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**Schrijver**       Dood Paard  
**Titel**           Bye-Bye (Othello - adaptation for two men)  
**Jaar**            2011  
**Uitvoering**      

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The Othello in this booklet is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s text. This adaptation / translation was made for the performance of Bye Bye, by the Dood Paard theater company, which had its Dutch-language premiere in the spring of 2011.

The main idea behind the adaptation was that it was to be performed by two actors. In the course of our work on it, we were particularly struck by the brilliant dialogues between Iago and Othello, which form the core of the play. We began by translating those parts first and then, like ripples fanning out from a stone tossed into a pond, added those scenes which we felt were needed to create enough context to understand the main characters’ motives or, just as often, to simply gaze on them in amazement.
In translating Shakespeare’s texts into Dutch, we went in search of an idiom that would combine immediacy with poetry. As with all of Dood Paard’s Shakespeare translations, we did not attempt to follow the metric pattern of the original. Nevertheless, the tone and color of the word and the rhythm of the sentence have been granted an importance equal in full measure to the meaning of the text itself.

The English version of our adaptation was done by prize-winning translator Sam Garrett. In it he has transposed the play of lightness and earnest, of humor and tragedy, into a beautiful text which does full justice to our original while bearing a highly personal stamp of his own.

Kuno Bakker and Gillis Biesheuvel
Dramatis personae

RODERIGO

JAGO

OTHELLO

DESDEMONA

EMILIA
I

act I-1

RODERIGO You must be joking.
Iago! What am I supposed to think?
I give you all my money
and still don’t have a clue.

IAGO Jesus Christ.
Listen to me.
I find this baffling as well.
Disgusting.

RODERIGO I mean
you do hate him, don’t you?
IAGO That’s putting it mildly.
Three people, all three of them with clout
lobbied personally on my behalf
to make me his lieutenant.
I know what I’m worth
and what I deserve.
But arrogant and self-satisfied as he is
he brushes them off
with some cock-and-bull story
full warlike rhetoric
and in the end he sends them packing.
‘Actually,’ he says
‘I’ve already picked my lieutenant.’
And who do you think that was?
Actually, some number-cruncher
by the name of Michael Cassio
from Florence, of all places
who knows of war
mostly what he reads in books.
Much wind but little lightning.
But he got the job.
And I
who he saw fight in Rhodes and Cyprus
against Christian and heathen alike
am written off
at the expense
of a walking balance sheet.
An accountant he chooses
to be his lieutenant
and I, for Christ’s sake
the standard bearer to
His Royal Swarthiness.
RODERIGO I’d rather be his ax man.
IAGO What do you expect?
The system’s rotten to the core.
Promotion goes by way of a word put in
and not, as before
by seniority
by standing in line and waiting your turn.
Judge for yourself, then what Othello is in my eyes.

RODERIGO Then I wouldn’t work for him.

IAGO Don’t you worry about that.

I work for him in the service of myself.

Were I Othello, I’d think twice before cuddling up to Iago.

And should my acts ever betray my inner motives

I soon will find my heart lying in my hand as food for ravens.

I am not what I am.
act 1-2

IAGO Although I’ve killed my share
of men at war
I’m not in favor of cold-blooded murder.
I should probably be less scrupulous.
I felt like puncturing Brabantio
like an overblown balloon.
OTHELLO It is good that you did not.
IAGO Hmm, it wasn’t easy.
But listen, are you two really married?
For Brabantio has connections and
will force you to annulment
or riddle you with plaints
and bend the law
until it meets his ends.

Othello  Let him try.

My reputation will see to it
that his charges are dismissed.

If need be
I’ll brag about my royal lineage.

You know, Iago

if I didn’t love Desdemona so much
I’d trade in this hominess in an instant
for the jewels of distant shores.

What are those torches?

Iago  That is the father, out for blood

    with his howling band of buddies.

Go inside quickly, my lord.

Othello  Not me

    let them find me.

My deeds, my rights and my uprightness
will absolve me of all blame.

Are you sure it’s them?
RODERIGO Iago.

IAGO Who’s there?

RODERIGO What must I do now?

IAGO Go to bed and go to sleep.

RODERIGO I’m going to drown myself
   on the spot.

IAGO If you do that
   I’ll never talk to you again.
   You idiot.

RODERIGO Idiocy is living on
   when living is a torment.
   Dying is the medicine prescribed to us
   when death is our doctor.
IAGO Your clichés are deadlier by far.
I’ve been around the block a few times Roderigo
and since the day I learned the difference between
happiness and pain
I have never met a man
who knew how to love himself.
I’d rather be a baboon
than drown myself over some chickadee.

RODERIGO What am I to do?
I’m ashamed to be in love like this
but I have no power to change a thing.

IAGO No power?
No power in your pants, you mean!
We ourselves decide who or what we are.
Our body is a garden, our will the gardener.
And the question is
will we grow nettles, or will we sow lettuce
plant sage and harvest thyme?
Do we choose a single herb
or do we go for variety?
Do we opt for laziness
or do we wield the hoe?
It’s our will that decides.
If life’s scales
did not weigh reason against urge
our passion and filthy nature
would move us
to the most perverse of deeds.
But we have understanding
to rein in our impulses
our fleshly lusts and unbridled randiness.
From which I deduce that what you call love
is only a bad case of crabgrass.

RODERIGO Nothing could be less true.

IAGO Aw, your lust whines
and your will surrenders.
Come on, be a man.
Drowning is for kittens and for puppies.
I am your friend
and I bind myself with bonds of steel
to that which you have coming.
Never could I help you better than now.
Cash in your holdings.
Go off with them to war.
And paste a beard
on that sweet puss of yours.
See to money, I say.
Desdemona won’t stay in love
with that camel jockey
not for long
– see to money –
nor he with her.
It was a flame that flared up
and will gutter just as quickly
See to money, I say.
These Arabs are always in for something new.
Bring all the money you have.
The food that tastes as sweet
as honey to him now
will soon turn bitter as black tea.
She’ll have to trade him in
for something younger.
When she tires of his body
she’ll see the error of her ways.
She’ll trade him in. For sure.
So see to money.
If you need to waste yourself, well then
choose something more elegant
than drowning –
Gather all the money you can.
A cold day in hell
it will be when some little sacrament
and the brittle vows between
a wandering Berber
and a highly discerning Venetian dame
can keep you from enjoying her favors.
Go get your money.
Drowning is for wets.
Better to gag with pleasure
at the end of your rope
than to wear cement overshoes
and so miss paddling in her wading pool.

RODERIGO And you
will you stick out your neck for me
if need be?

