



Cambridge IGCSE™

DRAMA

0411/13

Paper 1

October/November 2025

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



Centres should download this material from the School Support Hub and give it to candidates.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the **two** play extracts provided in this booklet.
- You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you explore both extracts as practical theatre, investigating performance and staging opportunities.
- You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
- A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

This document has **20** pages.

EXTRACT 1

Adapted from *Othello* by William Shakespeare

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Othello is a tragedy by William Shakespeare (1564–1616), who is generally considered to be the most performed playwright in the world. The first public performance was probably in 1603. The extract is taken from Act 1, Act 2, and Act 3, Scene 3, in a modern version.

The play is about Othello, a Moor, who rose to great military heights in the City of Venice. Othello fell in love and secretly married Desdemona, the daughter of Brabantio, a senior senator.

Othello's ensign (flag carrier) is Iago, a complex man of villainous, evil and jealous mind. Iago ultimately fools Othello into jealous belief that Desdemona has been unfaithful. Iago is one of Shakespeare's most outright villainous characters, but manages to trick most people into believing he is totally honest.

The action begins in Venice and then moves to Cyprus, which Venice owned and defended against Turkish invaders.

CHARACTERS:

RODERIGO, a Venetian gentleman

IAGO, an Ensign (flag carrier)

BRABANTIO, a senator, father of Desdemona

OTHELLO, a noble Moor, secretly married Desdemona

CASSIO, lieutenant to Othello

DESDEMONA, young wife to Othello, daughter of Brabantio

EMILIA, Iago's wife, servant to Desdemona

MONTANO, Othello's predecessor as governor of Cyprus

HERALD

Officers, Attendants and Gentlemen

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

[Venice. A street. Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.]

RODERIGO:	Be quiet! Don't tell me this – I am already annoyed that you, Iago, who already uses my money as if it were yours knows about this.	
IAGO:	You won't listen to me. If I even so much as dreamed this were true, go ahead and hate me.	5
RODERIGO:	You told me that you hated him.	
IAGO:	I do hate him. Three of the city's noblemen approached him and asked him to make me his next in command. I promise you that I know my own value and that I deserve that position. But he, because he is prideful and loves his own reasons most, avoided their request with puffed up speech full of military jargon and patriotic quotes. He said, 'In fact, I have already chosen my lieutenant.' Who did he choose? None other than the great statistician Michael Cassio who never moved troops in combat and knows less of how an actual battle plays out than an unmarried woman. He speaks simply to speak and has no actual fighting to back up his military life. But he, Roderigo, was chosen. And as for me whose bravery and talent he saw at Rhodes and Cyprus, I must act calm in front of this accountant and I – how stupid – must hold the flag for the Moor general.	10
RODERIGO:	I swear I would rather have been his executioner.	15
IAGO:	And there's no cure for it. It's the curse of the military life. Promotions come from how liked one is. Roderigo, you tell me if I am in any position to love and respect the Moor general.	20
RODERIGO:	If it were me, I would not serve him.	25
IAGO:	Don't be hasty. I serve under him now, but for my own purposes. Take note of the servant who bows and does his duty, who fully attends to their obedience and slavery, and in the end is worn out like his master's donkeys. But there are others who know how to give the appearance of obedience while focusing on themselves. And in reality they prosper by quietly stealing and thus work for themselves. And I admit I am one like that. By serving him, I am really serving myself.	30
RODERIGO:	That Moor is lucky if he can go through with this.	
IAGO:	Speaking of which, call after her father and wake him. Annoy him; spoil his happiness. Shout at him in the streets, anger his and his daughter's family, until he seems like he is plagued by flies.	35
RODERIGO:	Here is her father's house. I'll call for him.	
IAGO:	Do it as if you are frightened and yell as if a fire has started from negligence at night.	40
RODERIGO:	Brabantio! Mister Brabantio! Hey!	
IAGO:	Wake up, Brabantio! Thieves are in your house. Look around and protect your daughter and your possessions! Thieves! Thieves!	
[BRABANTIO appears above at a window.]		
BRABANTIO:	Why are you shouting all this? What is the matter?	45
RODERIGO:	Sir, is your family at home?	
IAGO:	And have you locked your doors?	
BRABANTIO:	Why are you asking me this?	
IAGO:	Goodness, sir, you are robbed! Put your nightgown on. Your heart is broken and you have lost a part of your soul. Get up, get up. Wake the sleeping people with the bell or it will be too late	50

