

A photograph of a narrow Venetian canal at night. The water is dark and reflects the warm, yellowish light from the street lamps and building windows. Several gondolas are moored along the sides of the canal. The buildings are multi-story, with visible windows and balconies. The overall atmosphere is quiet and romantic.

***WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE***

***OTHELLO,
THE MOOR
OF VENICE***

A photograph of a narrow Venetian canal at night. Several gondolas are moored along the left side of the canal. The water reflects the warm, yellowish light from the street lamps and the buildings lining the canal. The buildings are multi-story and have a historic, weathered appearance. The overall atmosphere is quiet and romantic.

***WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE***

***OTHELLO,
THE MOOR
OF VENICE***

William Shakespeare

Othello, the Moor of Venice

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Dramatis Personæ

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DUKE OF VENICE

BRABANTIO, a Senator of Venice and Desdemona's father

Other Senators

GRATIANO, Brother to Brabantio

LODOVICO, Kinsman to Brabantio

OTHELLO, a noble Moor in the service of Venice

CASSIO, his Lieutenant

IAGO, his Ancient

MONTANO, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus

RODERIGO, a Venetian Gentleman

CLOWN, Servant to Othello

DESDEMONA, Daughter to Brabantio and Wife to Othello

EMILIA, Wife to Iago

BIANCA, Mistress to Cassio

Officers, Gentlemen, Messenger, Musicians, Herald, Sailor, Attendants, &c.

**SCENE: The First Act in Venice; during
the rest of the Play at a Seaport in
Cyprus.**

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ACT I

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SCENE 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 will 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-capp'd 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 stuff'd 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 damn'd 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 theoric,
Wherein the toged consuls can propose
As masterly as he: mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election,
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof
At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds,
Christian and heathen, must be belee'd and calm'd
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 the first. Now sir, be judge yourself
Whether I in any just term am affin'd
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 follow'd. 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, cashier'd.

Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are
Who, trimm'd 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 have lin'd their
coats,
Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul,
And such a one do I profess myself. 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 complement 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 color.

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!
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 robb'd, 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 charg'd 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 bravery, 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 cover'd
with a Barbary horse; you'll have your nephews neigh to

you; you'll have coursers for cousins and gennets 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' the 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 wrongs.
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.

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!

[Exit from above.]

IAGO.

Farewell; for I must leave you:
It seems not meet nor wholesome to my place
To be produc'd, as if I stay I shall,
Against the Moor. For I do know the state,
However this may gall him with some check,
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd
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,
And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

[Exit.]

Enter BRABANTIO with Servants and torches.

BRABANTIO.

It is too true an evil. Gone she is,
And what's to come of my despised time,
Is naught 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.

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, would 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 will deserve your pains.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. Venice. 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' the conscience
To do no contriv'd murder; I lack iniquity
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times
I had thought to have yerck'd 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,
I did full hard forbear him. But I pray you, sir,
Are you fast married? Be assur'd of this,
That the magnifico is much belov'd
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—
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 reach'd. 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:
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 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.

OTHELLO.

What is the matter, think you?

CASSIO.

Something from Cyprus, as I may divine.
It is a business of some heat. The galleys
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers
This very night at one another's heels;
And many of the consuls, rais'd and met,
Are at the duke's already. You have been hotly call'd for,
When, being not at your lodging to be found,
The senate hath sent about three several quests
To search you out.

OTHELLO.

'Tis well I am found by you.

I will but spend a word here in the house,
And go with you.

[*Exit.*]

CASSIO.

Ancient, what makes he here?

IAGO.

Faith, he tonight hath boarded a land carrack:
If it prove lawful prize, he's made forever.

CASSIO.

I do not understand.

IAGO.

He's married.

CASSIO.

To who?

Enter OTHELLO.

IAGO.

Marry to—Come, captain, will you go?

OTHELLO.

Have with you.

CASSIO.

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO and Officers with torches and
weapons.*

IAGO.

It is Brabantio. General, be advis'd,
He comes to bad intent.

OTHELLO.

Holla, stand there!

RODERIGO.

Signior, it is the Moor.