

# Othello

Shakespeare  
in Rhyme 1



## OTHELLO

In Venice city there once did live  
A rich senator, Brabantio by name  
Whose daughter, Desdemona would only give  
Her affections to a Moor who had won great fame. 1

As Othello, this dark-skinned Moor was known,  
An experienced soldier in Venice's pay,  
Whose fame and rank in the army had grown,  
By fighting the Turks in a valiant way. 2

Young Desdemona loved to hear  
Othello's adventurous stories  
Of battle, travel, danger and fear;  
She was impressed with his past glories. 3

Desdemona gave Othello various signs  
Which he took to be tokens of her love for him  
And after reading between the lines  
He proposed marriage but their prospects were grim. 4

They knew that Brabantio would not approve  
Of Othello as his son in law.  
He soon found out about their marriage move  
And accused Othello of using witchcraft to score. 5

Just as this family crisis was breaking  
News was received of the Turks' war preparation.  
They had a plan to invade Cyprus in the making;  
Othello's skill was required in this war situation. 6

He found himself called before  
The senate of Venice so grand,  
Facing a charge of witchcraft and more;  
He was needed to take the Cyprus defence in hand. 7

Brabantio stated his case, clear and plain  
Regarding Desdemona falling for Othello's charm  
But his testimony was too emotional in the main  
And he failed to do the marriage any harm. 8





When it was Othello's turn to speak in court 9  
He defended his romancing very well.  
His wife's enchantment seemed of the natural sort  
Rather than due to a supernatural spell.

Desdemona spoke in her husband's defence 10  
And saw how the court approved.  
Even Brabantio seemed less tense;  
The whole marriage issue was soothed.

Othello was then directed to the invasion 11  
Of Cyprus by a Turkish force.  
To assist, he needed little persuasion  
But a storm threw the enemy fleet off course.

He remained in command of this island place 12  
And Desdemona was there as well.  
There was also a young lieutenant with a handsome face,  
From Florence as far as we can tell.

Michael Cassio was the young man's name 13  
And he had earlier been employed  
As a messenger in the courtship game  
For Othello and Desdemona, which he rather enjoyed.

This friendship with young Cassio grew 14  
And Othello gave him a good promotion  
But such favouritism put Iago in a stew;  
In revenge he plotted to make a commotion.

He also imagined that the Moor 15  
Was too fond of Emilia, his wife.  
The outlook for happiness began to look poor  
As Iago set out to take more than one life.

Not long after Othello's arrival, 16  
A party of celebration was held  
Due to the Turkish invasion's non-survival  
But in the background something smelled.





Cassio was in charge of the guard that night 17  
With orders from Othello to see  
That the soldiers drank little to avoid a fight  
In case they caused the Cyprus people to flee.

Iago put his evil plot into action 18  
By tempting Cassio to drink whilst on duty.  
The drunken lieutenant began to express satisfaction  
With Desdemona and his comments were rather fruity.

The intoxicated Cassio got into a fight 19  
And in trying to settle this dispute,  
Montano, also on guard duty that night,  
Was wounded, although Iago, was at the root.

He proceeded to ring the alarm bell, 20  
Even though the disturbance was small.  
When Othello arrived he began to tell  
Of Cassio's drinking which led to the brawl.

Iago was sure to leave out his own part 21  
In this unfortunate riot scene.  
He was too clever for Cassio in this scheming art  
And Othello was forced to make a decision, so mean.

Cassio's post as lieutenant was taken away 22  
But the young man was determined to win it back.  
He told this to Iago on the following day,  
Unaware that this was the man who'd got him the sack.

Iago cunningly proposed the idea 23  
That in order to win back Othello's favour,  
Cassio ask Desdemona to make it clear  
To her husband that he was the soldier to savour.

Cassio agreed to this subtle plan 24  
And consulted Desdemona about his trouble.  
She swore to take up the cause of this young man;  
Iago's plot was now going for the double.





Desdemona pleaded Cassio's case 25  
But Othello was reluctant to change  
His decision and put his lieutenant back in place,  
Yet refusing her request was hard to arrange.

One day when Cassio was about to take leave 26  
Of Desdemona, her husband came in  
Along with Iago who tried to make believe  
That their meeting looked like a sin.

Iago then made further signs 27  
That some secret romance might exist.  
Othello began to read between the lines,  
As Iago hinted at what he had missed.

Iago was careful not to directly accuse 28  
Desdemona and Cassio in Othello's hearing  
But he pointed out how she was quick to abuse  
Her father's trust when their marriage was nearing.

Another of Iago's vengeful ploys 29  
Was to refer to the colour of Othello's skin,  
Hinting that Desdemona now preferred the joys  
Of fair skinned men, although this point seemed thin.

Iago advised Othello to delay 30  
The reinstating of Cassio in a lieutenant's post  
And wait to see what Desdemona would say  
In defence of the young man, which would prove the most.

Othello was in a troubled state of mind, 31  
Thanks to Iago's sly false observations,  
Whilst pretending to defend Desdemona in a manner so kind  
And the Moor lost interest in all other situations.

Othello's moods changed on many an occasion; 32  
He even seized Iago by the neck in a rage.  
Iago escaped using subtle persuasion,  
Pushing the Moor further into his jealous cage.





Iago referred to a certain handkerchief 33  
Covered with a strawberry design  
Given by Othello to Desdemona in the belief  
That their relationship would always be fine.

To Othello, Iago hinted that he'd seen 34  
The precious hankie in the possession  
Of Cassio, although it had carefully been  
Taken from Desdemona as part of Iago's obsession.

When Othello heard Iago's observation 35  
He wanted his wife and Cassio dead.  
At first he created a tense situation  
As the handkerchief loss went to his head.

Desdemona of course failed to find 36  
This gift from Othello as Iago had planned.  
When she saw he was not in the right frame of mind  
She felt sleepy, unable to understand.

As Desdemona lay in bed, Othello appeared 37  
Determined that she must die.  
She awoke and sensed that her death had neared  
But begged her husband to give compassion a try.

He stated his suspicions to her face 38  
And she tried to tell him the true situation.  
In anger he suffocated her in that place  
And Cassio entered with new information.

Cassio was wounded from an assassin's attack, 39  
Which had failed to go according to plan.  
He also had letters, which made Iago look black;  
Othello then knew he'd been a misled man.

In remorse for unjustly killing his wife 40  
He tragically fell on his sword.  
Iago paid for this treachery with his life  
But Othello was remembered as a great lord.

THE END

