

# Othello

## 3.3

*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 cause were his.

**DESDEMONA**

O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio, 5  
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 anything but your true servant.

**DESDEMONA**

I know't. I thank you. You do love my lord. 10  
You have known him long, and be you well assured  
He shall in strangeness stand no farther off  
Than in a politic distance.

**CASSIO**

Ay, but, lady,  
That policy may either last so long,  
Or feed upon such nice and wat'rish diet, 15  
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, 20  
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 everything he does 25  
With Cassio's suit. Therefore be merry, Cassio,  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away.

*Enter Othello and Iago*

**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, 30

Unfit for mine own purposes.

**DESDEMONA** Well, do your discretion.

*Exit Cassio*

**IAGO** Ha! I like not that.

**OTHELLO** What dost thou say?

**IAGO**

Nothing, my lord. Or if, I know not what. 35

**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 your coming.

**OTHELLO** I do believe 'twas he. 40

**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, 45  
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 judgement in an honest face. 50  
I prithee call him back.

**OTHELLO** Went he hence now?

**DESDEMONA** Yes, faith, so humbled

That he hath left part of his grief with me  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back. 55

**OTHELLO**

Not now, sweet Desdemon. Some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But shall't be shortly?

**OTHELLO** The sooner, sweet, for you.

**DESDEMONA**

Shall't be tonight at supper?

**OTHELLO**

No, not tonight.

**DESDEMONA**

Tomorrow dinner, then?

**OTHELLO**

I shall not dine at home.

I meet the captains at the citadel.

60

**DESDEMONA**

Why then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morn,

On Tuesday noon, or night, on Wednesday morn±±

I prithee name the time, but let it not

Exceed three days. In faith, he's penitent,

And yet his trespass, in our common reason±±

65

Save that, they say, the wars must make example

Out of her best±±is not almost a fault

T'incur a private check. When shall he come?

Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul

What you would ask me that I should deny,

70

Or stand so mamm'ring 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? By'r Lady, I could do much.

75

**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

80

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:

85

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. (*To Othello*) Be as your fancies teach you.

Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

90

*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** My noble lord.

**OTHELLO** What dost thou say, Iago?

95

**IAGO**

Did Michael Cassio, when you wooed 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?

100

**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?

105

**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, thou echo'st me

110

As if there were some monster in thy thought

Too hideous to be shown! Thou dost mean something.

I heard thee say even now thou liked'st not that,

When Cassio left my wife. What didst not like?

And when I told thee he was of my counsel

115

In my whole course of wooing, thou cried'st '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. 120

**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 giv'st them  
breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more; 125  
For such things in a false disloyal knave  
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just,  
They're close dilations, working from the heart  
That passion cannot rule.

**IAGO** For Michael Cassio,  
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest. 130

**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 Cassio's an honest man.

**OTHELLO** Nay, yet there's more in this. 135  
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. 140  
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false,  
As where's that palace whereinto foul things  
Sometimes intrude not? Who has that breast so pure  
But some uncleanly apprehensions  
Keep leets and law-days, and in sessions sit 145  
With meditations lawful?

**OTHELLO**  
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,

If thou but think'st him wronged and mak'st his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

**IAGO** I do beseech you,  
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess±± 150  
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 then,  
From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble 155  
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,  
To let you know my thoughts.

**OTHELLO** What dost thou mean?

**IAGO**  
Good name in man and woman, dear my lord, 160  
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 165  
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** O, beware, my lord, of jealousy.  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock 170  
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger.  
But O, what damneÁd minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes yet doubts, suspects yet fondly loves!

**OTHELLO** O misery! 175

**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? 180

Think'st thou I'd make a life 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 185  
To such exsufflicate and blowed 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, 190  
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: 195  
Away at once with love or jealousy.

**IAGO**

I am glad of this, 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. 200  
Look to your wife. Observe her well with Cassio.  
Wear your eyes 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. 205  
In Venice they do let God see the pranks  
They dare not show their husbands; their best  
conscience  
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

**OTHELLO** Dost thou say so?

**IAGO**

She did deceive her father, marrying you, 210  
And when she seemed 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 seel her father's eyes up close as oak,  
He thought 'twas witchcraft! But I am much to blame. 215  
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 dashed your spirits.

**OTHELLO**  
Not a jot, not a jot.

**IAGO** I'faith, I fear it has. 220  
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. 225

**IAGO** Should you do so, my lord,  
My speech should fall into such vile success  
Which my thoughts aimed not. Cassio's my worthy  
friend.  
My lord, I see you're moved.

