside*) So, so, so, so. They laugh that wins.

IAGO Faith, the cry goes that you marry her.

CASSIO Prithee, say true.

IAGO I am a very villain else.

OTHELLO (*aside*) Ha' you scored me? Well. 125

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

OTHELLO (*aside*) Iago beckons me. Now he begins the story.
Othello draws closer

CASSIO She was here even now. She haunts me in every 130
 place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with
 certain Venetians, and thither comes the bauble, and
 falls me thus about my neck.

OTHELLO (*aside*) Crying `O dear Cassio!' as it were. His
 gesture imports it. 135

CASSIO So hangs and lolls and weeps upon me, so shakes
 and pulls me±±ha, ha, ha!

OTHELLO (*aside*) 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! 140

CASSIO Well, I must leave her company.

Enter Bianca

IAGO Before me, look where she comes.

CASSIO 'Tis such another fitchew! Marry, a perfumed one.

(*To Bianca*) What do you mean by this haunting of me?

BIANCA Let the devil and his dam haunt you. What did
you mean by that same handkerchief you gave me
even now? I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out
the whole work±±a likely piece of work, that you should
find it in your chamber and know not who left it there.
This is some minx's token, and I must take out the
work. There, give it your hobby-horse. (*Giving Cassio
the napkin*) Wheresoever you had it, I'll take out no
work on't. 145

CASSIO How now, my sweet Bianca, how now, how now?

OTHELLO (*aside*)

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief. 155

BIANCA An you'll come to supper tonight, 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 streets else.

IAGO Will you sup there? 160

CASSIO Faith, I intend so.

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

CASSIO Prithee, come, will you?

IAGO Go to, say no more. 165

Exit Cassio

OTHELLO How shall I murder him, Iago?

IAGO Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

OTHELLO O Iago!

IAGO And did you see the handkerchief?

OTHELLO Was that mine? 170

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. 175

IAGO Nay, you must forget that.

OTHELLO Ay, let her rot and perish, and be damned

tonight, for she shall not live. No, my heart is turned
to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world
hath not a sweeter creature! She might lie by an 180
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 185
plenteous wit and invention.

IAGO She's the worse for all this.

OTHELLO O, a thousand, a thousand times! And then of
so gentle a condition.

IAGO Ay, too gentle. 190

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! 195

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 200
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 205
hear more by midnight.

OTHELLO Excellent good.

A trumpet

What trumpet is that same?

IAGO I warrant, something from Venice.

Enter Lodovico, Desdemona, and attendants

'Tis Lodovico. This comes from the Duke. See, your 210
wife's with him.

LODOVICO God save the worthy general.

OTHELLO With all my heart, sir.

LODOVICO (*giving Othello a letter*) The Duke and the senators
of Venice greet you. 215

OTHELLO I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

He reads the letter

DESDEMONA

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

IAGO *(to Lodovico)* I am very glad to see you, signor.

Welcome to Cyprus.

LODOVICO I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio? 220

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?

DESDEMONA My lord. 225

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

T'atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio. 230

OTHELLO

Fire and brimstone!

DESDEMONA My lord?

OTHELLO Are you wise?

DESDEMONA

What, is he angry?

LODOVICO Maybe the letter moved him,

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

Deputing Cassio in his government.

DESDEMONA By my troth, I am glad on't. 235

OTHELLO Indeed!

DESDEMONA My lord?

OTHELLO *(to Desdemona)* I am glad to see you mad.

DESDEMONA Why, sweet Othello!

OTHELLO Devil! 240

He strikes her

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, 245
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
Out of my sight!

DESDEMONA (*going*) I will not stay to offend you.

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

OTHELLO Mistress! 250

DESDEMONA (*returning*) My lord?

OTHELLO (*to Lodovico*) 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 255
And turn again, and she can weep, sir, weep,
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
Very obedient. (*To Desdemona*) Proceed you in your
tears.
(*To Lodovico*) Concerning this, sir±± (*To Desdemona*) O
well painted passion!
(*To Lodovico*) I am commanded home. (*To Desdemona*)
Get you away. 260
I'll send for you anon. (*To Lodovico*) Sir, I obey the
mandate,
And will return to Venice. (*To Desdemona*) Hence,
avaunt!

Exit Desdemona

(*To Lodovico*) 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! 265
Exit

LODOVICO
Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate
Call all-in-all sufficient? Is this the nature
Whom passion could not shake, whose solid virtue
The shot of accident nor dart of chance
Could neither graze nor pierce?

IAGO He is much changed. 270

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. If what he might he is not,
I would to heaven he were.

LODOVICO

What, strike his wife!

IAGO

Faith, that was not so well. Yet would I knew 275
That stroke would prove the worst.

LODOVICO

Is it his use,

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

IAGO

Alas, alas.

It is not honesty in me to speak
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him, 280
And his own courses will denote him so
That I may save my speech. Do but go after,
And mark how he continues.

LODOVICO

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

Exeunt