	and the devil will give you grandchildren. Get up, I say.	
BRABANTIO:	Have you gone crazy?	
RODERIGO:	My respectful sir, do you recognise my voice?	
BRABANTIO:	No, who are you?	55
RODERIGO:	I am Roderigo.	
BRABANTIO:	Even worse. I have asked you not to come near my home, and very honestly told you that my daughter is not for you. Now, as if you are crazy, after dinner and probably drunk, with the evil courage a drunkard has, you come here and disturb me.	60
RODERIGO:	Sir, sir, sir.	
BRABANTIO:	Let me be clear. I have the desire and connections that can make this turn out very poorly for you.	
RODERIGO:	Please wait, good sir.	
BRABANTIO:	Why are you telling me my house is being robbed? This is Venice.	65
RODERIGO:	Respectable Brabantio, I have come with pure intentions and a simple message.	
IAGO:	Sir, you are so stubborn that you would not turn to God even if the devil asks you to. We come for your benefit and yet you think we are troublemakers.	70
BRABANTIO:	Who are you, you profane man?	
IAGO:	I'm one who has come to tell you that your daughter and the Moor are ...	
BRABANTIO:	Since I know you Roderigo, you must respond to this.	
RODERIGO:	Sir, if you are pleased and contented with this arrangement, as I think you might be, that your beautiful daughter at this late hour of the night has left with no regular guard to the disgusting embrace of the Moor, if you already know this and are allowing it, then we have done you a very great evil in coming here, but if you do not know this, I think you are wrongly accusing us. Now see for yourself. If she is still in her room or in your house, then punish me as the state allows for tricking you.	75
BRABANTIO:	Someone light a match. Give me a candle. Wake servants! What you have told me is similar to a dream I have had. Believing it is possible already haunts me. Give me a light!	80
		85
	<i>[Exit from above.]</i>	
IAGO:	Farewell, for I must go. It is not good or right to be seen, which I will be if I stay here. Brabantio cannot easily get rid of the Moor, as he is leaving for Cyprus for the wars. They do not have another general like him. I admit this even though I hate him as I would the fires of hell. It is necessary for me that I carry his flag and act like I love him. Now, take the search party to the Armoury and I will already be there with him.	90
	<i>[Exit. Enter BRABANTIO and servants with flaming torches.]</i>	
BRABANTIO:	It is true that she's gone. The rest of my life will be nothing without her. Where did you see her? Did you see her with the Moor? Who would want to be her father? How did you know it was her? Did she think she could trick me? What did she say to you? Wake up my relatives. Do you think they are married?	95
RODERIGO:	Truly, I think they are.	100
BRABANTIO:	How on earth did she get out? Fathers, never trust your daughters just because they act innocent and good. Is there any spell that can't lead a young girl astray? Have you ever heard of something	

like that, Roderigo?
 RODERIGO: Yes sir, I have indeed. 105
 BRABANTIO: Oh how I wish you'd married her. Do you know where we'll find her and the Moor?
 RODERIGO: I think I know where he is. Get a good party of your guards and come with me.

[Exit] 110

ACT ONE SCENE TWO

[Another street. Enter OTHELLO, IAGO and Attendants with flaming torches.]

IAGO: I must ask, sir. Are you securely married? Because you know that Brabantio is very respected and loved. He has a voice worth potentially twice the Duke's. He will force you to divorce or will try to punish you according to the law with all his strength. 115
 OTHELLO: He can do his worst. All that I have done for the government will outweigh his complaints against me. This is not known about me – it is never honourable to boast – but my life comes from a royal line. I have as great a wealth and position as the woman I've married. And know this, Iago, unless I loved Desdemona, I would never have ruined my bachelorhood and freedom by adding the fence of marriage. But wait, what are those lights? 120
 IAGO: Those belong to the angry father and his friends. You should go inside and out of sight. 125
 OTHELLO: No, I will let them come to me. My qualities, my rank and my lack of wrongdoing will prove me in the right. Is that them?
 IAGO: Actually, no, I don't think so.

[Enter CASSIO and officers with flaming torches.]

OTHELLO: It's the Duke's servants and my new lieutenant Cassio. I hope you are well, friends, why do you come? 130
 CASSIO: The Duke has sent us to greet you, general. And he requests your presence right away, immediately.
 OTHELLO: Do you know what the matter is?
 CASSIO: I think it's about Cyprus. It seems important. Warships have sent messengers tonight, one after another. And many statesmen are awake and are with the Duke. You were asked for and when you were not found at your home, three different groups were sent to find you. 135
 OTHELLO: I have to wait a minute here at this house, and then will go with you. 140

[Exit.]

CASSIO: What business does he have here?
 IAGO: Truly, tonight he has boarded a large ship full of treasure.
 CASSIO: What are you talking about?
 IAGO: He's married. 145
 CASSIO: To whom?

[Re-enter OTHELLO.]

IAGO: Why, to - My captain, shall we go?

CASSIO: Here comes another group looking for you.
 IAGO: It is Brabantio. Be careful, general, he intends you harm. 150

[Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO and officers with flaming torches and weapons.]

OTHELLO: Hello, stay there!
 RODERIGO: Sir, it is the Moor.
 BRABANTIO: Get that thief! 155

[Both sides draw their weapons.]

IAGO: Roderigo, come here, I'll fight you.
 OTHELLO: Keep your swords in their sheaths so the dew doesn't rust them.
 Good, sir, I respect you and will not fight you.

BRABANTIO: O you evil thief, where have you hidden my daughter? I know you put a spell on her. All good and common sense says that unless she were enchanted through magic, a woman so gentle, beautiful and happy would never do something others would make jokes about. The whole world may judge me if it's not obvious that you have practised evil magic on her and taken advantage of her naïve youth. I will go to court over the matter. Therefore, I will take you and see that you're tried as a criminal. Take him. If he resists arrest, forcefully hold him down. 160 165

OTHELLO: Do not touch me. If it were necessary to fight I would not need someone to tell me. Where do you want me to go to respond to your accusations? 170

BRABANTIO: To prison until the law sees fit to take you to court.
 OTHELLO: And if I obey then how will the Duke react since he sent these messengers on urgent national business to bring me to him?

