

“O, What a tangled web we weave!” In the play *The Tragedy of Othello, The Moor of Venice*, Iago, the villain, definitely weaves a huge web throughout the play with his jealousy. One way Shakespeare communicates jealousy, throughout the play, is through Iago’s actions; by making it the backdrop and main event in the story, Shakespeare weaves each character into Iago’s fiendish plot of jealousy and deceit. Iago’s scheming starts right as the play opens, but the reader is only introduced to his plans and motives in Act 1, Scene 3, during his first soliloquy. “But for my sport and profit I hate the Moor/ He holds me well the better shall my purpose work on him/...After sometime, to abuse Othello’s ear...”(1.3. 429-445). Here is also a slight dramatic irony for the reader now knows that Iago is not as honest or truthful as he seems; although the other characters do not, and believe him to be the most honest. This helped him to bring his plan into action, to overthrow the moor, and to get revenge.

What would you do if the job you craved with all your heart was given to a man you felt were less qualified than yourself? Iago thinks up a mischievous plan to climb back on top when Othello awards Cassio with the lieutenantcy, a position that Iago felt he deserved and was better qualified for. Overcome with jealousy, Iago turns to revenge as a means to console himself. This is the web’s initial loop; Iago then recruits Roderigo, who is made, by Iago, to think of this as an opportunity to get closer to Desdemona- the women with whom he is smitten and to whom Othello is married. “Thus do I ever make my fool my purse/For I mine own gained knowledge should I profane.” (1.3.426-427). This is where the reader sees just how conniving Iago is, he does not care about others, and the reader sees here, and later on in the play, that Roderigo is the pawn that Iago puts forth as his first move toward a quick and steady stalemate.

Iago's next move was to scoop up Cassio; Iago gets Cassio drunk and stages a fight between Cassio and Montano. When all the commotion wakes Othello, Iago, his right hand man is the one who recounts the tale. Othello promptly fires Cassio, distraught that his own lieutenant would act in such an un-becoming way. "I know Iago, Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter/Making it light to Cassio. I love thee/But nevermore be officer of mine."(2.3.262-265) This is a turning point in the play; Othello firing Cassio adds another loop to the web. Yet another loop is woven when Cassio, pining for his job, first asks Iago for help and then Desdemona; Iago makes note of this and uses it in his next round of schemes. With Cassio out of the way Iago has now only to bring Othello down, and to do it he will take up the love of Othello's life- Desdemona.

When Cassio loses his position, Desdemona, who is sympathetic to him, promises to do everything in her power to help Cassio get it back. She continuously asks Othello to, at least hear Cassio out. "Why then tomorrow night (or) Tuesday morn, / On Tuesday noon or night or Wednesday morn/I prithee name the time, but let it not/Exceed three days."(3.3.69-71) Desdemona's want for Othello to make haste in his speaking with Cassio does not go unnoticed by Iago. Iago does a little more of his infamous brain washing and the result is his convincing Othello to watch for Desdemona and Cassio. Othello walks away with a feeling of angst, he doesn't know which direction to go in and this clouds his head and causes him a headache. Desdemona, seeing Othello's pain, offers him her handkerchief, and when Othello declines it and it falls, it goes unnoticed. Emilia picks it up and is badgered by Iago to give it to him. With the hanky in hand Iago embarks upon the final stretch of his plan.

Iago catches up to Othello and tells him that he saw Cassio wipe his brow with a hanky that looked like Desdemona's. This provides the proof, or so Othello's thinks, of Desdemona's disloyalty. Othello and Iago discuss the recent happenings and Othello decides to kill Desdemona, Iago says "But pardon me- I do not in position/Distinctly speak of her, though I may fear/ ..." (3.3.274-275) Basically Iago gives the illusion that he knows more than he is admitting, a skill that gets Othello riled up and makes him feel wishy-washy about Desdemona's virtue. This is when Othello comes crashing down. He first strikes Desdemona in front of Lodovico, and then on the night that Roderigo is killed, Othello kills Desdemona. Emilia finds out and when her shrieks bring Iago, all of his efforts seem for naught.

This play was based on jealousy it looms in every scene, high above the characters. It is the string that keeps the whole play together in a sense, and in another sense jealousy tears the play apart. The reader is first introduced to jealousy in Iago, who is jealous because Cassio got the position he wanted, next the reader sees it in Roderigo, whose role was the moneybag and "Deputy Pawn", who is jealous of Othello for getting the girl (Desdemona). Jealousy can neither be found in Desdemona nor Cassio, but Iago uses them countless times to get under Othello's skin. The only other person who is jealous for any reason is Othello and he is jealous because Iago brainwashed him into believing certain things. So when the question is asked, "How does Shakespeare communicate jealousy throughout the play *Othello*?" The answer is through Iago's plotting and planning and dragging his fellow characters' good names through the mud. And when the question is asked "How does Shakespeare communicate jealousy throughout the play *Othello*, through Iago's plans and actions?" The answer is that

Shakespeare manages to do so, because Iago's actions were fueled by jealousy and brought on jealousy. Iago is the vision of darkness, deceit and jealousy- a resounding message throughout the play. The whole could have been avoided if the characters had listened to Iago's little remarks and especially if they had taken heed when he said, "I am not, what I am"