

Othello: short summary

William Shakespeare's *Othello* takes place in 16th-century Venice and also Cyprus. Othello who is a noble black warrior in the Venetian army that secretly married a beautiful white woman called Desdemona who is the daughter of a prominent senator named Brabantio. When he eventually finds out and is completely furious he decides to disown Desdemona.

Iago has a secret jealousy and resentment towards Othello because a soldier named Lieutenant Cassio has been put in front of him and also suspects that Othello has been cheating with his wife. Waiting on revenge, Iago plans a devious comeback to plant suspicions in Othello's mind that Desdemona has been having an affair with Cassio. He decided to start a street fight which Cassio is blamed for, and is then dismissed from his post by Othello. Desdemona takes up Cassio's case with her husband, which only increases his suspicions that the pair are lovers.

While all of this is happening Iago manages to find a treasured handkerchief from Desdemona that was given to her by Othello. He somehow gets the handkerchief on Cassio so that Othello sees it and he finally concludes that the possession is proof of the affair. Due to the jealousy, he orders Iago to murder Cassio. Then Othello decides to strangle Desdemona. Immediately afterwards her innocence is revealed, and Iago's treachery exposed, in a fit of grief and remorse Othello kills himself and Iago is taken into custody by the authorities.

***Othello* as a Domestic Play/ handkerchief Tragedy**

Othello is a domestic play in the sense that its subject is one of family or domestic issues. The issues are limited to the scope of a family and personal assistants of the hero: marital relation and happiness, sexual jealousy and personal revenge, intrigue and conspiracy, friendship and betrayal.

The central theme of Othello's relationship with his wife, his sexual jealousy and the consequence of his fatal weakness of gullibility doesn't go beyond the limit of his family life.

It deals with domestic issues of a couple's married life, the husband's jealousy and the wife's ignorance which lead to their disaster. Earlier dramas, the classical dramas of the Greek model, used to deal with social and universally significant human issues at large, William Shakespeare much narrowed down the subject matter in *Othello* to a more ordinary 'domestic' issue. Even when compared to his other tragic dramas, this play has a more common issue.

Instead of dramatizing an issue of national or communal importance Othello is essentially concerned with domesticity.

Othello as a Tragic Hero

A tragic hero is a person who makes a bad judgment that leads to their own destruction. Having culpability is having guilt and responsibility for an event or situations. Othello by Shakespeare had been a story that ended with a tragedy as both Desdemona and Othello die at the end. Throughout the story, Othello continuously questions Desdemona's loyalty as he gets manipulated by Iago. Finally, in the end, he kills Desdemona and later on realizes it was all lies and ends up killing himself. His anger and jealousy grow as more lies are told to him, enough that make him stop listening to Desdemona and others telling him the truth. As all that happens, it allows the reader to realize that Othello has different changes throughout the story as well as different characteristics that show him as a tragic hero. In Othello, William Shakespeare characterizes Othello as a tragic hero and as well includes ways that show how Othello had culpability for Desdemona's murder. Othello changes because of his actions, which results in his downfall, showing how he changes from a sweet and loving husband and then changes to a cruel and abusive husband who eventually goes on to kill his own wife.

Othello is seen as a tragic hero since he not only was doomed from the start because of his race, which eventually lead him to do something bad as the result of his very poor judgment. As stated by Aristotle, a tragic hero is a person who is doomed from the start, and clearly is imperfect but has noble nature, a person whose judgment causes the tragedy. Othello is immediately judged for being black beforehand and people of a different race were mistreated and seen as inferior back then showing that he had something he was suffering through before the tragic event. Kiernan Ryan says, "The colour of Othello's skin is obviously a crucial factor in his downfall, because his visibly alien racial identity makes him and his bride far more vulnerable to the machinations of Iago than if he were an equally accomplished and indispensable white man." Othello was an easy target for Iago's plan as he was already seen as an outcast in society making it easier for Iago to attack him and use him as his plan Not only is Othello doomed from the start but his judgment from the way Iago used Othello's insecurity of race allowed him to decide that killing Desdemona was for the better. Othello had killed Desdemona because of his jealousy that was being fed with Iago's lies because he thought that being black would make Desdemona want to go for someone else besides him. Killing Desdemona had been a very bad judgment because Desdemona had been loyal and honest the entire time and Othello had ended up killing the love of his life because of manipulation and lies. All this shows that Othello has characteristics of a tragic hero, as he is doomed from the start and later on acts on very poor judgment.