OFFICER: It's true sir. The Duke has called a meeting and you, too, are asked to attend. 175

BRABANTIO: What? The Duke has called a meeting this late at night? The Duke and all the other senators will feel how wrong this is. If actions like this go unpunished, then slaves and pagans will become our rulers. 180

[Exit.]

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

[Seaport in Cyprus, open space near quay. Enter CASSIO from one side; DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO and attendants from other.]

CASSIO: Good Ensign, you are welcome here. Welcome mistress. I hope it does not offend you, good Iago, that I greet your wife like this, a bold custom of greeting. 185

IAGO: Sir, if she gives you as much of her lips as she gives me by berating me, you'll be sick of her.

DESDEMONA: No, she seems to say nothing. 190

IAGO: Truly, she says too much. Even when I'm trying to sleep. In front of you, she says little, but she's speaking scornfully to me in her heart.

EMILIA: You have no reason to say that.

IAGO: Come, in public you women are pretty, but at home, loud bells. 195

	Saints when injured, devils when offended.	
DESDEMONA:	A curse on you, you slanderer.	
EMILIA:	You will not say anything good about me.	
IAGO:	No, I won't.	
DESDEMONA:	What verse would you write if you had to say something nice?	200
IAGO:	Gentle lady do not make me do that.	
DESDEMONA:	Come on, try. I'm not really this playful. Come on, how would you praise me?	
IAGO:	Creative verse comes from my head as difficultly as birdlime comes out of wool cloth. It takes all my brains. How about – 'If a woman has beauty and intelligence she uses her beauty to get what she wants as a tool of her intelligence'?	205
DESDEMONA:	Well said, and if she is ugly and smart?	
IAGO:	'If she has brains she will trick some man to love her ugliness'.	
DESDEMONA:	This is getting even worse.	210
EMILIA:	What if she is beautiful and dumb?	
IAGO:	No beautiful woman was ever dumb.	
DESDEMONA:	What awful things do you have to say about the woman who is ugly and dumb?	
IAGO:	No matter how dumb and ugly a woman is, she tricks men just like the beautiful and smart ones do.	215
DESDEMONA:	Do not listen to him, Emilia, even if he is your husband. What do you think, Cassio? Isn't he the rudest teacher?	
CASSIO:	He speaks commonly, madam. You'll find more worth in him as a soldier than as a scholar.	220
IAGO:	[<i>Aside</i>] He holds her hand. Good. Whisper together. This is enough to use Cassio for my own plans. Good, smile at her. Very good. Kiss her! A wonderful gesture indeed. And again, you place her fingers to your lips? [<i>Trumpet sound.</i>] That's the Moor.	
DESDEMONA:	Let's go meet him.	225
CASSIO:	There he is, coming to us.	
OTHELLO:	Oh my beautiful warrior!	
DESDEMONA:	My dear Othello.	
OTHELLO:	I am amazed as well as happy to see you here before I arrived. If every storm had after it such calms, the winds should blow so hard they would wake the dead. If I died now, I would die most happy, for I fear since I am so completely content, no comfort will come close to this in my lifetime.	230
DESDEMONA:	I pray to God our love and comfort increases as we grow old.	
OTHELLO:	Amen to that! And I hope this kiss is the greatest gift that we ever face.	235
IAGO:	[<i>Aside</i>] O you are in good spirits now, I'll bring you down from this height since I am the honest man.	
OTHELLO:	Come, Desdemona. I am happy to see you in Cyprus.	
	[<i>Exit</i> OTHELLO, DESDEMONA and attendants.]	240
IAGO:	Listen to me, Cassio is tasked tonight with guard duty. I must tell you – Desdemona is in love with him.	
RODERIGO:	With him? That's not possible.	
IAGO:	Be quiet and listen. Look at how quickly and impulsively she fell in love with the Moor from his bragging and tall tales. Do you think she'll keep loving him as he speaks nonsense? How could she possibly enjoy looking at that devil? In time, the heat of romance goes away. One needs certain things to reignite it, such as similarity in age and custom. The Moor has neither of these.	245

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ACT TWO SCENE THREE

[A hall in the castle, festivities. Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA and CASSIO with attendants.]

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OTHELLO: Good Michael Cassio, keep the guard tonight and help the festivities not get out of control.

CASSIO: Iago has instructions. But regardless I'll personally look after it.

OTHELLO: Iago is very honest. [To DESDEMONA] Come, my love. Goodnight all.

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[Exit OTHELLO, DESDEMONA and attendants.
Enter IAGO.]

CASSIO: Welcome Iago, we must to the watch.

IAGO: Not yet, lieutenant, it's not yet ten. Our general wanted us to leave early because of his love for Desdemona. We can't blame him, though. She is beautiful.

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CASSIO: She's young and delicate.

IAGO: And what beautiful eyes! They're provocatively inviting.

CASSIO: Inviting, yes, but she is still appropriately modest.

IAGO: And isn't her voice a beautiful bell?

310

CASSIO: She is quite perfect.

IAGO: Well, I wish them happiness. Come, have a bottle of wine. Here's some Cyprus gentlemen who would love to drink Othello's health.

CASSIO: Not tonight, good Iago. I have very poor tolerance for alcohol. I wish society would invent some other way to celebrate.

