The scene: Venice; Cyprus

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Duke of Venice
Brabantio, a senator, father to Desdemona
Other Senators
Gratiano, brother to Brabantio
Lodovico, kinsman to Brabantio
Othello, a noble Moor in the service of the Venetian state
Cassio, his lieutenant
Iago, his ancient
Rodrigo, a Venetian gentleman
Montano, Othello’s predecessor as governor of Cyprus
Clown, servant to Othello
Desdemona, daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello
Emilia, wife to Iago
Bianca, mistress to Cassio

Sailor, Messenger, Herald, Officers, Gentlemen, Musicians, and Attendants
OTHELLO

[1. 1.]

Venice. A street

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO

RODERIGO. Tush, never tell me; I take it much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

IAGO. 'Sblood, but you'll not hear me.
If ever I did dream of such a matter,
Abhor me.

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-capped 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 stuffed 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,
A fellow almost damned in a fair wife,
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster—unless the bookish theorist,
Wherein the tog'd consuls can propose
As masterly as he; mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiery. But he, sir, had th’election;
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds.

Christian and heathen, must be be-lee’d and calmed
By debitor-and-creditor: this counter-caster,
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
And I—God bless the mark!—his Moorship’s ancient.

Rodrigo. 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 th’first. Now, sir, be judge yourself
Whether I in any just term am affined

To love the Moor.

Rodrigo. I would not follow him then.

Iago. O, sir, content you.
I follow him to serve my turn upon him.
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters
Cannot be truly followed. You shall mark
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,
Wears out his time, much like his master’s ass,
For nought but provender, and, when he’s old, cashiered:
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are

Who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them; and, when they’ve lined
their coats,
Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul,
And such a one do I profess myself:
1.1.56

OTHELLO

For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago;
In following him, I follow but myself;
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 thick-lips 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; though that his joy be joy,
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't
As it may lose some colour.

Roderigo. Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

Iago. Do; with like timorous accent and dire yell
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities.

Roderigo. What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

Iago. Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves!
thieves! thieves!

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 locked?
Brabantio. Why, wherefore ask you this?
Iago. 'Zounds, sir, you're robbed; for shame, put on your gown;
Your heart is burst; you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tupping 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.
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; and now, in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,
Upon malicious knavery dost thou come
To start my quiet.
Roderigo. Sir, sir, sir—
Brabantio. But thou must needs be sure
My spirit and my place have in them power
To make this bitter to 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. '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 with a Barbary horse; you’ll
have your nephews neigh to you; you’ll have coursers
for cousins, and jennets for Germans.

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 anything. But
I beseech you,
If’t be your pleasure and most wise consent,
As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,
At this odd-even and dull watch o’ th’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 wrong;
But if you know not this, my manners tell me
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe
That, from the sense of all civility,
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence.
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,
I say again, hath made a gross revolt,
Tying her duty, beauty, wit, and fortunes
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger
Of here and everywhere. Straight satisfy yourself.
If she be in her chamber or your house,
Let loose on me the justice of the state
For thus deluding you.
8

**OTHELLO**

1.1.141

**Brabantio.** Strike on the tinder, ho!
Give me a taper! call up all my people!
This accident is not unlike my dream;
Belief of it oppresses me already.
Light, I say! light! [he goes in

**Iago.** 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; for I do know the state,
However this may gall him with some check,

150 Cannot with safety cast him; for he’s embarked
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,
Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,
Another of his fathom they have none
To lead their business: in which regard,
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,
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely
find him,

Lead to the Sagittary the raised search,

160 And there will I be with him. So farewell. [he goes

**Enter, below, Brabantio, and Servants**

with torches

**Brabantio.** It is too true an evil: gone she is;
And what’s to come of my despised time
Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,
Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!
With the Moor, say’st thou? Who would be a father!
How didst thou know ’twas she? O, she deceives me
Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers.
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?

**Roderigo.** Truly, I think they are.
I.1.170

OTHELLO

Brabantio. O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood! Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters’ minds By what you see them act! Is there not charms By which the property of youth and maidhood May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo, Of some such thing?

Roderigo. Yes, sir, I have indeed.

Brabantio. Call up my brother. O, that you had had her!

Some one way, some another. 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.

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. [they go

[1. 2.]

Another street.

Enter Othello, Iago, and Attendants with torches

Iago. Though in the trade of war I have slain men, Yet do I hold it very stuff o’th’conscience To do no contrived murder. I lack iniquity Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times I had thought t’have jerked 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

That, with the little godliness I have,
10 I did full hard forbear him. But I pray, sir,
Are you fast married? For be sure 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—

20 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 reached. 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. But look what lights come yond!

Iago. Those are the raised father and his friends.

30 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.

Enter Cassio, and certain Officers with torches

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.