

Othello

2.1

Enter below Montano, Governor of Cyprus; two other gentlemen [above]

MONTANO

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Nothing at all. It is a high-wrought flood.
I cannot 'twixt the heaven and the main
Descry a sail.

MONTANO

Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land. 5
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements.
If it ha' ruffianed so upon the sea,
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

A segregation of the Turkish fleet; 10
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds,
The wind-shaked surge with high and monstrous mane
Seems to cast water on the burning Bear
And quench the guards of th'ever-fixeÁd Pole. 15
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafeÁd flood.

MONTANO

If that the Turkish fleet
Be not ensheltered and embayed, they are drowned.
It is impossible to bear it out.

Enter a third Gentleman

THIRD GENTLEMAN News, lads! Our wars are done. 20

The desperate tempest hath so banged the Turks
That their designment halts. A noble ship of Venice
Hath seen a grievous wrack and sufferance
On most part of their fleet.

MONTANO How, is this true? 25

THIRD GENTLEMAN The ship is here put in,
A Veronessa. 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. 30

MONTANO

I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,
And prays the Moor be safe, for they were parted
With foul and violent tempest.

MONTANO

Pray heavens he be, 35

For I have served him, and the man commands
Like a full soldier. Let's to the sea-side, ho!±±
As well to see the vessel that's come in
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,
Even till we make the main and th'aerial blue 40
An indistinct regard.

THIRD GENTLEMAN Come, let's do so,
For every minute is expectancy
Of more arrivance.

Enter Cassio

CASSIO

Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens 45
Give him defence against the elements,
For I have lost him on a dangerous sea.

MONTANO Is he well shipped?

CASSIO

His barque is stoutly timbered, and his pilot
Of very expert and approved allowance. 50
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,
Stand in bold cure.

VOICES (*within*) A sail, a sail, a sail!

CASSIO What noise?

A GENTLEMAN

The town is empty. On the brow o'th' sea
Stand ranks of people, and they cry `A sail!' 55

CASSIO

My hopes do shape him for the governor.
A shot

A GENTLEMAN

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.

A GENTLEMAN I shall. 60

Exit

MONTANO

But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

CASSIO

Most fortunately. He hath achieved a maid
That paragons description and wild fame,
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,
And in th'essential vesture of creation 65
Does tire the engineer.

Enter Gentleman

How now, who has put

in?

GENTLEMAN

'Tis one Iago, ensign to the general.

CASSIO

He's had most favourable and happy speed.
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
The guttered rocks and congregated sands, 70
Traitors ensteeped to enclog the guiltless keel,
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, 75
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts
A sennight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship, 80
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,
Give renewed fire to our extincted spirits,
And bring all Cyprus comfort.

Enter Desdemona, Iago, Emilia, and Roderigo

O, behold,

The riches of the ship is come on shore!

You men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.

85

Montano and the Gentlemen make curtsy to Desdemona

Hail to thee, lady, and the grace of heaven

Before, behind thee, and on every hand

Enwheel thee round!

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

90

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.

VOICES (*within*) A sail, a sail! 95

CASSIO But hark, a sail.

A shot

A 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. (*Kissing Emilia*)

Welcome, mistress.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago, 100

That I extend my manners. 'Tis my breeding

That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

IAGO

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips

As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,

You would have enough. 105

DESDEMONA Alas, she has no speech!

IAGO In faith, too much.

I find it still when I ha' leave to sleep.

Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,

She puts her tongue a little in her heart, 110

And chides with thinking.

EMILIA You ha' little cause to say so.

IAGO

Come on, come on. You are pictures out of door,

Bells in your parlours; wildcats in your kitchens,
Saints in your injuries; devils being offended,
Players in your housewifery, and hussies in your
beds. 115

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.

EMILIA

You shall not write my praise.

IAGO

No, let me not.

DESDEMONA

What wouldst write of me, if thou shouldst praise me? 120

IAGO

O, gentle lady, do not put me to't,
For I am nothing if not critical.

DESDEMONA

Come on, essay±±there's one gone to the harbour?

IAGO Ay, madam.

DESDEMONA

I am not merry, but I do beguile 125
The thing I am by seeming otherwise.
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

IAGO

I am about it, but indeed my invention
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frieze±±
It plucks out brains and all. But my muse labours, 130
And thus she is delivered:
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, 135
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 helped her to an heir.