315

IAGO: But these are friends. Drink one cup, I'll drink the rest for you.

CASSIO: I have already had a cup tonight, and even that was watered down. Yet look how drunk it has made me.

IAGO: You can't be serious! Tonight is a night of partying. The gentlemen want you to drink. They're at the door. Call them in.

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CASSIO: I'll do it, but I don't want to.

[Exit.]

IAGO: If I can make him drink one more cup he'll be as aggressive and ready to fight as a dog. The lovesick fool Roderigo has drunk tonight to Desdemona, several toasts and he's on guard duty, too. I need Cassio to offend this island. Here they come.

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[Re-enter CASSIO, MONTANO and gentlemen and servants.]

CASSIO: They have already given me a lot to drink.

MONTANO: Only a small cup. Not even a pint.

IAGO: More wine! [Sings] And clink your glasses together, and clink your glasses together, a soldier is a man and a life is only so long so let the soldier drink. More wine, boys!

330

CASSIO: A great song!

IAGO: I learned it in England where they are very good at drinking. They have no problem outdrinking anybody.

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CASSIO: To the health of Othello!

MONTANO: I will drink to that!

[IAGO sings again.]

CASSIO:	Why, this is an exquisite song!	
IAGO:	Would you like me to sing it again?	340
CASSIO:	No, I don't think it is right for us to be doing these things. No more of this. Let's go to the watch. Do not think, men, that I am drunk. Look, this is my ensign, this is my right hand, this is my left hand. I can stand and speak well enough.	
ALL:	Yes, well enough.	345
	[CASSIO <i>exit</i> .]	
MONTANO:	Let's get to the watch.	
IAGO:	You see that man who just left? I'm afraid that Othello trusts him too much and this weakness will be bad for the island.	
MONTANO:	Is he often drunk?	350
IAGO:	Usually before going to bed.	
MONTANO:	It would be good if the general knew about this. Perhaps he doesn't see his evils, only his virtues.	
	[<i>Enter</i> RODERIGO.]	
IAGO:	[<i>Aside to him</i>] Go after the lieutenant, now.	355
	[<i>Exit</i> RODERIGO.]	
MONTANO:	It's too bad that the good Moor should be so risky with his second in command. It would be honest to tell him.	
IAGO:	Not I. But wait, what's that sound?	
	[<i>Cry within, 'Help! Help!' Re-enter CASSIO driving in RODERIGO.</i>]	360
CASSIO:	You villain and rascal!	
MONTANO:	What is the matter?	
CASSIO:	You fool, trying to teach me my duty. I'll beat you.	
RODERIGO:	Beat me?	
CASSIO:	[<i>Shouting</i>] Are you talking, you villain?	365
MONTANO:	Come, you are drunk.	
CASSIO:	Drunk! [<i>He starts fighting</i> MONTANO]	
IAGO:	[<i>Aside to RODERIGO</i>] Go, and shout out that there is a fight. [<i>Exit</i> RODERIGO.]	
IAGO:	Now, good gentlemen, stop, sir, help, someone! stop! [<i>Bell rings</i>] Who is ringing the bell? The whole town will come out. Stop!	370
	[<i>Re-enter</i> OTHELLO <i>with attendants</i> .]	
OTHELLO:	What is the matter here?	
MONTANO:	Oh I am bleeding, hurt to death.	
OTHELLO:	Stop, or your lives will be at stake.	375
IAGO:	Have you all forgotten your sense of duty and honour? Stop, your general is speaking to you.	
OTHELLO:	How did this happen? Do we do what Heaven stopped the Turks doing to us? Someone stop that awful bell. What happened here? Good Iago, you look exhausted and upset. Who started this?	380
IAGO:	I don't know. We were all friends, then swords came out. I wish I didn't have to see this.	
OTHELLO:	What happened Michael, that you forgot yourself?	

CASSIO:	Please forgive me.	
OTHELLO:	Worthy Montano, what happened that you ruin your reputation like this?	385
MONTANO:	Worthy Othello, I am badly injured. It hurts me to talk. Iago can tell you. I have done nothing wrong. It's no sin to defend ourselves from attack.	
OTHELLO:	Tell me how this fighting started. Whoever is proved the offender shall lose my respect. You have created this private fight at night when you were supposed to be on guard. Iago, who started it?	390
IAGO:	I would rather cut my tongue out than speak ill of Cassio. This gentleman, Montano, stepped in to stop Cassio who was following a fellow intent on executing him. I believe Cassio received a cruel insult from the man who fled.	395
OTHELLO:	I know, Iago, that your honest love affects your judgment. Cassio, you're no longer my officer. <i>[Re-enter DESDEMONA.]</i> Look, you have woken my love, I'll make an example of you.	
DESDEMONA:	What happened?	400
OTHELLO:	All is well, sweetheart. Come, love, to bed.	

[MONTANO led off. All exit except IAGO and CASSIO.]

