

Shakespeare

OTHELLO

Act V, Scene 2

A bedchamber in the castle: DESDEMONA in bed asleep;

a light burning.

[Enter OTHELLO]

- **Othello.** It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again.
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.
[Kissing her]
Ah balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.
- **Desdemona.** Who's there? Othello?
- **Othello.** Ay. Desdemona.
- **Desdemona.** Will you come to bed, my lord?
- **Othello.** Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?
- **Desdemona.** Ay, my lord.
- **Othello.** If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.
- **Desdemona.** Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?
- **Othello.** Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No; heaven forbid! I would not kill thy soul.
- **Desdemona.** Talk you of killing?
- **Othello.** Ay, I do.

Desdemona. Then heaven

Have mercy on me!

- **Othello.** Amen, with all my heart!
 - **Desdemona.** If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.
 - **Othello.** Hum!
 - **Desdemona.** And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.
 - **Othello.** Think on thy sins.
 - **Desdemona.** They are loves I bear to you.
 - **Othello.** Ay, and for that thou diest.
 - **Desdemona.** That death's unnatural that kills for loving.
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:
These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.
 - **Othello.** Peace, and be still!
 - **Desdemona.** I will so. What's the matter?
 - **Othello.** That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee
Thou gavest to Cassio.
 - **Desdemona.** No, by my life and soul!
Send for the man, and ask him.
 - **Othello.** Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy deathbed.
 - **Desdemona.** Ay, but not yet to die.
 - **Othello.** Yes, presently:
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;
For to deny each article with oath
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.
 - **Desdemona.** Then Lord have mercy on me!
 - **Othello.** I say, amen.
- Desdemona.** And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love: I never gave him token.
- **Othello.** By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And makest me call what I intend to do

A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:
I saw the handkerchief.

- **Desdemona.** He found it then;
I never gave it him: send for him hither;
Let him confess a truth.
- **Othello.** He hath confess'd.
- **Desdemona.** What, my lord?
- **Othello.** That he hath used thee.
- **Desdemona.** How? unlawfully?
- **Othello.** Ay.
- **Desdemona.** He will not say so.
- **Othello.** No, his mouth is stopp'd;
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.
- **Desdemona.** O! my fear interprets: what, is he dead?
- **Othello.** Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge
Had stomach for them all.
- **Desdemona.** Alas! he is betray'd and I undone.
- **Othello.** Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?
- **Desdemona.** O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!
- **Othello.** Down, strumpet!
- **Desdemona.** Kill me to-morrow: let me live to-night!
- **Othello.** Nay, if you strive—
- **Desdemona.** But half an hour!
- **Othello.** Being done, there is no pause.
- **Desdemona.** But while I say one prayer!
- **Othello.** It is too late.

[He stifles her]

Emilia. [*Within*] My lord, my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!

- **Othello.** What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?
I that am cruel am yet merciful;
I would not have thee linger in thy pain: So, so.
- **Emilia.** [*Within*] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

- **Othello.** Who's there?
- **Emilia.** [*Within*] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!
- **Othello.** Yes: 'tis Emilia. By and by. She's dead.
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.—
The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't good?—
I think she stirs again:—no. What's best to do?
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
O insupportable! O heavy hour!
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe
Should yawn at alteration.
- **Emilia.** [*Within*] I do beseech you
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!
- **Othello.** I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia;
Soft; by and by. Let me the curtains draw.
Where art thou?
[*Unlocks the door*]
[*Enter EMILIA*]
What's the matter with thee now?
- **Emilia.** O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!
- **Othello.** What, now?
- **Emilia.** But now, my lord.
- **Othello.** It is the very error of the moon;
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont,
And makes men mad.
- **Emilia.** Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian
Call'd Roderigo.
- **Othello.** Roderigo kill'd!
And Cassio kill'd!
- **Emilia.** No, Cassio is not kill'd.
- **Othello.** Not Cassio kill'd! then murder's out of tune,
And sweet revenge grows harsh.
- **Desdemona.** O, falsely, falsely murder'd!
- **Emilia.** Alas, what cry is that?
- **Othello.** That! what?
- **Emilia.** Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.
Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!
- **Desdemona.** A guiltless death I die.
- **Emilia.** O, who hath done this deed?
- **Desdemona.** Nobody; I myself. Farewell
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell!

[Dies]