

SHAKESPEARIENCE!

OTHELLO

Act I, scene 3: The Duke, Othello, Brabantio, Desdemona

DUKE OF VENICE

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you against the general enemy Ottoman.

To BRABANTIO

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;
We lack'd your counsel and your help tonight.

BRABANTIO

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care
Take hold on me, for my particular grief is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing
nature, that it engulfs and swallows other sorrows
And it is still itself.

DUKE OF VENICE

Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO

My daughter! O, my daughter!

DUKE OF VENICE

Dead?

BRABANTIO

Ay, to me; she is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted

DUKE OF VENICE

Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding hath thus beguiled your daughter
of herself and you of her, the bloody book of law you shall yourself read...

in the bitter letter after your own sense.

BRABANTIO

Humbly I thank your grace.
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state-affairs hath hither brought.

DUKE OF VENICE

[To OTHELLO] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

OTHELLO

That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter, it is most true; true,
I have married her:
Rude am I in my speech, and little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace:
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle.
Yet, by your gracious patience, I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love;
What conjuration and what mighty magic, for such proceeding I am charged
withal, I won his daughter.

BRABANTIO

A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion blush'd at herself; and she, in spite
of nature, of years, of country, credit, every thing,
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!
I therefore vouch again
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjured to this effect, he wrought upon her.

DUKE OF VENICE

To vouch this, is no proof.
But, Othello, speak: Did you by indirect and forced courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?

OTHELLO

I do beseech you, send for the lady and let her speak of me before her father.
If you do find me foul in her report, the trust, the office I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence even fall upon my life.

DUKE OF VENICE

Fetch Desdemona hither.
Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO

Her father loved me; oft invited me; still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes, that I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;
Wherein I spake of moving accidents by flood and field
Of being taken by the insolent foe and sold to slavery, of my redemption
thence and portance in my travels' history:
This to hear would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'ld come again, and with a greedy ear devour up my discourse:
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used:
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

Enter DESDEMONA

DUKE OF VENICE

I think this tale would win my daughter too.

BRABANTIO

I pray you, hear her speak: Come hither, gentle mistress:
Do you perceive in all this noble company where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA

My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education both do learn me how to respect you; you are the lord
of duty; I am hitherto your daughter:
but here's my husband, and so much duty as my mother show'd to you,
preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess due to the Moor my lord.

BRABANTIO

I have done, my lord.
Please it your grace, on to the state-affairs:
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.
Come hither, Moor:
I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.

DUKE OF VENICE

Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence,
Which, as a guise or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour. If you please, Be't at her father's.

BRABANTIO

I'll not have it so.

OTHELLO

Nor I.

DESDEMONA

Nor I; I would not there reside, to put my father in impatient thoughts
By being in his eye. Most gracious duke, to my unfolding lend your
prosperous ear;
And let me find a charter in your voice, to assist my simpleness.

DUKE OF VENICE

What would You, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA

That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world:
my heart's subdued even to the very quality of my lord:
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honour and his valiant parts did I my soul
and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind, a moth of peace, and he go to the war,
The rites for which I love him are bereft me,

And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

OTHELLO

Let her have your voices.

DUKE OF VENICE

Be it as you shall privately determine,
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,
And speed must answer it. You must away to-night.

OTHELLO

With all my heart.

DUKE OF VENICE

Noble signior, if virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

[Exit]

BRABANTIO

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceived her father, and may thee.