CASSIO:	Reputation, reputation, reputation. I have lost my reputation.	
IAGO:	Reputation is a lazy and fake quality that others impose. There are ways to get back on the general's good side. Go and ask. He will change his mind.	405
CASSIO:	I would rather ask him to hate me than to trick a good commander to allow a worthless, drunken, stupid officer back. Every cup of wine is an evil curse.	
IAGO:	Othello's wife is his general. Tell your story to her and beg her to help you regain your rank. The brokenness between you and Othello can be mended by her.	410
CASSIO:	Early tomorrow I will go to good Desdemona and plead my case. Goodnight, honest Iago. <i>[Exit]</i>	
IAGO:	And who says I am the villain? Two things must be done. My wife must plead Cassio's case to Desdemona and I must make sure the Moor sees Cassio pleading to his wife. <i>[Exit]</i>	415

ACT THREE SCENE THREE

[The garden of the castle. Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO and EMILIA.]

DESDEMONA:	Be certain, Cassio, I will do everything I can.	420
EMILIA:	Please do, madam. I believe it upsets my husband so much, that it seems like it is his case.	
DESDEMONA:	Well, he is a good man. Do not doubt, Cassio, that I will make sure you and my husband become as friendly as you ever were.	
CASSIO:	Good lady, whatever happens to me, I will always be your devoted servant.	425
DESDEMONA:	You do love Othello and have known him a long time. He only stands away from you from political need.	
CASSIO:	Yes, but lady, that political need may go on too long. Or may mean that I'm not missed. Since I am gone and my position taken, Othello will forget about my service to him.	430
DESDEMONA:	Do not think about that. Before Emilia as my witness, I promise you your position, rest assured, Othello shall never gain rest. I	

shall watch him and talk to him until his patience is gone. I will mix everything he does with your case. I would rather die than forget your cause. 435

EMILIA: Madam, here comes Othello.

CASSIO: I will take my leave.

DESDEMONA: No, stay and hear what I will say.

CASSIO: I do not feel comfortable. 440

[Exit CASSIO. Enter OTHELLO and IAGO.]

IAGO: Well, I don't like that.

OTHELLO: What is it?

IAGO: Nothing my Lord.

OTHELLO: Was that Cassio leaving my wife? 445

IAGO: Cassio? He would not leave looking so guilty.

DESDEMONA: My lord. I have been talking with a troubled man who suffers from your anger at him.

OTHELLO: Who are you talking about?

DESDEMONA: Why, Cassio. If I have power to influence you please accept his desire to reconcile. He loves you. His mistakes come from ignorance. Please call him back. 450

OTHELLO: Did he leave just now?

DESDEMONA: Yes. He went away humbled and left some sadness with me. Call him back. 455

OTHELLO: Another time.

DESDEMONA: Will it be shortly?

OTHELLO: Sooner than later since you ask.

DESDEMONA: Perhaps tonight at dinner?

OTHELLO: No, not tonight. 460

DESDEMONA: Please name the time. Do not let it go past three days, because he is truly remorseful. Tell me, Othello, is there anything you could ask me that I would deny you? This is Michael Cassio, he who came with you to woo me many times. Who took your side and defended you. 465

OTHELLO: No more. I'll deny you nothing. Leave me alone for a while.

DESDEMONA: Goodbye, my lord. Come, Emilia.

[Exit DESDEMONA and EMILIA.]

OTHELLO: What do you say, Iago?

IAGO: When you courted Desdemona did Michael Cassio know her? 470

OTHELLO: He did, right from the start. Why?

IAGO: I did not know that he knew her.

OTHELLO: O yes, and he talked to her often.

IAGO: Really?

OTHELLO: Really. Is there something wrong? Don't you think him honest? 475

IAGO: For all I know, my lord.

OTHELLO: You must mean something. I heard you comment as if you did not like it when you saw Cassio leave my wife. Tell me what you thought. I know you are honest and weigh your words carefully before you speak. So your pauses frighten me. 480

IAGO: As for Cassio, I swear I think he's honest. Men should be what they look like. Those not honest shouldn't seem honest.

OTHELLO: Whatever you are pondering, say your worst fears.

IAGO: My lord, I am often suspicious, it is a curse of my character. I imagine problems, create faults where there are none. A man and 485

a woman's reputation is the most worthy part of who they are. If someone steals my money, they steal trash. Whoever steals my reputation takes away something that truly hurts me. My lord, be careful not to fall into jealousy. It is a green-eyed monster who taunts its victim. How horrible for the man who doubts his beloved and still loves her.

490

OTHELLO:

Do you think I will become so jealous and get suspicious? To hear that my wife is beautiful, cooks well, enjoys company, speaks freely sings and dances well ... I will not create a fear or doubt. She had eyes and chose me.

495

IAGO:

I would not want your noble and trusting character to be taken advantage of. So be wary. She already tricked her father by marrying you. I see this has upset you. My lord, I must ask you to stop thinking about this.

[Exit.]

500

OTHELLO:

Iago is honest and speaks wisely. If I find she has been cheating on me ... If she has lied, then God mocks himself, I will not believe it.

EXTRACT 2

Adapted from *The Cat Connection* by Elyse Nass

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The Cat Connection is a play by Elyse Nass (1947–2019), a native New Yorker who championed gender equality and the rights of the elderly in society. This one-act play was first performed in New York in 1988 and was subsequently published in a collection of pieces about elderly people. The extract is from the start of the play.

The Cat Connection is a two-hander between May, a fed-up world-weary woman, and Leona, a highly strung and nervous woman of similar age but with totally different world experiences. The play explores their first encounter.

