

Othello

This is a scene from *Othello*. *Othello* tells the story of a newly married couple Desdemona and Othello. Iago who is a sergeant in Othello's army has a grudge against Othello because he thinks Othello promoted Cassio when he Iago should have been given the promotion. Iago gets his revenge on Othello by making him believe that his young wife Desdemona is having a love affair with Cassio. This scene takes place in a busy place outside the castle where the generals are all meeting. Othello has just read a letter (or mandate asking him to return to Venice) which appears to annoy him and Desdemona asks him what the matter is. Othello is so angry with her because he thinks she has been unfaithful that he slaps her. The other men are all shocked at his behaviour – as is Desdemona.

Can you write the cue scripts for this scene? There are just three actors involved. If you rehearse the scene you will see that there are lots of cues in the scene – not just cues to speak, but cues about what to do, where to stand and how to act. See if you can spot all the cues in the scene.

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

I am glad to see you mad.

DESDEMONA

Why, sweet Othello,--

OTHELLO

(Striking her) Devil!

DESDEMONA

I have not deserved this.

LODOVICO

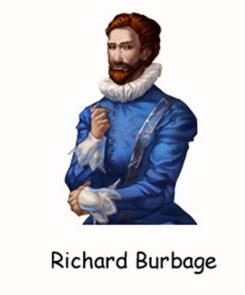
My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,
Though I should swear I saw't: 'tis very much:
Make her amends; she weeps.

OTHELLO

O devil, devil!
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.
Out of my sight!

DESDEMONA

I will not stay to offend you.



Richard Burbage

Game Two

LODOVICO

Truly, an obedient lady:
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

OTHELLO

Mistress!

DESDEMONA

My lord?

OTHELLO

What would you with her, sir?

LODOVICO

Who, I, my lord?

OTHELLO

Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.
Concerning this, sir,--O well-painted passion!--
I am commanded home. Get you away;
I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt*!
Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight,
I do entreat that we may sup together:
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.

(*Avaunt was a Shakespearian curse asking someone to go away)



Richard Burbage