

Othello

2.3

Enter Othello, Desdemona, Cassio, and attendants

OTHELLO

Good Michael, look you to the guard tonight.
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop
Not to outsport discretion.

CASSIO

Iago hath direction what to do,
But notwithstanding, with my personal eye 5
Will I look to't.

OTHELLO Iago is most honest.

Michael, good night. Tomorrow 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. 10
(*To Cassio*) Good night.

Exeunt Othello, Desdemona, and attendants

Enter Iago

CASSIO

Welcome, Iago. We must to the watch.

IAGO Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o'th' clock.
Our general cast us thus early for the love of his
Desdemona, who let us not therefore blame. He hath 15
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 full of game.

CASSIO Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature. 20

IAGO What an eye she has! Methinks it sounds a parley
to provocation.

CASSIO An inviting eye, and yet, methinks, right modest.

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

CASSIO She is indeed perfection. 25

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 tonight, good Iago. I have very poor and 30
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 ha' drunk but one cup tonight, and that was 35
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! 40

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

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
With that which he hath drunk tonight already 45
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
As my young mistress' dog. Now my sick fool Roderigo,
Whom love hath turned almost the wrong side out,
To Desdemona hath tonight caroused
Potations pottle-deep, and he's to watch. 50
Three else of Cyprus±±noble swelling spirits
That hold their honours in a wary distance,
The very elements of this warlike isle±±
Have I tonight flustered with flowing cups,
And they watch too. Now 'mongst this flock of
drunkards 55

Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle.

*Enter Montano, Cassio, Gentlemen, [and servants]
with wine*

But here they

come.

If consequence do but approve my dream,
My boat sails freely both with wind and stream.

CASSIO

Fore God, they have given me a rouse already. 60

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

IAGO Some wine, ho!
(Sings)
 And let me the cannikin clink, clink,
 And let me the cannikin clink.
 A soldier's a man, 65
 O, man's 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 70
 potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your
 swag-bellied Hollander±±drink, ho!±±are nothing to
 your English.

CASSIO Is your Englishman so exquisite in his drinking?

IAGO Why, he drinks you with facility your Dane dead 75
 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. 80

IAGO O sweet England!
(Sings)
 King Stephen was and a worthy peer,
 His breeches cost him but a crown;
 He held them sixpence all too dear,
 With that he called the tailor lown. 85
 He was a wight of high renown,
 And thou art but of low degree.
 'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
 Then take thy auld cloak about thee.
 Some wine, ho! 90

CASSIO Fore God, 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 95

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. 100

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 ha'
no more of this. Let's to our affairs. God forgive us our
sins. Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not 105
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 I speak well enough.

GENTLEMEN Excellent well.

CASSIO Why, very well then. You must not think then 110
that I am drunk.

Exit

MONTANO

To th' platform, masters. Come, let's set the watch.

Exeunt Gentlemen

IAGO

You see this fellow that is gone before±±
He's a soldier fit to stand by Caesar
And give direction; and do but see his vice. 115
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,
The one as long as th'other. 'Tis pity of him.
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? 120

IAGO

'Tis evermore his prologue to his sleep.
He'll watch the horologe a double set
If drink rock not his cradle.

MONTANO It were well

The general were put in mind of it.
Perhaps he sees it not, or his good nature 125
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,
And looks not on his evils. Is not this true?

Enter Roderigo

IAGO *[aside]* How now, Roderigo!
I pray you after the lieutenant, go.
Exit Roderigo

MONTANO
And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor 130
Should hazard such a place as his own second
With one of an engrafted infirmity.
It were an honest action to say so
To the Moor.

IAGO Not I, for this fair island!
I do love Cassio well, and would do much 135
To cure him of this evil.

VOICES *(within)* Help, help!

IAGO But hark, what noise?
Enter Cassio, driving in Roderigo

CASSIO 'Swounds, you rogue, you rascal!

MONTANO What's the matter, lieutenant? 140

CASSIO A knave teach me my duty?±±I'll beat the knave
into a twiggen bottle.

RODERIGO Beat me?

CASSIO Dost thou prate, rogue?

MONTANO Nay, good lieutenant, I pray you, sir, hold your 145
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 *(to Roderigo)*
Away, I say. Go out and cry a mutiny. 150
Exit Roderigo

Nay, good lieutenant. God's will, gentlemen!
Help, ho! Lieutenant! Sir! Montano! Sir!
Help, masters. Here's a goodly watch indeed.
A bell rung

Who's that which rings the bell? Diablo, ho!
The town will rise. God's will, lieutenant, hold. 155
You'll be ashamed for ever.

Enter Othello and attendants, with weapons

OTHELLO What is the matter here?
MONTANO

'Swounds, I bleed still. I am hurt to th' death.
(Attacking Cassio) He dies.

OTHELLO Hold, for your lives!

IAGO

Hold, ho, lieutenant, sir, Montano, gentlemen!
Have you forgot all place of sense and duty? 160
Hold, the general speaks to you. Hold, hold, for shame.