**OTHELLO** No, not much moved. 230  
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 proposeÁd matches 235  
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
Where to we see in all things nature tends.  
Foh, one may smell in such a will most rank,  
Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural!  
But pardon me. I do not in position  
Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear 240  
Her will, recoiling to her better judgement,  
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. 245

**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 honour  
To scan this thing no farther. Leave it to time. 250  
Although 'tis fit that Cassio have his place±±  
For sure he fills it up with great ability±±  
Yet, if you please to hold him off a while,  
You shall by that perceive him and his means.  
Note if your lady strain his entertainment 255  
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 honour. 260

**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 heart-strings 265  
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind  
To prey 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±± 270  
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 275  
Than keep a corner in the thing I love

For others' uses. Yet 'tis the plague of great ones;  
Prerogativèd are they less than the base.  
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death.  
Even then this forkeÁd plague is fated to us 280  
When we do quicken.

*Enter Desdemona and Emilia*

Look where she comes.

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. 285

**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 290  
It will be well.

**OTHELLO** Your napkin is too little.  
*He puts the napkin from him. 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** *(taking up the napkin)*  
I am glad I have found this napkin.  
This was her first remembrance from the Moor. 295  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times  
Wooed 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 ha' the work ta'en out, 300  
And give't Iago. What he will do with it,  
Heaven knows, not I.  
I nothing, but to please his fantasy.

*Enter Iago*

**IAGO**

How now, what do you here alone?

**EMILIA**  
Do not you chide. I have a thing for you. 305

**IAGO**  
You have 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 that same handkerchief? 310

**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? 315

**EMILIA**  
No, faith, she let it drop by negligence,  
And to th'advantage I, being here, took't up.  
Look, here 'tis.

**IAGO** A good wench! Give it me.

**EMILIA**  
What will you do with it, that you have been so  
earnest  
To have me filch it?

**IAGO** Why, what is that to you? 320  
*He takes the napkin*

**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**  
Be not acknown on't. I have use for it. Go, leave me.  
*Exit Emilia*  
I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin, 325  
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, 330  
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
But, with a little act upon the blood,

Burn like the mines of sulphur.

*Enter Othello*

I did

say so.

Look where he comes. Not poppy nor mandragora  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

335

**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.

340

**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 harmed not me.  
I slept the next night well, fed well, was free and  
merry.

345

I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips.  
He that is robbed, not wanting what is stol'n,  
Let him not know't and he's not robbed at all.

**IAGO** I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**

I had been happy if the general camp,  
Pioneers and all, had tasted her sweet body,  
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content,  
Farewell the plume! Ad troops and the big wars  
That makes ambition virtue! O, farewell,  
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner, and all quality,  
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!  
And O, you mortal engines whose rude throats  
Th'immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,  
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.

350

355

360

**IAGO** Is't possible, my lord?

**OTHELLO** *[taking Iago by the throat]*

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore.  
Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof, 365  
Or, by the worth of mine 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 370  
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, 375  
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed,  
For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.

**IAGO** O grace, O heaven forgive me!  
Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?  
God buy you, take mine office. O wretched fool, 380  
That lov'st 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. 385

**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. 390  
I'll have some proof. My 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! 395

**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, and I will.

**IAGO**

And may. But how, how satisfied, my lord?  
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on, 400  
Behold her topped?

**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? 405  
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, 410  
If imputation, and strong circumstances  
Which lead directly to the door of truth,  
Will give you satisfaction, you might ha't.

**OTHELLO**

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

**IAGO** I do not like the office, 415

But sith I am entered in this cause so far,  
Pricked 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 420  
So loose of soul that in their sleeps  
Will mutter their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio.

In sleep I heard him say `Sweet Desdemona,  
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves',  
And then, sir, would he grip and wring my hand, 425  
Cry `O, sweet creature!', then kiss me hard,  
As if he plucked up kisses by the roots,  
That grew upon my lips, lay his leg o'er my thigh,  
And sigh, and kiss, and then cry `CurseÁd fate,  
That gave thee to the Moor!' 430

**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 435  
That do demonstrate thinly.

**OTHELLO** I'll tear her all to pieces.

**IAGO**

Nay, yet 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? 440

**OTHELLO**

I gave her such a one. 'Twas my first gift.

**IAGO**

I know not that, but such a handkerchief±±  
I am sure it was your wife's±±did I today  
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

**OTHELLO** If it be that±±

**IAGO**

If it be that, or any that was hers, 445  
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. 450  
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell.  
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy freight,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues.

**IAGO** Yet be content.

**OTHELLO**

O, blood, blood, blood!

**IAGO** Patience, I say. Your mind may change. 455

**OTHELLO**

Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er knows retiring ebb, but keeps due on

To the Propontic and the Hellespont,  
Even so my bloody thoughts with violent pace 460  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up.

*[He kneels]*

Now, by yon marble heaven,  
In the due reverence of a sacred vow  
I here engage my words.

**IAGO** Do not rise yet. 465

*Iago kneels*

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 wronged Othello's service. Let him command, 470  
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 475  
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, damn her!  
Come, go with me apart. I will withdraw  
To furnish me with some swift means of death 480  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

**IAGO** I am your own for ever.

*Exeunt*