DESDEMONA These are old fond paradoxes, to make fools 140
laugh i'th' 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. 145

DESDEMONA O heavy ignorance! Thou praisest the worst
best. But what praise couldst thou bestow on a
deserving woman indeed±±one that, in the authority
of her merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice
itself? 150

IAGO

She that was ever fair and never proud,
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
Never lacked gold and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish, and yet said `Now I may';
She that, being angered, her revenge being nigh, 155
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly;
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,
See suitors following, and not look behind±± 160
She was a wight, if ever such wights were±±

DESDEMONA To do what?

IAGO

To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer.

DESDEMONA O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do
not learn of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. 165
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.

Cassio and Desdemona talk apart

IAGO (*aside*) He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said±± 170
whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as
great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do. I will
gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true, 'tis so
indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your
lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed 175

your three fingers so oft, which now again you are
most apt to play the sir in. Very good, well kissed, an
excellent curtsy, 'tis so indeed; yet again your fingers
to your lips? Would they were clyster-pipes for your
sake. 180

Trumpets within

(Aloud) The Moor±±I know his trumpet.

CASSIO

'Tis truly so.

DESDEMONA

Let's meet him and receive him.

CASSIO

Lo where he comes!

Enter Othello and attendants

OTHELLO *(to Desdemona)*

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, 185
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death,
And let the labouring barque climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven. If it were now to die 190
'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.

DESDEMONA

The heavens forbid

But that our loves and comforts should increase 195
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, *(they kiss)* and this, the greatest discords be
That e'er our hearts shall make.

IAGO *(aside)*

O, you are well tuned now, 200

But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

OTHELLO

Come, let us to the castle.

News, friends: our wars are done, the Turks are
drowned.

How does my old acquaintance of this isle?±±

Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus, 205

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. 210

He is a good one, and his worthiness

Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona.±±

Once more, well met at Cyprus!

*Exeunt Othello and Desdemona with all but Iago
and Roderigo*

IAGO (to an attendant as he goes out) Do thou meet me
presently at the harbour. (To Roderigo) Come hither. If 215

thou beest valiant±±as they say base men being in love
have then a nobility in their natures more than is

native to them±±list me. The lieutenant tonight watches
on the court of guard. First, I must tell thee this:

Desdemona is directly in love with him. 220

RODERIGO With him? Why, 'tis not possible!

IAGO Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed.

Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor,
but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies. To love
him still for prating?±±let not thy discreet heart think 225

it. Her eye must be fed, and what delight shall she
have to look on the devil? When the blood is made
dull with the act of sport, there should be again to
inflame it, and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness
in favour, sympathy in years, manners, and beauties, 230

all which the Moor is defective in. Now, for want of
these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness
will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish
and abhor the Moor. Very nature will instruct her in
it and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this 235

granted±±as it is a most pregnant and unforced
position±±who stands so eminent in the degree of this
fortune as Cassio does?±±a knave very voluble, no
further conscionable than in putting on the mere form

of civil and humane seeming for the better compass of 240
his salt and most hidden loose affection. Why, none;
why, none±±a slipper and subtle knave, a finder of
occasion, that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit
advantages, though true advantage never present itself,
a devilish knave! Besides, the knave is handsome, 245
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. 250

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? 255

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. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! When these 260
mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes
the master and main exercise, th'incorporate conclu-
sion. Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought
you from Venice. Watch you tonight. For the command,
I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not; I'll not be 265
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. 270

IAGO Sir, he's rash and very sudden in choler, and haply
may strike at you. Provoke him that he may, for even
out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny,
whose qualification shall come into no true taste again
but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a 275
shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall
then have to prefer them, and the impediment most
profitably removed, without the which there were no
expectation of our prosperity.

RODERIGO I will do this, if you can bring it to any 280
opportunity.

IAGO I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I
must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

RODERIGO Adieu.

Exit

IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it. 285

That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.

The Moor±±howbe't 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, 290

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 leapt into my seat, the thought whereof 295

Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;

And nothing can or shall content my soul

Till I am evened with him, wife for wife±±

Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor

At least into a jealousy so strong 300

That judgement cannot cure, which thing to do,

If this poor trash of Venice whom I trace

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±± 305

For I fear Cassio with my nightcap, too±±

Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me

For making him egregiously an ass,

And practising upon his peace and quiet

Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused. 310

Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

Exit