IAGO Have I ever failed you?
Come on, get your money.
I said it once
and I’ll say it again:
I hate that Berber.
It is whispered that he
between my very own sheets
has performed duties reserved for me.
I don’t know if it’s true
but my suspicion
tells me so
and prompts my hand.
So I have reason enough to hate
and you not a jot less.
Let’s work together.
You make him wear the cuckold’s horns
have your fun, and let me have my way.
Hurry now, scrape up some cash.
Tomorrow more of this.
Bye bye.
RODERIGO See you.
IAGO And not another word of drowning, hear?

RODERIGO I am a changed man.

IAGO Get moving, see you then.

And bring enough cash.

RODERIGO I' ll sell all that I hold.
IAGO Come here.
If you are brave, listen to me now.
Tonight Cassio stands guard.
And you know
that Desdemona’s stuck on him.
RODERIGO On him? Preposterous.
IAGO Sssh.
She fell head over heels for that Arab
with his big talk and his whopping lies.
But is she going to stick
with that mythomaniac?
You don’t believe that, do you?
Looks do count, after all.
How much pleasure could she derive from his sooty face?  
Once the sporting’s over and the blood has cooled  
only beauty, compatibility in age behavior and appearance  
– all things that Berber lacks – can ignite the fire of lust once more.  
Her sensitive little self will feel misused and be revolted by the Arab.  
Nature will force her to choose anew.  
And who but Cassio will seize the prize?  
A mover and a shaker, concerned above all with seeming reasonable and civilized in the service of his goatish lusts.  
Besides, he’s young and cute that’s why the sweet thing already has her eye on him.
RODERIGO I can’t believe that.

She’s a pious girl.

IAGO A pious pussy, you mean.

Her wine is from no different grapes than any.

Were she so pious
she never would have gone for that Berber.

A pious little twat.

You saw for yourself
how she diddled with his fingers?

RODERIGO Of course

but that was pure politeness.

IAGO Pure randiness

which promises little piety.

But listen

I brought you here from Venice

and ask that you now stand guard

along with Cassio
who doesn’t know you from Adam.
See if you can piss him off
by speaking loudly
or questioning his competence
or somesuch.

RODERIGO Good.

IAGO He’s hot-tempered
and quick to take offense.
And might even strike you
with his pikestaff.
Get him to do that.
It’s enough
to make the Cypriots rise up in arms
and force him to resign his post
in order to restore the island’s peace.
That will pave the way for your desires
and give me the proper means
to reach our end.
RODERIGO I will do so, if I’m able.

IAGO Of course you’re able.

I have to bring his bags ashore now.

Adieu.

RODERIGO Bye bye.

exit Roderigo

IAGO I believe

that Cassio is truly mad about her.

And she him.

That Berber, I hate to say

is level-headed, loving and loyal

and will, I think

be a good husband to Desdemona.

I too have my eye on her

but not purely out of lust

no, more out of vengefulness

for I suspect our horny Arab

has been riding my little pony
and the thought alone
devours me from the inside out.
Nothing will heal my heart
but to make him pay
woman for woman.
Or else I’ll pour that Berber full of a jealousy
from which no man can recover.
Young Cassio is going to take some knocks
and rightly so
for I fear that Cassio, too
has blown his nose in my pillow.
desdemona Be certain of this, Cassio
that I shall do for you
all that lies within my power.
Do not doubt it for a moment.
Your rank will be restored.
Be sure of that
when I commit to something
I keep on to the bitter end.
Othello shall not rest.
I’ll keep him awake till he concedes
and talk at him till he surrenders.
His bed will be a blackboard
his table a witness stand.
At everything he does I shall bring up
Cassio’s plight.
Rest assured, Cassio
for I, your counsel, would rather die
than surrender your case.

exit Cassio and Desdemona

enter Othello and Iago

IAGO Hmm, don’t like the looks of this.

OTHELLO What did you say?

IAGO Nothing. At least… No, forget it.

OTHELLO Was that Cassio I saw bid farewell to my
wife?

IAGO Cassio?

But why would he sneak away
when he saw you?

So guiltily.

OTHELLO I think it was he.

enter Desdemona
DESIDEMONA Hi, love.
I was just approached by a man
whose spirit groans
beneath your disapproval.

OTHELLO Who’s that?

DESIDEMONA Your lieutenant, Cassio.
Listen, if my charm or influence
means anything to you
Then give him back his job, okay?
For truly, if he does not love you
and it was not by accident
but purposefully
that he did any wrong
than I don’t know who to trust anymore.
Please, take him back on.

OTHELLO Did I just see him on his way out?

DESIDEMONA Indeed
and he was so deeply shaken
that he left a portion of his sorrow behind, with me, and now I feel it too.
Take him back on.

Othello Not now, Desdemona
some other time.

Desdemona But soon then.

Othello For you, my sweet, as soon as I can.

Desdemona Tonight, at dinner?

Othello No, not tonight.

Desdemona Tomorrow lunch, then?

Othello I won’t be coming home for lunch.
I have a meeting with the officers by the wall.

Desdemona Tomorrow night, then?

Or else Tuesday morning?
Tuesday afternoon, or evening?
Let’s say Wednesday morning.
Please, tell me when
but make it no longer than three days.
Really, he is sorry.
And a little slip-up like that
– except perhaps in war, I suppose –
can hardly be a violation
calling for such punishment.
When can he come by?
Tell me, Othello.
I seriously ask myself
what you could ask of me
that I would deny
or at which I would protest.
Listen! Michael Cassio helped you
to win my heart.
And each time I spoke badly of you
he sprang to your defense.
Is it so hard to give him back his job?
I would –
Othello Hush now –
He may come when he feels like it.
I can refuse you nothing.

**desdemona** Wait a minute
I’m not asking you for a favor.
It’s more like reminding you
to wear your gloves
or eat a balanced meal
or put on your warm coat
or not to drink too much
before taking to horseback.
No, if ever I ask you for something
on which our love depends
be sure it will be something big
and important
and hard to say yes to.

**otello** I can refuse you nothing.
But if you don’t mind
I need to be alone.
DESDEMONA And what if I refuse?

Only kidding.

Bye, sweetie.

OTHELLO Bye, Desdemona

I'll be there in a bit.

DESDEMONA Follow your heart

and whatever you do

I'm still your woman.

OTHELLO Delicious imp.

I am lost if I stop loving you

And if I stop loving you, I am lost.

exit Desdemona

IAGO Commander-in-chief

of the armed forces...

OTHELLO Excuse me?