CHARACTERS:

MAY REYNOLDS, late sixties, looks fed up and tired, a bit on the untidy side

LEONA WOODS, late sixties, highly strung and nervous but keeps herself together very well

[SCENE: A park bench. MAY enters, wearing an old dress. SHE carries a pocketbook and a small paper bag.]

MAY:	[Sits down wearily, then from the paper bag, SHE takes an opened can of cat food, and sets it on the ground, then crumples paper bag and throws it under the bench.] Another day has gone by ... soon another night ... then tomorrow another day ... Are you around, Whiskey? If you are, I got food for you. If you're not, well, that's life ... Here ... [Calling.] Pssss ... Pssss ...	5
	[LEONA enters, dressed very neatly, carrying a purse and shopping bag.]	10
LEONA:	Who are you and what are you doing here?	
MAY:	I can ask you the same questions.	
LEONA:	I heard you calling, "Pssss ... Pssss ..."	
MAY:	I was ... Is that a crime?	
LEONA:	No.	15
MAY:	[Calling again.] Pssss ... Pssss ...	
LEONA:	[Looking at cat food.] So you're feeding a cat?	
MAY:	You gonna arrest me?	
LEONA:	I would like to know what kind of cat you're feeding.	
MAY:	Are you with the police or something?	20
LEONA:	No. I would just like to know if it's – [SHE sets shopping bag carefully on the ground and takes from it a small dish which is covered with a napkin.]	
MAY:	[Interrupting.] What do you have under that napkin?	
LEONA:	[Uncovering it proudly.] Tuna fish. Real tuna fish.	25
MAY:	The kind that humans eat?	
LEONA:	[Sets dish on ground.] That's right.	
MAY:	And you're gonna give it to a cat?	
LEONA:	Yes.	
MAY:	That cat gets cat food tuna fish from me.	30
LEONA:	[Sits close to MAY on bench and folds napkin, places it back in the shopping bag.] Please tell me about the cat you're feeding.	
MAY:	[Inching away.] Why?	
LEONA:	I want to know if it's the same one. Is she a gray and white striped one with a patch of black on her nose?	35
MAY:	These strays look all the same to me	
LEONA:	Does she have very long whiskers?	
MAY:	Lady, I never examined her.	
LEONA:	Does she sometimes take the food with her paw?	
MAY:	[Softening.] Yes.	40
LEONA:	Then we're feeding the same one. Have you seen her?	
MAY:	Not yet.	
LEONA:	How long have you been sitting here?	
MAY:	Not even five minutes when you came along.	
LEONA:	I've never seen you around here before.	45
MAY:	I'm usually around earlier.	
LEONA:	How long have you been feeding her?	
MAY:	I don't know. A couple of weeks.	
LEONA:	It's been nearly two months for me.	
MAY:	That long? [Calling.] Pssss. Whiskey.	50
LEONA:	Whiskey?	
MAY:	That's her name.	
LEONA:	Her name is Cleopatra.	

MAY:	Maybe that's what you call her. To me, she's Whiskey.	
LEONA:	That's not a very dignified name for a cat.	55
MAY:	Oh, pardon me. I forgot this is a royal cat that eats regular tuna fish.	
LEONA:	I give her food that I eat ... Shrimp ... chicken ... white meat only.	
MAY:	What do you know? A high-class cat.	
LEONA:	Cleopatra deserves the best.	60
MAY:	If you think she's so special, why don't you just take her home?	
LEONA:	I can't just yet. She's pregnant.	
MAY:	Pregnant? I thought she was just a fat cat.	
LEONA:	I took her to the vet to make sure. He said within the next week, which means any day now – she'll have a litter – between six and twelve kittens.	65
MAY:	No kidding?	
LEONA:	I can't bring her home now because I already have four cats.	
MAY:	Four?	
LEONA:	Yes. Charlemagne, Catherine the Great, Queen of Sheba and James the Tenth.	70
MAY:	What a group!	
LEONA:	They're darling. Did you know that our sixteenth President, Mr. Abraham Lincoln, had four cats in the White House?	
MAY:	Are you thinking of running for President?	75
LEONA:	No. I'm just telling you a little-known fact about cats. They're appreciated by some of the most powerful people throughout history.	
MAY:	Well, you learn something new every day ... <i>[Pause.]</i> I don't know why you just don't bring that pregnant cat home. Think of all your power with twelve more cats.	80
LEONA:	My cats would resent Cleopatra. They have their own territory. Besides, they all have very sharp claws ... It's not a good idea now. But I have her future all mapped out.	
MAY:	You do?	85
LEONA:	After Cleopatra has her kittens, I have arranged for a couple who takes care of strays to house all of them. After a month, I will take Cleopatra home with me.	
MAY:	You got the whole thing planned out?	
LEONA:	Yes.	90
MAY:	I couldn't stand to have one cat in my house. I don't like them creeping around. I get the chills.	
LEONA:	It doesn't sound like you like cats very much. Why are you feeding this one?	
MAY:	Oh, just to pass some time. Cats are all right as long as they're not in my house.	95
LEONA:	<i>[Calling.]</i> Here ... Cleopatra ... please come here.	
MAY:	Maybe she's mad at you.	
LEONA:	For what? She knows when I come around. She's used to this place, at this time. She knows my scent. Maybe she's not coming around because you're here.	100
MAY:	Nah ...	
LEONA:	I've been feeding her regularly at this time.	
MAY:	You act like she can tell time or something. Cats are real dumb and not too loyal. I heard about this eighty-year-old woman who had a cat for years. One day she just forgot to feed it and the cat came after her at night, clawed her to death in her sleep.	105
LEONA:	I don't believe it.	

