

EDSC501B

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

Othello

LEVEL 5



A Perfect Soul



Iago and Roderigo argue outside Desdemona's home.

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
 2. Look at the picture.
 3. Read the sentence under the picture.
 4. Read the first five paragraphs of the story.
 5. Then answer the following question.

- You learned from your preview that the Moor asked
- a. Iago to be his lieutenant.
 - b. Iago to help him marry Desdemona.
 - c. Cassio to be his lieutenant.
 - d. Roderigo to marry Desdemona.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read on to find out how Iago betrays Othello.

Which Report Is True?

The council crowded around the dimly lit table. "Which report is true?" asked the Duke. "Since their first galley was sighted, each hour has brought a new rumor."

"My letters say one hundred and seven," said the first senator.

"And mine two hundred," said the second senator.

The next message rumored the Turks had turned around. The first senator shook his head. "The Turks want to deceive us. They need Cyprus, and they know the island does not have strong military protection." A new message proved his suspicion right. The Turks had gathered more galleys and turned back to Cyprus.

"Brave General, we need your help," said the Duke, when Othello came into the room. Then he noticed Brabantio. "We missed you tonight, noble Senator."

"I'm not here for the reports," said Brabantio. "It's my daughter! I can't think of anything else."

"Dead?" all the council asked.

"She's dead to me!" sighed Brabantio. "She's been stolen from me. How else could she have done something so opposite nature?"

"You decide how to punish the villain," said the Duke. "Even if it is my own son, I won't stand between you and justice."

Brabantio pointed to Othello. "Here's the man -- the same man you called to the council tonight, this Moor!"

"What do you say to defend yourself?" the Duke asked Othello.

"Say nothing," demanded Brabantio, "just confess!"

"Noble leaders, it is true. I have married his daughter. Since the age of seven I've lived in the military, so it's difficult for me to speak well about other ideas. But I'll try to explain how I won Desdemona," said Othello.

"My daughter is very shy and gentle. It's completely against her nature to fall in love with some-

one she feared to look at. Why would she ruin her reputation in a marriage that isn't right according to nature? He must have deceived her with magic!"

"There is no proof. Did anyone witness his magic?" asked the Duke. No one replied.

"Let Desdemona answer," suggested Othello calmly. "And let her speak of me before her father."

The Duke agreed, and the Moor's ensign was sent to get her.

As they waited, Othello told how Brabantio often invited him to speak about his adventures. Desdemona would listen when she could get away from her chores. "I talked about my narrow escapes, how I was captured and sold as a slave. I spoke of my travels through strange lands with frightening creatures. One day, she hinted that she would fall in love with any man who could tell such adventures. So I took the hint. I told her I loved the way she listened. She showed so much wonder and feeling. The stories of my life, these are the only magic spells I used. Here comes Desdemona. Let her be my witness."

"This tale would win my daughter, too," said the Duke.

"If my daughter confesses these things are true, may I be struck down," Brabantio said. He turned to her, "In this noble company, do you know who it is your duty to obey?"

"I see here a divided duty. I owe you, noble father, for raising me; but I owe my husband the same duty my mother gave you. She chose you over her father, and so I choose Othello."

"It's better to let what has been stolen from you go freely," the Duke said to Brabantio.

"Would you let Cyprus go freely to the Turks? You accept their marriage because she isn't your daughter, but I feel differently," Brabantio said. "She is

yours, Moor, because you've already taken her. I'm glad I have no other children. Because of your escape, Desdemona, I would be afraid to give them any freedom."

Immediately, the Duke turned to Othello, "You know how to defend Cyprus, and your reputation will give us support from the citizens. Meanwhile, Desdemona can stay with her father."

"I will not have it so!" stated Brabantio with passion.

"Nor I," said Othello.

"Nor I," said Desdemona. "Let me go with my husband."

Othello followed orders to leave for Cyprus that night. He put honest Iago in charge of Desdemona's travels to join him.

Brabantio left them with a bitter warning: "Watch her carefully, Moor. She deceived me; she may deceive you."

When all had left, Roderigo told Iago, "I'll drown myself. It's foolish to live; life is too painful."

Iago replied, "If you want to send yourself to hell, think of a better way than drowning. Trust me. She'll grow tired of his aging body, and his passion for her will change from sweet to bitter; so fill your purse and be ready! If you can make her betray her husband, we'll really get our revenge!"

Roderigo's passion for Desdemona was so great, he would even become a slave to win her. "I'll sell all my land," he decided.

That fool is my purse, Iago thought, as he watched him leave. So Iago planned revenge. He held the suspicion that his own wife had fallen in love with the Moor. Though it was only a suspicion, he treated it as if it were true. Now, Othello would suffer the same pain. Iago thought of handsome Cassio, the chosen lieutenant. I'll deceive Othello into believing he's chasing Desdemona. Then I'll get my revenge twice -- against Othello and against Cassio, too!

Which Report Is True?

VOCABULARY CHECK

confess	duke	noble	reputation	slave	witness
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I. Sentences to Finish

Fill in the blank in each sentence with the correct key word from the box above.

- The police are looking for a _____ to the car accident.
- The princess could only marry someone from a _____ family.
- The teacher had a _____ for being a kind, caring person.
- He has an ancestor who was sold as a _____ before the Civil War.
- The police questioned the thief for seven hours before he would _____.
- The _____ threw a grand ball for the visiting prince.

II. Matching

Write the letter of the correct meaning from Column B next to the key word in Column A.

Column A	Column B
____ 1. reputation	a. a man of high birth who rules a small area of land
____ 2. confess	b. great because of birth into a high position; high and great in character
____ 3. slave	c. to see or hear something happening; a person who sees something happen and later reports it in court
____ 4. duke	d. what other people think about a person's character
____ 5. witness	e. to admit to doing something bad
____ 6. noble	f. a person of any skin color who is owned by another person is and forced to serve

Check your answers with the key on page 69.

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