IAGO Did Cassio actually know

you were in love with her?

OTHELLO Yes, of course.
Why do you ask?

IAGO Just checking, to see if I was right.

No further harm.

OTHELLO No further harm?

What was on your mind?

IAGO That he didn’t know her yet, back then.

OTHELLO Yes, he did.

He was always running back and forth
with letters.

IAGO Really?

OTHELLO Really?

What do you mean, really?

Is there anything wrong with that?

Can’t he be trusted?

IAGO Trusted?

OTHELLO Trusted?

Yes, trusted, that’s what I said!

IAGO As far as I know for a certainty.
Othello But what do you think?

Iago What I think?

Othello What I think?

You sound like a goddamn echo.

Stop playing peek-a-boo!

Some gruesome monster’s hidden away here
and you don’t want to show me.

Something’s going on.

‘I don’t like the looks of this.’

That’s what you said just now
when Cassio took leave of Desdemona.

What looks didn’t you like?

And when I told you how he helped me
win her heart

you shouted ‘Really?’

Deep grooves appeared on your brow
as if some terrible idea

was locked up in there.
If you love me, speak your mind.

IAGO You know that I do love you.

OTHELLO I think you do.

I know you have a big heart
that you are true as true can be
and that you weigh your words.
But that’s precisely why this stammering
alarms me.

A cheat would do that on purpose
but coming from an honest man
these are signs of a heart
choking on its own decency.

IAGO Really

Michael Cassio

I think

is honorable.

OTHELLO I think so too.

IAGO One is what one seems.
What you are not, you mustn’t seem.

**Othello** Indeed, you are what you seem.

**Iago** That’s why I think

that Cassio is honorable.

**Othello** No, there’s something else.

Come on, tell me what you think.

What’s going on inside that head of yours?

Pull no punches, use the worst of words

to ventilate the worst of thoughts.

**Iago** I’m sorry.

I am bound by duty

but even a slave can’t be forced to do that:

to speak his thoughts.

For what if they are mean and false?

Even the finest house can have a grubby sink

the purest heart at times impure motives.

**Othello** You betray your own friend

when you think he’s being deceived
and say nothing.

IAGO Listen, Othello

sometimes I get things all wrong

I tend to look for treachery everywhere

I’m suspicious

sometimes for no good reason

So please

don’t heed my shaky accusations

or let my vague and sloppy observations

ruin your good spirits:

it wouldn’t be good for your peace of mind and

welfare

or my own self-respect and credibility

were I to say what I am thinking.

OTHELLO For God’s sake, man!

What are you talking about?

IAGO A good reputation

is the rock beneath my character.
He who steals my money
steals worthless scrap
‘tis nothing, ‘tis nothing
it once was mine and now it’s his
and before him
it belonged to a whole crowd of others –
Yet he who filches my reputation
makes himself no richer
but me all the poorer.

Othello  Jesus, tell me what’s on your mind.
Iago  No. Even if my heart lay in your hand.
     As long as it is mine to guard, I say nothing.
Othello  Ha.
Iago  Beware of jealousy
     that green-eyed monster.
     That feeds itself laughing
     on its victim’s heart.
A cheated man who knows it
and loves no more is lucky.
But it is a blade twisted in your heart
if you love deeply and yet you doubt.
When you suspect, loving all the while.

Othello Hideous.

Iago To be poor and content
is to be a wealthy man.
But wealth is bitter as the greenest gall
when you’re afraid to lose it.
Good God, spare the hearts of my friends from jealousy.

Othello Why – why are you saying this?
Do you believe I wish to live with jealousy
just to see a new suspicion wax and wane
with every new phase of the moon?
No: to doubt once is to be sure forever.
I’d be a nincompoop
to worry about the sort of
ghost-stories 'round the campfire
that you are telling me.
I will not be jealous
if you say my love is lovely
well-rounded
easy to get on with
frank in her ways
that she sings and dances and plays well:
that makes a pretty thing only prettier.
Though I have faults of my own
I will not let the fear
that she might be untrue
drive a ring through my nose.
She had eyes in her head
and she chose for me.
No, Iago
I must see before I doubt
and if I doubt, then proof
and with proof:
farewell love, farewell jealousy.

IAGO What a relief!
Now I know that I can speak my heart.
Listen.
I say nothing yet of proof.
But watch Desdemona
when Cassio is by her.
Look without jealousy
but with discernment.
It would be too bad if your goodness
were to be abused by your indulgence.
Take care.
I know our country.
In Venice they display pranks to heaven
that they wouldn’t show at home.
Their conscience never says:
do not
but
do not let it be known.

**Othello** Do you mean that?

**Iago** She deceived her father

when she chose for you.

For when she seemed to shiver

and shake at the sight of you

she was, in fact, all googly-eyed.

**Othello** True enough.

**Iago** That’s what I’m saying.

If she can fake at such a tender age

so well that her father walks straight into it

like an open man-hole –

He thought there was sorcery at play.

But I should be ashamed of myself.

Forgive me, please.

I favor you too much, that’s all.
OTHELLO I'm eternally in your debt.

IAGO I see this comes as quite a blow.

OTHELLO No, not at all.

No.

Absolutely not.

IAGO Well, I'm afraid it does.

I hope you realize that
I'm saying all this out of love.

I see that you are moved.

But please, don't take my words
out of context.

It is suspicion, nothing more.

OTHELLO I won't do that.

IAGO If you did

my words could have a hideous effect
unintended.

Cassio's a dear, dear friend and –

Othello, I see that you are moved.
OTHELLO  No, not really moved.
I believe that Desdemona has been true.

IAGO  Long may she remain so
and long may you continue
to believe so.

