Scenes (15 total)

Act I
Scene 2. Another street.
Scene 3. A council-chamber.

Act II
Scene 1. A Sea-port in Cyprus. An open place near the quay.
Scene 2. A street.
Scene 3. A hall in the castle.

Act III
Scene 1. Before the castle.
Scene 2. A room in the castle.
Scene 3. The garden of the castle.
Scene 4. Before the castle.

Act IV
Scene 1. Cyprus. Before the castle.
Scene 2. A room in the castle.
Scene 3. Another room in the castle.

Act V
Scene 1. Cyprus. A street.
Scene 2. A bedchamber in the castle: DESDEMONA in bed asleep;
Characters (26 total)

All

Bianca, A woman in Cyprus, Mistress to Cassio

Brabantio, A senator of Venice, father to Desdemona

Cassio, Othello's lieutenant or second-in-command

Clown, Servant to Othello and Desdemona

Desdemona, Daughter to Brabantio and wife to Othello, a Venetian lady

Duke of Venice

Emilia, Wife to Iago, Desdemona’s attendant

First Gentleman

First Musician

First Officer

First Senator, A senator of Venice

Fourth Gentleman

Gentleman

Gratiano, Brother to Brabantio, Venetian gentleman

Herald

Iago, Othello's ancient, standard-bearer, or ensign; one step below lieutenant

Lodovico, Kinsman to Brabantio, Venetian gentleman

Messenger

Montano, Othello's predecessor in the government of Cyprus

Othello, A noble Moor in the Venetian army

Roderigo, A Venetian gentleman

Sailor

Second Gentleman

Second Senator, A senator of Venice

Third Gentleman
ACT I SCENE III. Venice. A council chamber.

[The Duke and Senators sitting at a table; Officers attending.]

DUKE
There is no composition in these news
That gives them credit.

FIRST SENATOR
Indeed, they are disproportion'd;
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

DUKE
And mine a hundred and forty.

SECOND SENATOR
And mine two hundred:
But though they jump not on a just account,—
As in these cases, where the aim reports,
'Tis oft with difference,—yet do they all confirm
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

DUKE
Nay, it is possible enough to judgement:
I do not so secure me in the error,
But the main article I do approve
In fearful sense.

SAILOR

FIRST OFFICER
A messenger from the galleys.

[Enter a Sailor.]

DUKE
Now,—what's the business?

SAILOR
The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;
So was I bid report here to the state
By Signior Angelo.
DUKE
How say you by this change?

FIRST SENATOR
This cannot be,
By no assay of reason: ’tis a pageant
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk;
And let ourselves again but understand
That, as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,
So may he with more facile question bear it,
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,
But altogether lacks the abilities
That Rhodes is dress'd in. If we make thought of this,
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful
To leave that latest which concerns him first;
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,
To wake and wage a danger profitless.

DUKE
Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

FIRST OFFICER
Here is more news.

[Enter a Messenger.]

MESSENGER
The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,
Steering with due course toward the isle of Rhodes,
Have there injoined them with an after fleet.

FIRST SENATOR
Ay, so I thought.—How many, as you guess?

MESSENGER
Of thirty sail: and now they do re-stem
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance
Their purposes toward Cyprus.—Signior Montano,
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,
With his free duty recommends you thus,
And prays you to believe him.
DUKE
'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus.—
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

FIRST SENATOR
He's now in Florence.

DUKE
Write from us to him; post-post-haste despatch.

FIRST SENATOR
Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

[Enter Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, and Officers.]

DUKE
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 to-night.

BRABANTIO
So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;
Neither my place, nor aught I heard of business
Hath rais'd 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 engluts and swallows other sorrows,
And it is still itself.

DUKE
Why, what's the matter?

BRABANTIO
My daughter! O, my daughter!

DUKE and SENATORS
Dead?

BRABANTIO
Ay, to me;
She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;
For nature so preposterously to err,
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,
Sans witchcraft could not.

130 DUKE
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; yea, though our proper son
Stood in your action.

BRABANTIO
Humbly I thank your grace.

140 Here is the man, this Moor; whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state affairs
Hath hither brought.

DUKE and SENATORS
We are very sorry for't.

DUKE
[To Othello.] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

150 BRABANTIO
Nothing, but this is so.

OTHELLO
Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,

155 My very noble and approv'd good masters,—
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,

160 And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have us'd
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,

165 More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
Of my whole course of love: what drugs, what charms,
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, everything,—
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!

It is judgement maim'd and most imperfect
That will confess perfection so could err
Against all rules of nature; and must be driven
To find out practices of cunning hell,
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again,

That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjur'd to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

DUKE

To vouch this is no proof;
Without more wider and more overt test
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

FIRST SENATOR

But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forcèd courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question

As soul to soul affordeth?

OTHELLO

I do beseech you,
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,
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
Fetch Desdemona hither.

OTHELLO

215 Ancient, conduct them; you best know the place.—

[Exeunt Iago and Attendants.]

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven
I do confess the vices of my blood,
So justly to your grave ears I'll present
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,
And she in mine.

