

EMILIA

Madam, here comes my lord.

CASSIO

Madam, I'll take my leave.

DESEMONA

Why, stay, and hear me speak.

CASSIO

Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,
Unfit for mine own purposes.

DESEMONA

Well, do your discretion.
Exit CASSIO

Why is Cassio so anxious to leave? HOW should he leave? His posture? His tone of voice?

Picture this scene – Desdemona and Emilia on one side of the stage, Othello and Iago entering from the other. They walk as they talk.

Enter OTHELLO and IAGO

IAGO

Ha! I like not that.

OTHELLO

What dost thou say?

IAGO

Nothing, my lord: or if--I know not what.

OTHELLO

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

IAGO

Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming.

OTHELLO

I do believe 'twas he.

DESEMONA

How now, my lord!

I have been talking with a suitor here,
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

OTHELLO

Who is't you mean?

DESEMONA

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,
If I have any grace or power to move you,
His present reconciliation take;
For if he be not one that truly loves you,
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,
I have no judgment in an honest face:
I prithee, call him back.

OTHELLO

Went he hence now?

DESEMONA

Ay, sooth; so humbled
That he hath left part of his grief with me,
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

OTHELLO

Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

DESEMONA

But shall't be shortly?

OTHELLO

The sooner, sweet, for you.

DESEMONA

Shall't be to-night at supper?

OTHELLO

No, not to-night.

DESEMONA

To-morrow dinner, then?

OTHELLO

I shall not dine at home;
I meet the captains at the citadel.

DESEMONA

Why, then, to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:
I prithee, name the time, but let it not
Exceed three days.

How should Iago say this? Does Othello actually hear him? How do we know? Is it important?

How would you direct Iago to deliver these lines?

Othello knows it was Cassio – why does he ask? And how would you direct Othello to speak here?

How should Desdemona and Othello move here in relation to each other? Is she circling him? Is he turning away to show apparent lack of interest? What tone of voice does she speak in? She's nagging, of course, but how would you show this? The scene seems playful but there is a dreadful irony below the playfulness – Desdemona is digging her own grave. How would you show this if you were directing?