OTHELLO  But still
once nature slips the leash –

IAGO  Yes, that’s the point.
I’ll put it rather bluntly:
not to give in to the many advances
from men of her own background
of the same color skin
and the same social class
to whom one feels attracted by nature –
Do you catch my drift?
Such unnatural behavior
would almost seem proof
of an obsessive itch for decadence.
Don’t misunderstand me
I’m not talking specifically about her
though once her common sense awakes
I fear she’ll compare you
with her countrymen
and feel regret.

othello All right, all right already.
Go now.
Keep me posted.
Ask your wife Emilia to keep her eyes peeled.
Leave me now, if you will, Iago.

iago Then leave I shall.

exit Iago

othello Why has she chosen me as her own?
That faithful talkbox knows more
sees more, thinks more, much more
than he lets on.

enter Iago
IAGO Othello, please, just let it go.
   Time will do its work.
Of course Cassio must regain his rank
he is extremely suited for it
but if you can delay it a little while
you can plumb his soul
and his intentions too.
Watch Desdemona
see if she pleads on his behalf
and, above all
with how much force and passion.
From that you can learn a great deal.
And meanwhile realize
that I allow my fears to lead me
– a thing I fear with reason –
   and believe in her innocence, please.
OThELLO I’ll watch myself.
IAGO Then now I’m really off.
exit Iago

OTHELLO  There’s a man you can count on.
Sharp as a tack
when it comes to what makes people tick.
If indeed she proves to be a rutting filly
I’ll cut the reins and leave her
to her fate.
At a gallop. Trot trot. Tick-tack.
And gone she’ll be.
Perhaps because I’m black
and not as suave as these armchair generals
perhaps because time’s gravity
has made me droop
– still, not too shabby if you ask me –.
Whatever the case, I’ve been deceived
and retch at the thought of her.
What a relief!
Being in a relationship is such a curse.
I can say: she’s mine.
But her desires are not.
I’d rather be a warded toad
in the corner of some dank basement
than leave a little chunk of my beloved
to someone else.
That’s the shitty thing about success.
When you fall
you fall farther than the fools below.
It can’t be helped. Like death and taxes.
A man-child born
is a man-child born with horns.

enter Desdemona

DESDEMONA Hi, sweetheart.
Those friendly islanders are waiting for you
In the banquet hall.

OTHELLO How thoughtless I have been.

DESDEMONA Why do you sound so glum?
Aren’t you feeling well?

otello This stabbing feeling in my forehead here and here.

desdemona Not enough sleep it will go away.

Tie my kerchief ’round your head. It will be gone within the hour.

otello It is too small a thing. Leave it.

Come, let us go in.

desdemona I’m sorry you’re not feeling well.

exit Othello and Desdemona

enter Emilia

emilia What luck that I have found this kerchief!

Her first present from Othello.

My husband – who must be off his nut –
has begged me a hundred times
to steal it
but she holds it so dear
and promised Othello not to ever lose it
that she carries it with her always.
First I’ll have a copy made
and give that to Iago.
I don’t know what he plans to do
but why not humor him?

进入Iago

IAGO Hey, whoa!

What are you doing here alone?

EMILIA Stop sneaking up on me!

I have something for you.

IAGO What kind of something?

Something sweet?

EMILIA Wha?

IAGO Or something dirty?
EMILIA Christ, man.

What would you give me for that kerchief?

IAGO What kerchief?

EMILIA What kerchief?

Why

the kerchief Othello gave to Desdemona
and that you keep asking me to steal.

IAGO Did you steal it?

EMILIA No, she dropped it by accident.

And I found it by accident.

Look, here it is.

IAGO Ah, good girl!

Give it here.

EMILIA What do you plan to do with it

that you wanted me to steal it so badly?

IAGO What business is that of yours?

EMILIA If it’s not for something useful

then give it back.
Desdemona will go mad if she loses it.

IAGO It is none of your bee’s wax.

I can put it to good use.

Bye bye.

For as my grandma always said:
‘dangerous conceits
are in their natures poisons
which at the first are scarce
found to distaste
but, with a little act upon the blood
burn like the mines of sulphur.’

exit Emilia

enter Othello

Oh look, my friend is back.

Opium or valium
or all the Rohypnol in the world
won’t procure him the sweet, silly sleep
of which he drank so deeply only yesterday.
OTHHELLO Oh. Faithless.

She.

Me.

Oh.

IAGO Come, come, Othello.

Knock it off.

OTHHELLO Go away.

Vanish.

You have put me on the rack.

No, I swear to God

I’d rather be cheated on a thousand times

than know it once.

IAGO What’s all this about?

OTHHELLO What did I know

of her secret slutty rendezvous?

I saw nothing, thought nothing

knew no pain
I slept well every night, ate well
I whistled while I worked.
Cassio’s kisses I never tasted on her lips.
If I am robbed, but miss nothing
then don’t tell me
and I have not been robbed.

**iago** A terrible thing to hear.

**otello** The whole army
as far as I’m concerned
the cannon fodder too
may bend her to its will
as long as I know nothing.

Gone, forever, my peace of mind
gone too my happiness.
Gone, the saber’s rattle and grandeur of war
that lend ambition its sheen.
Oh, gone, my snorting steed
my blaring trumpet
stirring drum-roll
keening fife
proud banner and gone the whole shebang
the pride, the glint of sun on steel
iron discipline of the deadly war machine.
Screaming as one voice
to drown out the thunder.
Gone: Othello is unmanned.

IAGO I don’t understand!?

OTHELLO Rat-fucker.
Prove that she’s a whore
Show me, I must see it with my own eyes.
Or I’ll gut you like a mackerel.

IAGO Have we sunk so low?

OTHELLO Show me.
Prove it beyond a reasonable doubt.
Or you are dead meat.

IAGO Listen, please, dear friend..
othello  If you besmirch her and torture me
   forget then all forms of mercy.
Worse than this defies all thought
were you to gas and burn a continent.
iago  My God. I’m speechless.
   Are you human?
Have you a heart and reason?
So fire me.
I am an idiot.
My honesty turns against me.
Hideous world.
Look, look then, world!
It is dangerous to be open and frank.
Thanks for sharing.
The love for my friend I banish now
for that love has led to this shame.

othello  No, stop
   you must be honest.
IAGO  I must be sensible.
   To be honest is to be dumb.
   You destroy that
   which you would have saved.

OTHELLO  I don’t know what to think;
   Desdemona is true and she is not.
   You are honest and you are not.
   I must have proof.
   Her name, so unblemished as Diana’s visage
   is now besmeared and black as my own face.
   As long as rope or knife, poison, fire
   or a roaring river still exist
   I cannot bear this.
   I must be sure.

IAGO  I see this passion eats away at you.
   I’m sorry if I insinuated a thing.
   You want to be sure?

IAGO And can.

Be that.

But how?

How can one be sure?

By peeping at her like some little pervert?

While she does the dirty deed?

OSWELL Death! Death! Death!

IAGO T’would be a fair chore, I suppose
to trick them into that.

They’d have to be insane
to diddle each other
with someone else around.

What then? What now?

What shall I say?

Where must we find certainty?

You’ll never get to see that
not even if they were lewd as goats
randy as baboons
horny as bitch-wolves in heat
and reckless as a pair of drunken trolls.
But if eyewitness accounts and hearsay
– which tell a truth of their own, my lord –
can grant you certainty, then you’ll have it.

Othello  Give me proof of her adultery
open and shut.

Iago  It’s a hard task you give me.