DUKE

225 Say it, Othello.

OTHELLO

Her father lov'd me; oft invited me;
Still question'd me the story of my life,
230 From year to year,—the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days
To the very moment that he bade me tell it:
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
235 Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach;
Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence,
And portance in my travels' history:
240 Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak,—such was the process;
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
245 Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
250 Devour up my discourse; which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,

But not intently; I did consent;
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:

She swore,—in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me;
And bade me, if I had a friend that lov'd her,

I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She lov'd me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I lov'd her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have us'd:—

Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

[Enter Desdemona, Iago, and Attendants.]

DUKE
I think this tale would win my daughter too.—

Good Brabantio,
Take up this mangled matter at the best.
Men do their broken weapons rather use
Than their bare hands.

BRABANTIO
I pray you, hear her speak:
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man!—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.

300 BRABANTIO

God be with you!—I have done.—
Please it your grace, on to the state affairs:
I had rather to adopt a child than get it.—
Come hither, Moor:

305 I here do give thee that with all my heart
Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
I would keep from thee.—For your sake, jewel,
I am glad at soul I have no other child;
For thy escape would teach me tyranny,

310 To hang clogs on them.—I have done, my lord.

DUKE

Let me speak like yourself; and lay a sentence
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers

315 Into your favour.
When remedies are past, the griefs are ended
By seeing the worst, which late on hopes depended.
To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
Is the next way to draw new mischief on.

320 What cannot be preserved when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

325 BRABANTIO

So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
We lose it not so long as we can smile;
He bears the sentence well, that nothing bears
But the free comfort which from thence he hears;

330 But he bears both the sentence and the sorrow
That, to pay grief, must of poor patience borrow.
These sentences, to sugar or to gall,
Being strong on both sides, are equivocal:
But words are words; I never yet did hear

335 That the bruis'd heart was piercèd through the ear.—
I humbly beseech you, proceed to the affairs of state.

DUKE
The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus.—Othello, the fortitude of the place is best known to you; and though we have there a substitute of most allowed sufficiency, yet opinion, a sovereign mistress of effects, throws a more safer voice on you: you must therefore be content to slubber the gloss of your new fortunes with this more stubborn and boisterous expedition.

OTHELLO

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnize
A natural and prompt alacrity
I find in hardness; and do undertake
These present wars against the Ottomites.
Most humbly, therefore, bending to your state,
I crave fit disposition for my wife;
Due reference of place and exhibition;
With such accommodation and besort
As levels with her breeding.

DUKE

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

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 honors 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.

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat,—the young affects
In me defunct,—and proper satisfaction;
But to be free and bounteous to her mind:

And heaven defend your good souls, that you think
I will your serious and great business scant
For she is with me: no, when light-wing'd toys
Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness
My speculative and offic'd instruments,

That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!

DUKE

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

FIRST SENATOR

You must away to-night.

OTHELLO

With all my heart.

DUKE

At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.—
Othello, leave some officer behind,
And he shall our commission bring to you;
425 With such things else of quality and respect
As doth import you.

OTHELLO

So please your grace, my ancient,—

430 A man he is of honesty and trust,—
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

435 DUKE

Let it be so.—
Good night to everyone.—[To Brabantio.] And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

440 FIRST SENATOR
Adieu, brave Moor; use Desdemona well.

BRABANTIO

445 Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

[Exeunt Duke, Senators, Officers. &c.]

OTHELLO

450 My life upon her faith!—Honest Iago,
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:
I pr'ythee, let thy wife attend on her;
And bring them after in the best advantage.—
Come, Desdemona, I have but an hour

455 Of love, of worldly matters and direction,
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

[Exeunt Othello and Desdemona.]

RODERIGO

460 Iago,—

IAGO

What say'st thou, noble heart?

465 RODERIGO
What will I do, thinkest thou?

IAGO
Why, go to bed and sleep.

RODERIGO
I will incontinently drown myself.

IAGO
If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why, thou silly gentleman!

RODERIGO
It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

IAGO
O villainous! I have looked upon the world for four times seven years, and since I could distinguish betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a Guinea-hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon.

RODERIGO
What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond, but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

IAGO
Virtue! a fig! 'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigeable authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: But we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion.

RODERIGO
It cannot be.

IAGO
It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man: drown thyself! drowned cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend, and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,—
put money in thy purse,—nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an
answerable sequestration;—put but money in thy purse.—These Moors are changeable in their
wills:—fill thy purse with money: the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to
him shortly as acerb as the coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his
body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore put money
in thy purse.—If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make
all the money thou canst; if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a
supersubtle Venetian be not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her;
therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to
be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

510

RODERIGO
Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

IAGO
Thou art sure of me:—go, make money:—I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and
again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in
our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport.
There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse; go; provide thy
money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

520

RODERIGO
Where shall we meet i’ the morning?

IAGO
At my lodging.

530

RODERIGO
I’ll be with thee betimes.

IAGO
Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

540

RODERIGO
What say you?

IAGO
No more of drowning, do you hear?

RODERIGO
I am changed: I’ll go sell all my land.

550

[Exit.]
IAGO
Thus do I ever make my fool my purse;
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane
If I would time expend with such a snipe
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor;
And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
He has done my office: I know not if 't be true;
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well,
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now;
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery,—How, how?—Let's see:—
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear
That he is too familiar with his wife:—
He hath a person, and a smooth dispose,
To be suspected; fram'd to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by the nose
As asses are.
I have't:—it is engender'd:—hell and night
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

[Exit.]