MAY:	It's the truth. So watch out for your group at home and this one too.	110
LEONA:	[Pause.] She must be confused seeing two people here at once.	
MAY:	You see Whiskey?	
LEONA:	Cleopatra may see us.	
MAY:	If she was around, she'd be out here. She'd smell the food. Maybe she had her kittens somewhere and you'll never find out where.	115
LEONA:	Would you mind leaving?	
MAY:	This is a public place and a free country.	
LEONA:	I know.	
MAY:	No, you don't, because you're telling me to leave.	120
LEONA:	Only for Cleopatra's good. What I'm saying is that I have her food. Stop by later.	
MAY:	No. I'm gonna sit right here.	
LEONA:	Why do you insist on being so stubborn?	
MAY:	I was here first.	125
LEONA:	Yes, you were.	
MAY:	So if anybody should leave, it should be you.	
LEONA:	I will not.	
MAY:	Why don't you stop making a big deal out of this? Either that cat will come around or it won't.	130
LEONA:	What do you mean by that?	
MAY:	It has nothing to do with me being here.	
LEONA:	I'm not so sure. There's a shyness about her, a coyness. She seems to be saying, "I don't want to be around more than one person in my condition."	135
MAY:	She told you that?	
LEONA:	Yes.	
MAY:	Lady, if you tell anybody that, they'll think you're crazy.	
LEONA:	She didn't actually speak to me.	
MAY:	That's good to know.	140
LEONA:	Her eyes told me. I never saw anything like it before. The way she looks at me. I could read her mind. More than any other cat I know. Cleopatra knows that I realise it. Her beautiful yellow eyes know I understand everything.	
MAY:	I wouldn't go around telling that to people.	145
LEONA:	When she sits in my lap, I can feel a certain connection. I feel so calm. My blood pressure goes down. It has wonderful healing powers.	
MAY:	It's a stray, that's all. It looks like a million other cats. Nothing special, no powers. A cat is a cat, nothing more. Those stripes, those eyes, those whiskers ... I can't tell the difference.	150
LEONA:	How can you say something like that? You've been feeding her a few weeks.	
MAY:	So?	
LEONA:	After all that time, you'd think you'd know the difference.	155
MAY:	What's the big deal?	
LEONA:	Don't you find Cleopatra very appreciative when you feed her?	
MAY:	That's for sure. It licks my leg and purrs in my face.	
LEONA:	Of course, she's very grateful to you and me. Animals are more appreciative than people. I learned that a long time ago. They will never disappoint you but people will. One time when I was a young woman, this teenager came over to me and asked me to help her make a phone call from a phone booth, so I did. The	160

MAY:	next thing I knew was my pocketbook was gone and so was she. From that time on, I never trusted people, put all my faith in cats. Maybe you're right but I can't get excited over the cat the way you do.	165
LEONA:	[<i>Impatient.</i>] Where is she? Why isn't she here by now?	
MAY:	Maybe she met with foul play.	
LEONA:	Foul play?	170
MAY:	She could have run into a German shepherd.	
LEONA:	Oh no!	
MAY:	Or it could have been hit by a car.	
LEONA:	I'd never forgive myself. Why don't you stop this?	
MAY:	Take it easy, it's only a cat.	175
LEONA:	She won't disappoint me. I'll just apply some more perfume. My scent will be stronger. [<i>Takes small perfume bottle out of purse and dabs some on.</i>]	
MAY:	What's that stuff?	
LEONA:	It's called <i>Breathless Power</i> .	180
MAY:	You're not kidding!	
LEONA:	Cleopatra knows my scent and she'll be around.	
MAY:	I'm sure that will bring her out from anywhere.	
	[<i>THEY wait.</i>]	
LEONA:	I also have her flea powder. [<i>Puts perfume back in purse, and then takes a can of flea powder from her shopping bag.</i>]	185
MAY:	[<i>Aghast.</i>] Flea powder? She's got fleas? I'm not gonna touch her anymore.	
LEONA:	Don't be silly. Every few days I rub it all over her. [<i>Indicates powder.</i>] Then she sits right in my lap. She likes to be stroked around the neck.	190
MAY:	The pleasure is all yours.	
LEONA:	[<i>Putting powder back in shopping bag.</i>] She's not picking up on my perfume. I'm going to look for her. Do me a favour? Wait right here. [<i>Rises.</i>]	195
MAY:	Now you don't want me to leave?	
LEONA:	Maybe she'll come out when I'm gone. If you leave, I'll never know. Please do me this favour.	
MAY:	[<i>Reluctant.</i>] All right, I'll stay.	
LEONA:	[<i>Taking out "cat treats" from shopping bag.</i>] Thanks. Now if she comes out just give her one of these cat treats ... [<i>Hands them to MAY.</i>] to keep her attention. I'll be right back. [<i>SHE exits.</i>]	200
MAY:	[<i>Looks at cat treats, rises and calls.</i>] Whiskey ... here ... Whiskey ... some goodies for you. But don't come too close. [<i>Looks in shopping bag, takes out rubber ball.</i>] Do you want to play, huh? Or are you having your kittens somewhere? All twelve ... You're missing out on some very good tuna fish. All right, be that way. [<i>Puts ball and "cat treats" back in shopping bag.</i>] Whiskey, you know, in spite of the fact that you're a bad cat, you help me forget. [<i>Sits, takes out a pint whiskey bottle from her pocketbook, takes several swigs, then puts it away.</i>] Ahh ... that really hits the spot. [<i>Now SHE begins to act silly.</i>] Oh, you bad, bad cat ... Come out, wherever you are ... Heh ... Heh ... Red light, green light ... boo ... [<i>Rises, moving around.</i>] Oh, cat ... Please come out ... We're going crazy waiting for you ... Yoo-hoo ... Where are you hiding? If you come out, you will get a whole bag full of goodies ... I'll count to ten ... 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 ... Cat, the water-rat ... the	205
		210
		215