But now that I have wandered
down this road
due to my own stupid honesty and love
I shall not turn back.

Not long ago I slept over at Cassio’s:
I had a toothache and barely caught a wink.
And you know, you’ve got these people
who blather in their sleep
– Cassio is one of those.
In his sleep I heard him say:

‘Sweet Desdemona
we must take care and hide our love.’

And then he seized my hand and squeezed it
groaned: ‘Cara mia’
and kissed me on the lips
he almost sucked my tongue out by the root threw
his leg over mine
and sighed, and kissed
and then cried out: ‘why, oh why
did that barbarian have to find you first!’

OTHELLO Oh. Hideous. Most hideous.

IAGO Listen, it was only a dream.

OTHELLO But one which speaks
of previous experience.

IAGO Yes, even though it was a dream
it does make them look rather guilty
and might support evidence
otherwise too scanty.

OTHELLO I shall tear her to pieces.

IAGO We must control ourselves.
We haven’t seen anything yet
she may be faithful – still.
But tell me
have you ever seen that kerchief of hers?
The one with the strawberries on it?

OTHELLO Seen it!?
It was I who gave it her, my first gift of love.

IAGO Could well be
but I saw Cassio with just such a kerchief
– I know for sure it was the one she wears –
using it to wipe his beard.

OTHELLO Be that the one –

IAGO Be that the one, or another of hers –
With the evidence we have
it speaks against her.

OTHELLO I wish
that slave had forty-thousand lives.
One is too little
too meager for my vengeance.
Now I know for sure.
Look here, Iago
all the vain love I had
is blown to kingdom come.
Bye bye!
Black vengeance
rear your head from deepest hell
love, surrender your crown and throne
to a hate without mercy.
Heart, burst beneath the weight
of this poisonous cargo.

IAGO Try to stay calm.
OTHELLO  Blood, blood, blood.

IAGO  Calm down, I tell you
perhaps you’ll change your mind.

OTHELLO  Never, Iago, never.

I am a sea where the tide never turns.
My murderous thoughts roll in
like pounding waves
never to recede
and will allow no love to mingle
with the current
until a ruthless vengeance
has calmed the surf.
I swear with all I have.

IAGO  Don’t get up yet.

Bear witness
eternal glowing coals above
forces of nature
that surround us witness this

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that Iago hereby places head and hands and heart in the service of the cuckold Othello. In heartfelt empathy I shall obey even the bloodiest of commands.

Othello Thank you for your friendship. It means everything to me. And I shall put you to work at once: within three days I want to hear from you that Cassio is asleep in Jesus.

Iago My friend is no more. What’s done is done – at your request, of course. But pray, let her live.

Othello God’s wounds! The cunning bitch. God’s wounds, I say! Come with me.
I’m off to think about the best way
I can finish her off.
You’re my lieutenant now.

IAGO  Always at your service.
desdemona Where could that kerchief be?
emilia I don’t know, Desdemona.
desdemona I would rather have lost my purse, I tell you.
Good thing Othello is sure of himself and not the jealous kind.
Otherwise he’d flip his lid.
emilia Is he not jealous?
desdemona Who, he?
No, that subtropical sun burned it right out of him.
emilia Look, here he comes.

enter Othello
DESDEMONA This time I won’t let him go.
Fetch Cassio.
How are you feeling, Othello?

OTHELLO Fine.
And you?

DESDEMONA Fine.

OTHELLO Give me your hand.
This palm is moist.

DESDEMONA Yet still young and free of care.

OTHELLO All indications of a full and generous heart.
Hot, hot and sopping wet!
This hand of yours calls for strict restraint for fasting and prayer
a thousand lashes
godly devotion
for here we have
a young and sweaty devil
who rails against heaven.
It is a pretty hand.
A hand that’s free.

**Desdemona**  And you should know
for it was this hand that gave you my heart.

**Othello**  An open hand.
Once you gave your hand with all your heart
today your hand, but not your heart.

**Desdemona**  I don’t get it.
Come now, your promise.

**Othello**  Which promise was that, pussycat?

**Desdemona**  I’ve called for Cassio
that you might speak to him.

**Othello**  My nose is runny and my gullet
raw and burning as the gates of hell.
Could I borrow your kerchief?
DESDEMONA Of course.

OTHELLO No, the one I gave you.

DESDEMONA I don’t have it with me.

OTHELLO You don’t have it with you?

DESDEMONA No, I really don’t.

OTHELLO Ooooh, that’s bad news!

My mother received it from a man of Egypt.

And it has special powers:

as long as you keep it

you stay in love with the one who gave it.

But lose it or give it away

and disaster pounces.

DESDEMONA Is that possible?

OTHELLO Of course.

It has magic powers.

It is dyed in mummy juice

squeezed from the hearts

of a thousand virgins.
DESDEMONA No kidding?

OTHHELLO I kid you not.
   So take good care of it.

DESDEMONA If only I had never had it.

OTHHELLO Ha. And why is that?

DESDEMONA Why do you sound
   so strange and excited?

OTHHELLO Is it lost? Is it gone?
   Tell me, has it disappeared?

DESDEMONA What’s all this about?

OTHHELLO What’s that?

DESDEMONA It is not lost
   but even if it were, what then?

OTHHELLO What?

DESDEMONA It is not lost, I’m telling you.

OTHHELLO Fetch it then, show it to me.

DESDEMONA Okay, but not right now.
   This is some trick, to avoid what I’m asking.
Please, take Cassio back on.

Othello Fetch the kerchief

I am getting dizzy.

Desdemona Come on

you’ll never find a man as capable.

Othello The kerchief.

Desdemona Please

I want to talk about Cassio.

Othello The kerchief.

Desdemona A man

who’s built his career on love for you

fought beside you –

Othello The kerchief.

Desdemona Really

you’re being unreasonable.

Othello Goddamn.

Emilia And you’re saying

this guy’s not jealous?
DESDEMONA I’ve never seen him like this before.

EMILIA Men are like stomachs and we their food.
They gobble us down greedily
And when they’re full
barf us all over the street.
IAGO  Do you really think so?

OTHELLO  Do I think so, Iago?

IAGO  So what
   a little kissing behind the curtains?

OTHELLO  Kissing is not allowed.

IAGO  Or lying around naked with her friend
   for a couple of hours in bed
   with only the best of intentions.

OTHELLO  Naked in bed, Iago
   with only the best of intentions?
   That is slapping the devil in the face.
   To do a thing like that with good intentions
is like asking Satan to deliver cupcakes in heaven.

