

OTHELLO

WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE

TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE



| Contents |

ACT 1	Scene 1	5
	Scene 2	10
	Scene 3	14
ACT 2	Scene 1	23
	Scene 2	29
	Scene 3	30
ACT 3	Scene 1	40
	Scene 2	41
	Scene 3	53
ACT 4	Scene 1	58
	Scene 2	67
	Scene 3	74
ACT 5	Scene 1	78
	Scene 2	83

- INTRODUCTION -

This play is set in Venice, Italy, and the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. The time is the early 1600s. Othello, a Moor from northwest Africa, is the great army general of Venice. As the play opens, Othello's ensign Iago has been passed over for a promotion. Instead, Othello has promoted Cassio, a younger man. Iago is very angry. To get revenge, he plans to drive a wedge between Othello and his bride, Desdemona, by playing on Othello's jealousy. As the play continues, the noble Moor falls into Iago's trap, and tragedy follows.

- CAST OF CHARACTERS -

DUKE OF VENICE

BRABANTIO Desdemona's father, a senator

GRATIANO Brabantio's brother; a noble Venetian

LODOVICO a relative of Brabantio; a noble Venetian

OTHELLO a noble Moor in the military service of
Venice

CASSIO Othello's honorable lieutenant

IAGO Othello's ensign; a villain

RODERIGO an easily fooled young gentleman

MONTANO the governor of Cyprus before Othello

CLOWN Othello's servant

DESDEMONA Brabantio's daughter; Othello's fair young
bride

EMILIA Iago's wife

BIANCA a prostitute

**GENTLEMEN, SAILORS, OFFICERS, MESSENGER, HERALD, MUSICIANS,
SERVANTS, and SENATORS (SIGNIORS)**

ACT 1

| Scene 1 |

*(Enter **Roderigo** and **Iago** on a street in Venice.)*

RODERIGO: Why didn't you say so earlier?

IAGO: You never listen to me anyway.

RODERIGO: But you told me you hated him—

IAGO: I do. I deserve to be his lieutenant.
Yet he picked Michael Cassio instead.
Cassio has never proved himself in battle.
And I, who led men on many battlefields,
Will be Othello's mere ensign, the lowest
rank of officer!

RODERIGO: I would rather be his hangman.

IAGO: A new system is in place.
It's who you know that counts—not what
you can do.
Now, sir, judge for yourself whether I have
any reason
To love the Moor.

RODERIGO: Why do you follow him, then?

IAGO: Don't be fooled. I only follow him to
get back at him.

We can't all be in charge—nor can all
those in charge be truly followed.
In following him, I'm looking out for my
own good.

As heaven is my judge, I act not out of
love and duty,
Even though I must make a show of
service.

I am never what I seem to be.

RODERIGO: We can't let him get away with this!

IAGO: Let us wake up Desdemona's father.
Making him angry will lessen Othello's joy.

RODERIGO: Here is her father's house.

IAGO: Wake him! Yell as if the town is on fire!

RODERIGO: Hello! Brabantio! Signior
Brabantio! Hello!

IAGO: Wake up, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves!

BRABANTIO (*appearing above, at a window*): Why all
the noise? What's wrong?

RODERIGO: Heavens, sir, you've been robbed!
Your heart is burst. You have lost half your
soul.

Even now, an old black ram is mating
with your white ewe.

Arise! Wake your neighbors with the bell,
Or else the devil may make you a
grandfather.

BRABANTIO: Have you lost your mind? Who are you?

RODERIGO: I am Roderigo, sir. Don't you know my voice?

BRABANTIO: You are not welcome here!
I've told you my daughter is not for you.

RODERIGO: I have come to you with simple and pure reasons.

IAGO (*supporting Roderigo*): We're here to help you. If you don't act quickly, your daughter will be mated with a Moorish horse. You'll have chargers for grandsons.

BRABANTIO: What kind of foul talk is that?

IAGO: It is the truth, sir. Your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

BRABANTIO: Villain! You'll answer for this.

RODERIGO: Sir, I will answer anything. Maybe it is your wish
That your fair daughter, in the middle of the night,
Has been carried off in the gross embrace
of a lustful Moor.
If so, we must apologize for bothering you.
But if you did not know about it, then you should thank us.

Why don't you find out for yourself?
If she is in her room or your house,
Bring the justice of the state against me
for thus lying to you.

BRABANTIO: Give me a candle! Wake up the
household!

Light, I say! *Light!*

(He exits from the balcony above.)

IAGO (to Roderigo): Farewell, for I must leave you.

It wouldn't help me to be used as a
witness against Othello.

I know that he is in favor with the state.

Oh, he might get some slight punishment.

But the state needs him to lead in the
Cyprus wars.

Though I hate him, I must show outward
signs of love.

Bring the search party to the inn. I will be
there with him. Farewell!

*(Iago exits. Brabantio enters below. Servants
carrying torches are with him.)*

BRABANTIO: It is too true an evil. She is gone!
What's left of my life will be nothing but
bitterness.

Now, Roderigo, where did you see her?

Oh, the foolish girl!

With the Moor, you said? Oh, treason of
the blood!

How did you know it was she? Oh, she
deceived me!

Wake up my family! Are they already
married, do you think?

RODERIGO: Truly, I think they are.

BRABANTIO: Oh, heavens! How did she get out?
Such deception!

Fathers, from now on, do not trust your
daughters' minds

Based on how you see them act. Is there
not magic

By which the nature of youth and
virginity

May be abused? Haven't you, Roderigo,
read of such things?

RODERIGO: Yes, sir, I have indeed.

BRABANTIO: Oh, if only she had been yours!
Do you know where we may find her and
the Moor?

RODERIGO: I think I can find them.

BRABANTIO: Please, lead on! Good Roderigo,
I'll reward you for this.

| Scene 2 |

(Othello, Iago, and servants enter on another street.)

IAGO: Though I have killed men in war,
It goes against my conscience to commit
murder.
I'm not evil enough to serve my own
needs. Nine or ten times
I thought about stabbing Brabantio right
here, under the ribs.

OTHELLO: It's better that you didn't.

IAGO: But he spoke rudely, insulting you.
I could hardly keep from attacking him!
But, I ask you, sir—are you married? You
can be sure of this:
Brabantio will see that you are divorced,
Or bring whatever charges against you
that the law allows.

OTHELLO: Let him do his worst.
The services that I have done for the state
Will speak louder than his complaints. No
one knows this yet,
But when the right time comes, I will
make it known that
I am descended from men of royal rank.
I can claim as great a fortune as my wife can.
Know this, Iago: If I didn't love the gentle
Desdemona so much,

I would not have given up my freedom for
all the treasure in the sea.

But look! What lights are coming this way?

(Enter Cassio and other officers, with servants carrying torches.)

IAGO: That's the awakened father and his
friends! You'd better go in.

OTHELLO: No. I must be found. My talents, my
title, and my perfect soul
Shall speak right of me. Is it they?

IAGO: I don't think so.

OTHELLO (to Cassio's group): Greetings, friends!
What is the news?

CASSIO: The duke sends greetings, General.
And wants to see you right away.

OTHELLO: What do you think is the matter?

CASSIO: Some news from Cyprus, I imagine.
Many important men are with the duke
already.
They are calling for you, too.
When they did not find you at home,
The Senate sent three groups to find you.

OTHELLO: It's good that you have found me.
I must tell my household I am leaving.
Then I'll go with you. *(He exits.)*

CASSIO (to Iago): Ensign, why is Othello here?