IAGO
Think, my lord!

OTHELLO
Think, my lord!
By heaven, he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?
And when I told thee he was of my counsel
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!'
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,
Show me thy thought.

IAGO
My lord, you know I love you.

OTHELLO
I think thou dost;
And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just
They are close delations, working from the heart
That passion cannot rule.

IAGO
For Michael Cassio,
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

OTHELLO
I think so too.

IAGO
Men should be what they seem;
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

OTHELLO
Certain, men should be what they seem.

IAGO
Why, then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

OTHELLO
Nay, yet there's more in this:
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,
As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts
The worst of words.

IAGO
Good my lord, pardon me:
Though I am bound to every act of duty, 
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to. 
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;

40 As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure, 
But some uncleanly apprehensions 
45 Keep leets and law-days and in session sit 
With meditations lawful?

OTHELLO
Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago, 
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear 
A stranger to thy thoughts.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Explore the significance of this scene in contributing to our understanding of the nature of Othello and Iago's relationship at this point in the play.

- Consider the use of techniques such as irony, imagery and tone.
IAGO
Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:
But he that filches from me my good name
Robbs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed.

OTHELLO
By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

IAGO
You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

OTHELLO
Ha!

IAGO
O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

OTHELLO
O misery!

IAGO
Poor and content is rich and rich enough,
But riches fineless is as poor as winter
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

OTHELLO
Why, why is this?
Think'st thou I'd make a lie of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love or jealousy!
GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Explain the importance of this scene as a turning point in our understanding of the character of Othello.

- How is the change in his character revealed through language?
OTHELLO
That is a fault.

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,

'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made gift of it, my father's eye

Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling like your precious eye;
To lose't or give't away were such perdigion

As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA
Is't possible?

OTHELLO
'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it:
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

DESDEMONA
Indeed! is't true?

OTHELLO
Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA
Then would to God that I had never seen't!
OTHIELLO
Ha! wherefore?

DESDEMONA
Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

OTHIELLO
Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA
Heaven bless us!

OTHIELLO
Say you?

DESDEMONA
It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHIELLO
How!

DESDEMONA
I say, it is not lost.

(Continued/....)

OTHIELLO
Fetch't, let me see't.

DESDEMONA
Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit:
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

OTHIELLO
Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

GUIDING QUESTIONS
• Discuss what is revealed about Othello and Desdemona's states of mind at this stage in the drama.

• Discuss the contribution of imagery and other literary devices to the shaping of our response to the characters and themes of the play.
DESDEMONA

Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?
If haply you my father do suspect
An instrument of this your calling back,
Lay not your blame on me: If you have lost him,
Why, I have lost him too.

OTHELLO

Had it pleased heaven
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head.
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
I should have found in some place of my soul
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me
A fixed figure for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at!
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life;
The fountain from which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads
To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,—
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

DESDEMONA

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

OTHELLO

O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

DESDEMONA
Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

**OTHELLO**

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,
Made to write ‘whore’ upon? What committed!
Committed! O thou public commoner!
I should make very forges of my cheeks,
That would to cinders burn up modesty,
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!
Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets
Is hush’d within the hollow mine of earth,
And will not hear it. What committed!
Impudent strumpet!

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

- Discuss what is revealed about Othello and Desdemona’s states of mind at this stage in the drama.

- What is significant about Shakespeare’s use of imagery?
OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,—

Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!—

It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;

Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,

And smooth as monumental alabaster.

Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.

Put out the light, and then put out the light:

If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,

I can again thy former light restore,

Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,

Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,

I know not where is that Promethean heat

That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,

I cannot give it vital growth again.

It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.

Kissing her

Ah balmy breath, that dost almost persuade

Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.

Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,

And love thee after. One more, and this the last:

So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep.

But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;

It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

OTHELLO

Ay, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA

Will you come to bed, my lord?

OTHELLO

Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?
DESDEMONA
Ay, my lord.

OTHELLO
If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Sollicit for it straight.

DESDEMONA
Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?

OTHELLO
Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No; heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.

DESDEMONA
Talk you of killing?

(Continued/...)

OTHELLO
Ay, I do.

DESDEMONA
Then heaven
Have mercy on me!

OTHELLO
Amen, with all my heart!

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Discuss what this extract reveals about Othello's motivation in killing Desdemona.

- What does Shakespeare's use of language contribute to the tone, tension and dramatic impact of the scene?
OTHELLO
Soft you; a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
5 Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
10 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
15 And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him, thus.

Stabs himself

LODOVICO
20 O bloody period!

GRATIANO
All that's spoke is marr'd.

OTHELLO
I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this;
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

Falls on the bed, and dies

CASSIO
This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;
25 For he was great of heart.

LODOVICO
[To IAGO] O Spartan dog,
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;
30 Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,
For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor,
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!
35 Myself will straight aboard: and to the state
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

Exeunt

Turn over for Guiding Questions
GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What does this extract contribute to our understanding of the characters of Othello and Iago and their respective roles in the drama?
- How does the language and imagery in particular shape our response to the characters and themes?