OTHELLO

Why, how now, ho? From whence ariseth this?
Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl. 165
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
Holds his soul light. He dies upon his motion.
Silence that dreadful bell±±it frights the isle
From her propriety.
[Bell stops]

What is the matter, masters?

Honest Iago, that looks dead with grieving, 170
Speak. Who began this? On thy love I charge thee.

IAGO

I do not know. Friends all but now, even now,
In quarter and in terms like bride and groom
Devesting them for bed; and then but now±±
As if some planet had unwitting men±± 175
Swords out, and tilting one at others' breasts
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak
Any beginning to this peevish odds,
And would in action glorious I had lost
Those legs that brought me to a part of it. 180

OTHELLO

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

CASSIO

I pray you pardon me. I cannot speak.

OTHELLO

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil.
The gravity and stillness of your youth
The world hath noted, and your name is great 185
In mouths of wisest censure. What's the matter,
That you unlace your reputation thus,
And spend your rich opinion for the name

Of a night-brawler? Give me answer to it.

MONTANO

Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger. 190

Your officer Iago can inform you,

While I spare speech±±which something now offends
me±±

Of all that I do know; nor know I aught

By me that's said or done amiss this night,

Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice, 195

And to defend ourselves it be a sin

When violence assails us.

OTHELLO

Now, by heaven,

My blood begins my safer guides to rule,

And passion, having my best judgement collied,

Essays to lead the way. 'Swounds, if I stir, 200

Or do but lift this arm, the best of you

Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know

How this foul rout began, who set it on,

And he that is approved in this offence,

Though he had twinned with me, both at a birth, 205

Shall lose me. What, in a town of war

Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,

To manage private and domestic quarrel

In night, and on the court and guard of safety!

'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began't? 210

MONTANO *(to Iago)*

If partially affined or leagued in office

Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,

Thou art no soldier.

IAGO

Touch me not so near.

I had rather ha' this tongue cut from my mouth

Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio. 215

Yet I persuade myself to speak the truth

Shall nothing wrong him. This it is, general.

Montano and myself being in speech,

There comes a fellow crying out for help,

And Cassio following him with determined sword 220

To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman

Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause.

Myself the crying fellow did pursue,

Lest by his clamour, as it so fell out,
The town might fall in fright. He, swift of foot, 225
Outran my purpose, and I returned, the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords
And Cassio high in oath, which till tonight
I ne'er might say before. When I came back±±
For this was brief±±I found them close together 230
At blow and thrust, even as again they were
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, 235
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,
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, 240
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee,
But never more be officer of mine.

Enter Desdemona, attended

Look if my gentle love be not raised up.
I'll make thee an example.

DESDEMONA What is the matter, dear? 245

OTHELLO All's well now, sweeting.
Come away to bed. (*To Montano*) Sir, for your hurts
Myself will be your surgeon. (*To attendants*) Lead him
off.

Exeunt attendants with Montano

Iago, look with care about the town,
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted. 250
Come, Desdemona. 'Tis the soldier's life
To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

Exeunt all but Iago and Cassio

IAGO What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO Marry, God forbid. 255

CASSIO Reputation, reputation, reputation±±O, I ha' lost
my reputation, I ha' 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 260
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 265
more ways to recover the general again. You are but
now cast in his mood±±a punishment more in policy
than in malice, even so as one would beat his offenceless
dog to affright an imperious lion. Sue to him again,
and he's yours. 270

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 275
thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee
devil.

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

CASSIO I know not. 280

IAGO Is't possible?

CASSIO I remember a mass of things, but nothing dis-
tinctly; 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, 285
revel, and applause transform ourselves into beasts!

IAGO Why, but you are now well enough. How came you
thus recovered?

CASSIO It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place
to the devil wrath. One unperfectness shows me 290
another, to make me frankly despise myself.

IAGO Come, you are too severe a moraller. As the time,
the place, and the condition of this country stands, I
could heartily wish this had not befallen; but since it
is as it is, mend it for your own good. 295

CASSIO I will ask him for my place again. He shall tell me
I am a drunkard. Had I as many mouths as Hydra,
such an answer would stop them all. To be now a

sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast!
O, strange! Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil. 300

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? 305

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. I may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces. Confess yourself freely to her. Importune her help to put you in your place again. She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. 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. 310 315

CASSIO You advise me well.

IAGO I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness. 320

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. 325

CASSIO Good night, honest Iago.
Exit

IAGO
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 330
Th'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,
All seals and symbols of redeemeÁd sin, 335
His soul is so enfettered 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 340
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 fortune, 345
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. 350
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

Enter Roderigo

How now,

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 355
almost spent, I ha' been tonight 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

How poor are they that ha' not patience! 360
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 cashiered Cassio. 365
Though other things grow fair against the sun,
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe.
Content thyself a while. By the mass, 'tis morning.
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.
Retire thee. Go where thou art billeted. 370
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.

Myself a while to draw the Moor apart,

375

And bring him jump when he may Cassio find

Soliciting his wife. Ay, that's the way.

Dull not device by coldness and delay.

Exit