**IAGO** But if they don’t do anything then you could turn a blind eye? Look, if I give my love a kerchief –

**OTHELLO** Then what?

**IAGO** Well, then it belongs to her. And if it’s hers she may, methinks give it to another man.

**OTHELLO** Her virtue is hers as well: may she surrender that too?

**IAGO** Her virtue is made of stuff invisible many possess it who don’t have it at all. But, okay, a kerchief like that –

**OTHELLO** Jesus, I wish I had forgotten.

You said – it’s as though a raven were picking at my memory –
you said he had my kerchief.

IAGO Yes, but so what?

OTHELLO It doesn’t sound too good.

IAGO If I were to say

that I had seen him make a fool of you?

Or heard him say

– the way that braggarts can’t shut up

after they’ve hopped some easy piece of fluff –

OTHELLO Did he say something?

IAGO Oh, did he!

But, believe me

nothing he won’t deny right away.

OTHELLO What did he say?

IAGO God, that he – I don’t know.

That he –

OTHELLO What? What?

IAGO Lay.

OTHELLO With her?
IAGO With her, on top of her, as you like.

OTHELLO Lay with her? Lay on her?
Lay, lay, she was laid, she lied!
Lay on her!

Christ, the obscenity –
Kerchief. Confession. Kerchief. –
Confess and then hang him for his troubles.
First hanged and then confessed.
I’m shaking like a leaf.

This gloom’s a sign
that my fears are justified.
It’s not the words that make me shake.

Arggh.

Noses, ears and lips.
It can’t be true?

faints

comes to
IAGO Are you okay?
Did you fall down, go ‘boom’?

OTHELLO Are you ridiculing me?

IAGO Ridiculing you?
No, of course not.
I was wishing you’d shoulder your problems like a man.

OTHELLO A man with horns
is a monster and a beast.

IAGO Then our city streets are full of beasts
and many monsters walk about in suits.

OTHELLO Has he confessed?

IAGO Come on and be a man!
 Forget not that every male with stubble
groans beneath the same burden.

Millions lie at night ’twixt sheets
befouled by others.

You’re in better shape than that
yet still it remains an infernal joke: 
there in your safe bed
suspecting nothing
to kiss the lips of your adulteress.
No, I need to know
so that I know what I am
and what she shall become.
Othello Well put, well put indeed.
Iago Wait.
A little exercise in patience here.
While you were lying in a swoon –
not really, excuse me
a sign of much manhood –
suddenly Cassio was standing here.
I shooed him away
came up with a plausible excuse
for your weakness
and asked him to come back later for a talk.
Which he promised.

Hide yourself and witness the condescending and mocking look upon his face.

For I shall have him tell again the whole story start to finish

where, in what position, how often, how long and when

He did the deed with Desdemona

and will do it again.

Pay careful attention to his attitude.

And please, control yourself

try not to act like some sentimental baby.

Othello Listen, Iago.

I shall apply my patience most craftily

But also – hear me well – most bloodily.

Iago Sounds good to me, Othello.

But all things in moderation.

Go now and hide.
Iago talks to Cassio sneeringly about his favorite whore. But Iago makes Othello believe that Cassio is talking about Desdemona.

Othello How shall I kill him
let me count the ways!

Iago Did you see him smirk
over his own dastardly deed?

Othello Iago.

Iago And did you see the kerchief?

Othello Was it mine?

Iago Absolutely yours.
And how he sang her praises
that foolish woman, your beloved.
She gave it to him
and he gave it to his favorite whore.
OTHELLO I'll kill him slowly for nine long years.

Sweetest, lovely, pretty wife.

IAGO You must forget her.

OTHELLO Yes, may she rot and burn and return to hell this night her life is over.

No, my heart has turned to stone it pains me to touch it.

There is no lovelier creature in all this world:

in bed with an emperor she orders his comings and goings.

IAGO No, you're going about this all wrong.

OTHELLO She shall hang I'm only telling you how she is:

she is a cunning seamstress a virtuoso with her instrument.
The way she plays the flute
would tame the wildest bear.
With so much skill and fantasy.

IAGO That only makes it worse.

OTHELLO A thousand times worse
a thousand times.
And really, such a willing character.

IAGO Ready and willing, yes.

OTHELLO No, indeed.
It is such a pity, Iago –
Oh, Iago, such a pity, Iago.

IAGO If you can’t help but drool
over her immoral acts
then let her go about her business
for if it doesn’t hurt you
who does it hurt?

OTHELLO I’ll saw her into pieces.
Would she make me a cuckold!? 
IAGO  It’s not very nice of her.

OTHELLO  With Cassio, my lieutenant.

IAGO  Adding insult to injury like that.

OTHELLO  Bring me poison, Iago

this very night.

I shall not lay everything on the table
lest her beautiful body
make me change my mind.

Tonight, Iago.

IAGO  Not with poison, no!

Strangle her in bed –
that same bed she’s befouled.

OTHELLO  Good, yes, justice.

A nice touch, that. Very well.

IAGO  And leave Cassio to me.

Tonight you shall hear more.

OTHELLO  Excellent, good.
OTHELLO So you have never seen a thing?
EMILIA No never heard a thing
nor ever suspected her.
OTHELLO Yes you did, you saw Cassio –
together with her.
EMILIA Never did I see anything improper
and I could hear every word they said.
OTHELLO You mean, they never whispered?
EMILIA Never.
OTHELLO Or sent you away?
EMILIA Never.
OTHELLO To fetch her fan, her glove
her mask or something?
EMILIA Neve.

OTHELLO That’s strange.

EMILIA I’m sure she’s faithful really.

If you think otherwise then chase that thought away for it infects your heart.

If some lecher has whispered this in your ear then he deserves the worst of punishments.

OTHELLO Ask her to come here.

Hurry up.

exit Desdemona

She says all kinds of things.

But she’s still a brothelkeeper who hides her dirtiest tricks beneath the flat rock of appearance.

And meanwhile Desdemona acts like the holy Virgin Mary herself.

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87.
enter Desdemona

Desdemona Othello, what is it?

Othello Please, darling, do come here.

Desdemona What’s up?

Othello I want to see your eyes

look at me.

Desdemona Why are you acting so creepy?

Othello One of your duties, Emilia

is to leave the copulators alone

behind closed doors

to cough or clear your throat

– ‘uh-hum’ –

when someone’s coming.

Get to work, get to work. Go.

exit Emilia

Desdemona What on earth

are you talking about?

I understand the anger in your words
but not the words themselves.

**Othello** Say it. What are you?

**Desdemona** Your wife, my sweet.

   Your faithful, loving wife.

