

Characters for the play *Othello*

OTHELLO – major role; must be a Black male actor; fight scenes

A Moor (an African), a general in the defense forces of the city state of Venice. His successful profession brings him high status in Venice, but his foreign origins and color separate him from those with whom he lives and works. He is a military man, with a reputation for courage in battle and good judgment in military matters. Othello falls in love and marries Desdemona, but during the campaign against the Turks, Othello is tricked by Iago into believing that his wife has been unfaithful with his lieutenant, Cassio. Iago works on Othello's personal and social insecurity until Othello believes the combination of Iago's lies and flimsy circumstantial evidence. Inflamed with jealousy, he smothers Desdemona in her bed, only to find out too late that he has been misled and has killed the woman who loved him faithfully. In despair, he kills himself. -

IAGO – cast – Carter Calahan

Othello's ancient (captain) in the Venetian defense forces. He had hoped for promotion, but Othello passed over him in favor of Cassio, and Iago works revenge on them both. He exploits Roderigo as a source of money and an unwitting accomplice in his plot to bring down Othello. When finally cornered and charged with his wickedness, Iago refuses to speak or to repent or explain his actions, and he goes to his punishment still surrounded by mystery.

DESDEMONA – major role; female ; sings

A noble Venetian lady, daughter of Brabantio. She organizes her life intelligently and shows courage, love, and loyalty in following her husband into danger. She accompanies Othello to Cyprus on the campaign against the Turks but finds him becoming distant and making wild accusations against her. She firmly believes that he will see that she is true to him, but when she realizes he is about to kill her, she can only feel despair and grief. She dies declaring her love for him.

CASSIO – a major role; young athletic; fight scenes

Othello's lieutenant in the Venetian defense forces. Cassio accompanied Othello as his friend when he was courting Desdemona. He is popular, he speaks well, and he is lively and trusting. Iago eventually convinces Othello that Cassio is Desdemona's paramour. Cassio is appointed governor of Cyprus after Othello's death.

RODERIGO – supporting role; fight scenes

A Venetian nobleman in love with Desdemona. He has more money than sense and pays Iago to court Desdemona on his behalf. Iago, playing on Roderigo's hopes and gullibility, continues to help himself to Roderigo's money, and Roderigo never gets his heart's desire. Iago involves Roderigo in an attack on Cassio, for which Roderigo pays with his life, as Iago kills him to ensure his silence.

EMILIA – supporting role; female; older than Desdemona

Desdemona's lady-in-waiting and Iago's wife. She knows Iago better than anybody else and is suspicious of his actions and motives. She does not realize until too late that the wicked person who has poisoned Othello against Desdemona is Iago, her own husband.

BIANCA – supporting role; female; sexy; pretty

A courtesan (prostitute), in love with Cassio. She is skilled in needlework and agrees to copy the handkerchief that Cassio gives her; then she throws it back at him, believing it is the token of his new love.

MONTANO – minor role

Othello's predecessor as the governor of Cyprus. He is Othello's friend and loyal supporter.

LODOVICO – minor role

Desdemona's cousin. After the death of Desdemona, Lodovico questions Othello and Cassio together, thus revealing the truth.

GRATIANO – minor role

Brabantio's brother. He and Lodovico find Cassio wounded after Roderigo stabs him in the drunken brawl.

BRABANTIO – minor role

A Venetian Senator, Desdemona's father. He is angry at his daughter's choice of husband but can do nothing once the marriage has taken place, and the Venetian Senate has accepted it. He warns Othello that Desdemona is a clever deceiver.

THE DUKE OF VENICE – minor role

The leader of the governing body of the city state of Venice. The Duke appoints Othello to lead the forces defending Venice against the Turkish attack on Cyprus; he also urges Brabantio to accept his daughter's marriage.

FIRST SENATOR - bit role

SECOND SENATOR- bit role

FIRST GENTLEMAN - bit role

SECOND GENTLEMAN - bit role

THIRD GENTLEMAN - bit role

FOURTH GENTLEMAN - bit role

SAILOR - bit role

FIRST OFFICER - bit role

FIRST MUSICIAN - bit role

SECOND MUSICIAN - bit role

CLOWN - bit role

MESSSENGER - bit role

Ensemble no lines - Servants, Attendants, Officers, Musicians