	fat cat ... fat cat, bad cat, spat cat ... And now 1. Did you hear that, Whiskey, now 1? I've counted to ten, come out now ... or else you won't get all your goodies ... Drat on you, you flea-bag cat ... <i>[Dances around.]</i>	220
LEONA:	<i>[Re-enters.]</i> I didn't have any luck ... so many bushes ... I don't know where to begin. <i>[Now staring at her.]</i> Just what are you doing?	
MAY:	What does it look like I'm doing? I'm doing a dance so that Whiskey will come out ... Whew ...	225
	<i>[SHE feels dizzy. LEONA helps her to sit down and sits down herself.]</i>	
LEONA:	Are you okay?	
MAY:	Just a little dizzy. But I feel great!	230
LEONA:	<i>[Taken aback.]</i> You smell of whiskey.	
MAY:	Nah.	
LEONA:	You do.	
MAY:	So I took a little nip, that's all.	
LEONA:	It smells like more than a nip. Now I understand why you named her Whiskey.	235
MAY:	Whiskey the cat makes me feel a little better. And whiskey the drink does too.	
LEONA:	You shouldn't drink.	
MAY:	I'm a big girl. I'm over twenty-one.	240
LEONA:	That's beside the point. It'll get you sick.	
MAY:	One sip here and there –	
LEONA:	Leads to more.	
MAY:	Why don't you just mind your own business?	
LEONA:	I'm trying to be of some help.	245
MAY:	Go help your cat.	
LEONA:	I couldn't find her. I'm so upset.	
MAY:	You're gonna give yourself a stroke over an alley cat. Who told her to get pregnant?	
LEONA:	She couldn't help it.	250
MAY:	I have no pity for her. Hundreds of cats roaming around, getting pregnant, every day and night.	
LEONA:	I'm beginning to think she has given birth somewhere. I'll never know where. So many bushes in the park.	
MAY:	What are you gonna do?	255
LEONA:	What can I do? I just feel very guilty. I should have taken her in.	
MAY:	How can anybody get so upset over an animal? I could see if it's a person. <i>[Pause. SHE curls up on bench.]</i>	
LEONA:	Don't fall asleep here.	
MAY:	I'm tired.	260
LEONA:	Maybe you should just go home.	
MAY:	I don't want to go home right now. I'll just watch the TV. And that makes me more lonesome. It's not the same anymore. Nothing is the same anymore.	
LEONA:	What do you mean?	265
MAY:	<i>[Sits up.]</i> Since he left.	
LEONA:	Who?	
MAY:	Wally, he was my husband. Three weeks ago, he walked out on me ... Ever since then, I'm not feeling so good. I went walking a lot ... And I sat in this park ... I heard this cat meowing ... I felt sorry so I brought her food. She licked me. I felt better. And	270

	I showed up the next day and the very next day after that ... Somebody was waiting for me ... Now the dirty cat is gone. I don't think that cat will come back.	
LEONA:	Don't say that.	275
MAY:	Face it. Just like I know Wally's never coming back. <i>[Pause.]</i> He ran away. Three weeks ago, I come home and there's this note pasted to the refrigerator. It says, "May, I can't take this marriage anymore." Now, mind you, the man is seventy-three years old. Well, I couldn't believe it. We're married fifty years. I checked his clothes. They were gone. His suitcase was gone. Next thing I looked at was our bankbook but nothing was taken out. I called the police. I thought he was kidnapped or something. No trace of him. Then a week later, I get this letter from Hawaii. It was from him. He wrote and told me the whole story. He was planning to leave me from the day he married me.	280
LEONA:	What?	
MAY:	Yeah, imagine him planning it all along. He was getting ready for his late-life crisis for years.	
LEONA:	I'm sorry this happened to you.	290
MAY:	You know what the sly devil did? He had his own bank account. For fifty years since we were married, he would go to the bank and deposit one dollar, just one lonesome dollar a day. And it added up over the years. So now he's in Hawaii. I should have known he was up to something. When he'd see pictures of Hawaii in the magazines, he would say, "May, that's paradise. I want to live in paradise before I pass on." I bet he's walking around with those funny-looking things you wear around your neck and those flashy-coloured shirts.	295
LEONA:	Oh my! I never heard anything quite like this.	300

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