**Othello** Come, swear by it

   and curse yourself.

So the Devil knows

who’s waiting for him

and isn’t fooled by your angel face.

Curse yourself twice over.

Swear that you’ve been true.

**Desdemona** I am that, and that is enough.

**Othello** You are that, yes

   untrue as all hell.

**Desdemona** With whom?

   With whom, tell me?

   How have I been untrue?

**Othello** Ah, Demon-ah, Desdemona
Be gone, be gone, be gone.

**Desdemona** Oh terrible day.

Why are you weeping?
Am I the cause of those tears?
Do you believe that my father
is behind your reprimand?
Then do not put the blame on me.
If he casts you away
then me he casts away as well.

**Othello** If I were faced with evil days
if disease and scandal
were heaped upon my head
were starvation to stare me in the eye
and I myself and all my hopes
be taken prisoner
then I would have found
one drop of patience in myself.
But to be pointed out for all time
as the brunt of the joke!
Yes, even that I could bear
very well in fact, quite well.
But to have that place
where I have kept my heart
where I live or where I die
the source from which my life’s stream flows
or otherwise falls dry –
to be evicted from that place
or have it made a cesspit
for the spawning of filthy frogs.
Oh, now your cheeks have lost their glow!
Patience, young angel with your rosy lips
yes, now your gaze is grim as hell itself.

Desdemona I hope you know
that I’ve been faithful.

Othello Oh yes, faithful
as flies on meat at noon’s hot hour
that mount each other soon
as they are hatched.
Noxious you are
a weed seeming lovely and aromatic
that pricks and stings the senses.
I wish that you were never born.

DESSDEMONA Christ, could it be
that I have done something terrible
without knowing about it?

OTHELLO Could this white page be made
to scribble ‘whore’ upon?
Done something.
Done?
Poxie whore!
Done something.
The moon eclipses in shame.
Even the riotous wind hides away
in the deepest grottos and plugs its ears.
Done something!
Shameless slut.

**desdemona** Now you’re going too far.

**othello** Are you no slut, then?

**desdemona** No, I don’t suppose I am.

If guarding this body against advances on behalf of the man I love makes me no slut then I am not.

**othello** What? Not a whore?

**desdemona** No, by all that I hold dear.

**othello** How can that be?

**desdemona** This is too pathetic.

**othello** I'm so very sorry.

For a moment there I thought you were that cunning whore from Venice who married Othello.
You.

Madam.

Who guards the ports of hell – you, yes, you.

Here’s where we get off.

And here’s money for your pains.

So lock the door and seal your lips and keep Desdemona here.
Othello watches Desdemona sleep

Othello It is her crime
her crime, my God
I will not speak the words
oh stars in all your purity
it is her crime.
Still, I shall not shed her blood
or cut into her snow-white skin
smooth as marble.
Yet die she shall
or other men she will betray.
Put out the light and then put out the light.
If I snuff out your flame, good candle
and then regret my act
I can give you back your light.
But you, most perfect act of Nature
if I put out your light
I do not know where I can find
Prometheus’ fire
to make you flame again.
If I pick a rose
it does not bloom on
but withers.
Unpicked I revel in your smell.
Sweet breath
that almost breaks in two the sword of justice.
Once more, and once more.
Once you are dead, you must remain so:
I slay you, and love you still.
Once more.
The final time.
So sweet yet oh-so deadly.
I must weep.
But the tears I shed are cruel.
My pain is great.
I punish because I love.
She’s waking up.

**Desdemona** Who are you? Othello?

**Othello** Yes, Desdemona.

**Desdemona** Are you coming to bed dearest?

**Othello** Have you washed yourself?

**Desdemona** Yes, my love.

**Othello** If there is any crime of which you’ve not come clean then purify your conscience too.

**Desdemona** What do you mean by that darling?

**Othello** Just do it

And make it quick.
I’ll wait over there.
I will not kill you unprepared
no, for God’s sake
I would not kill your soul.

**Desdemona** Did you say ‘kill’?

**Othello** You heard me right.

**Desdemona** My God.

**Othello** Amen is all I’ll add to that.

**Desdemona** But if you say that
you will not kill me.

**Othello** Hmm.

**Desdemona** Still, you’re scaring me.

When you look at me
with that murderous gaze.

I don’t know why I should be afraid
for I have done no wrong.

But still, I’m scared.

**Othello** Reflect on the error of your ways.

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desdemona  My only error is
to love too much.

othello  Yes, and for that you must die.

desdemona  That is unnatural
to kill for having loved.

Why are you chewing on your lip like that?
A fire is raging inside you
you’re shaking like a leaf.
It’s a sign of something
but I hope
I hope
it doesn’t point to me.

othello  Peace, be still.

desdemona  Okay.

So tell me: what’s going on?

othello  The kerchief that I found so fair
and gave to you
you gave to Cassio.
Desdemona No, I swear.

Bring him here, ask him yourself.

Othello Sweet angel, beware

beware of perjury.

You’re lying on your deathbed.

Desdemona Me?

But not to die already.

Othello Yes, any moment now.

So confess your sins most freely

for denying every charge I make

will not foil or undo my plan.

You must die.

Desdemona O, my God

have pity on me.

Have pity on me, Othello.

I have never done you wrong

never loved Cassio as anything more

than a good friend
never given him anything precious.

**OTHELLO** Goddamn it

I saw my kerchief in his hand.

Liar, you turn my heart to stone

and make a murder out of what I meant

to be a sacrifice.

I saw that kerchief.

**DESDEMONA** He must have found it.

I never gave it to him.

Bring him here

and let him tell you himself.

**OTHELLO** He has already told all.

**DESDEMONA** What?

**OTHELLO** That he has known you.

**DESDEMONA** What? In the Biblical sense?

**OTHELLO** Yes.

**DESDEMONA** He would never say a thing

like that.
OTHELLO  Indeed, he will never say a thing again.
    My friend Iago has seen to that.

DESDEMONA  Is that true?
    Is he dead?

OTHELLO  If he had lives like hairs on his head
    my vengeance would have plucked them
    one by one.

DESDEMONA  He has been led into a trap
    and I am lost.

OTHELLO  Drop dead, whore
    crying your eyes out over him
    here, in front of me?

DESDEMONA  Send me away
    but don’t kill me.

OTHELLO  Lie down, whore.

DESDEMONA  Let me live tonight
    murder me tomorrow.

OTHELLO  If you put up a fight...
DESDEMONA Just half an hour longer.

OTHELLO I have begun
and there is no stopping me –

DESDEMONA A final prayer, please.

