*Othello* Act 4

Close Reading Guide

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| **Directions: Answer the following questions fully and in complete sentences to receive credit.** |

**Scene 1:**

1. How does Iago manipulate the situation with Cassio and Othello?

2. In Scene 1, when Othello falls into an epileptic trance, Iago repeatedly refers to illness and madness. Find three of these references and explain how they emphasize and explain the change in Othello.

3. Compare how Cassio treats Bianca and how he speaks of her when she is not present. What can you infer about Cassio’s change in behavior?

4. In lines 170-205, Othello fluctuates between thinking of Desdemona’s good qualities and being angry at her betrayal. How do you explain these two conflicting feelings in Othello?

5. Othello decides to kill Desdemona with posion, but Iago convinces him to kill her in another way. Why?

6. Who is Lodovico and what news does he bring with him? What is Lodovico’s reaction to what he witnesses between Othello and Desdemona? What does this tell you about Othello and his reputation?

**Scene 2:**

1. What questions does Othello ask Emilia and how does she respond? Why do you think Othello does not believe her? If he doesn’t believe her, why does he even bother asking her of her opinion?

2. How would you describe Othello’s state of mind in Scene 2 when he speaks to Desdemona in private? How does he respond to Desdemona’s expressions of innocence?

3. How do you feel about Othello’s behavior in this scene? Should he be blamed for it, or is it all Iago’s fault?

4. What does Emilia say has happened to Othello? What kind of irony is this? What can you infer about Emilia based on her observation?

5. Find an example of the motif of *appearance vs. reality in* Iago and Roderigo’s conversation at the end of the scene.

6. What does Iago convince Rodrigo to do?

**Scene 3:**

1. In the final scene, how does Emilia function as a foil, or contrast, to Desdemona? Name three ways.

2. Desdemona is shocked and saddened by Othello’s accusations. In what other ways might an innocent wife respond to a jealous husband’s false accusations? How does Emilia respond?

3. Now that Iago’s plan is fully in motion, make your predictions for the ending of the play. How will events turn out? Who will die? How will they die? Will Iago be able to extricate himself, or will he be caught in the end?