

Cambridge University Press
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William Shakespeare
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OTHELLO

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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*

RODERIGO, *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

[I. I.]

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, 10
 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, 20
 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 theoretic,
 Wherein the togéd consuls can propose

As masterly as he; mere prattle without practice
 Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had th'election;
 And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds
 30 Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calmed
 By debtor-and-creditor: this counter-caster,
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,
 And I—God bless the mark!—his Moorship's ancient.

Roderigo. 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
 40 To love the Moor.

Roderigo. 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
 50 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:

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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, 60
 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, 70
 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! 80
 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

90 Is tugging 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 worsè 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,

100 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
 110 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.

120

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.

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If she be in her chamber or your house,
 Let loose on me the justice of the state
 For thus deluding you.

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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 raiséd 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 despiséd 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.

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OTHELLO

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Brabantio. O heaven! How got she out? O treason
 of the blood!

170

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.

180

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*]

[I. 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,

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OTHELLO

I. 2. 10

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.