OTHELLO Too late.


he kills her

EMILIA Othello, Othello.

Open up.

Othello, Othello.

OTHELLO Who shouts there?

EMILIA Open up. Othello. Othello.

OTHELLO Who is it?

EMILIA Oh, Othello

I have to talk to you.

OTHELLO It’s Emilia.

Hold on.
EMILIA Please, I have to talk to you.

Oh, Othello.

OTHELLO I’m coming, Emilia.

enter Emilia

Where are you?

What’s going on here anyway?

EMILIA A most hideous murder has been performed.

OTHELLO What? Just now?

EMILIA Yes, just now.

OTHELLO It is the moon’s fault.

She approaches the earth too close and drives men mad.

EMILIA Cassio has killed Rodrigo.

OTHELLO Rodrigo, dead?

And Cassio, dead?

EMILIA No, Cassio is not dead!

OTHELLO Cassio not dead?
Emilia sees the dead Desdemona

EMILIA Who did this?

OTHELLO No one, I did.

How could she be killed?

EMILIA Yes, who knows?

OTHELLO It wasn’t me.

She cheated on me, she was a whore.

EMILIA You’re lying.

You’re mad.

OTHELLO She was a snake in the grass.

EMILIA And you a wolfman, gory with blood.

She was faithful as a puppy.

OTHELLO She and Cassio were bumping uglies.

Ask your husband if you don’t believe me.

Hang me high from the rafters of hell

if I had no good reason

to apply this sanction most extreme.

Your husband knows everything.
EMILIA  My husband?

OTHELLO  Your husband.

EMILIA  That she was cheating on you?

OTHELLO  Yes, with Cassio.

Or else I would never-ever-ever

have done such a thing.

EMILIA  My husband?

OTHELLO  Yes, he was the first to tell me.

Honest as he is

he cannot bear the sickly smell

of pitiful fiddling about.

EMILIA  My husband?

OTHELLO  Why do you keep asking me that?

Your husband, yes.

EMILIA  My husband said she was cheating?

OTHELLO  That’s him.

That’s what I said, your husband.

Don’t you know the word?
My friend, your husband.
The most honest and upright Iago.

EMILIA If he says that
may his limbs rot one by one.
He’s lying through his teeth
his nose, his ears.
She was wild about that filthy Arab.

OTHELLO What!

EMILIA Do to me whatever you like.
You are not worthy of heaven.
And you are not worthy of her.

OTHELLO Shut your goddamn face, woman.


What you have done –
I'm not afraid of your sword –
I'll scream it all over the place
even if you kill me twenty times.

Help, help, ho, help.
This ape has murdered my Desdemona.
Murder. Murder.

*enter Iago*

Good going, Iago
letting murderers lay the blame on you.
If you’re a man, then say he’s lying.
He claims you said
that Desdemona was untrue.
I know you didn’t do that
you’re not that mean.
Say it.

My heart is breaking.

*Iago* I told him what I thought.
I told him nothing more
than what he himself saw
as being true.

*Emilia* But did you ever tell him
that she was untrue?
iago Yes.

emilia You lied.

A hideous lie.

A lie, a cruel, cruel lie.

She, cheating with Cassio?

Did you say it was Cassio?

iago With Cassio, yes.

Come on now, shut your mouth.

emilia No, I will not shut my mouth.

I have to speak.

Desdemona lies here in bed murdered.

And your lies lay behind that murder.

Cruel, cruel, cruel.

I’ve got it now

– it stinks to high heaven –

oh, cruelty.

I figured as much.
I shall do myself in.
Oh, cruel, most cruel.

IAGO Have you gone mad?
Hurry up, go home.

EMILIA Not much chance, Iago
of me ever going home again.

OTHELLO Oh, oh, oh.

EMILIA Yes, fall to your knees
and scream as you like.
For you have taken the dearest
purest thing there is
and murdered it.
*Othello* premiered as *Bye Bye* on the 8th of March 2011 at the Frascati Theater, Amsterdam

with:

Kuno Bakker
Gillis Biesheuvel
Chaib Massaoudi

[www.doodpaard.nl](http://www.doodpaard.nl)
Toneelgezelschap Dood Paard (Amsterdam, 1993) is a theater collective consisting of Kuno Bakker, Gillis Biesheuvel, Marten Oosthoek, Raymond Querido, René Rood and Manja Topper. Dood Paard has in the past translated and adapted a number of Shakespeare’s plays, including *Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Troilus en Cressida.*
Translator and writer Sam Garrett (1956) is an American who currently divides his time between Amsterdam and the French Pyrenees. As well as work by Arnon Grunberg and Tommy Wieringa, he has also translated books by Tim Krabbé, Geert Mak and Frank Westerman.

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616) was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world’s pre-eminent dramatist. His surviving works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.
Toneelwerk

Tragedies

*The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus* – 1593/1594
*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* – 1595/1596
*The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* – 1599
*The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* – 1600/1601
*The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice* – 1604
*The Tragedy of King Lear* – 1605
*The Tragedy of Macbeth* – 1606
*The Tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra* – 1606/1607
*The Life of Timon of Athens* – 1607/1608
*The Tragedy of Coriolanus* – 1607/1608

Komedies
The Comedy of Errors – 1592-1594
The Taming of the Shrew – 1593/1594
The Two Gentlemen of Verona – 1594
Love’s Labour’s Lost – 1594/1595
A Midsummer Night’s Dream – 1595/1596
The Merchant of Venice – 1596/1597
The Merry Wives of Windsor – 1597 – revisie ca.
1600/1601
Much Ado About Nothing – 1598/1599
As You Like It – 1599
Twelfth Night, or What You Will – 1601/1602
All’s Well That Ends Well – 1602/1603
Measure for Measure – 1604

Historical plays

The First Part of King Henry the Sixth – 1589/1590 – revisie 1594/1595
The Second Part of King Henry the Sixth – 1590/1591

The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth – 1590/1591

The Tragedy of Richard the Third – 1592/1593

Edward III – 1592-1595 - – auteurschap onzeker

The Life and Death of King John – 1594-1596

The Tragedy of King Richard the Second – 1595

The First Part of King Henry the Fourth – 1596/1597

The Second Part of Henry the Fourth – 1598

The Life of Henry the Fifth – 1599

The History of Troilus and Cressida – 1601/1602

The Life of King Henry the Eighth – 1612/1613

Romances

Pericles, Prince of Tyre – 1607/1608

The Tragedy of Cymbeline – 1609/1610

The Winter’s Tale – 1610/1611

The Tempest – De storm – 1611