***Othello* Act Five Scene Two Answers to Questions**

**Teachit sheet:**

1. **What imagery does Othello use to describe Desdemona in his opening soliloquy?’**

‘White’ imagery (snow, alabaster – suggests purity). Light imagery - ‘Put out the light, and then put out the light.’ Flower imagery (‘When I have plucked thy rose.’**Explain his thoughts at this point**: realises it is the point of no return – can’t ‘restore’ her ‘former light’ once he quenches it. Can’t give ‘vital growth’ to the rose once he has ‘plucked’ it. Yet sees himself as judge against her wickedness ‘it is the cause…’ and he carry out a sentence against her (kill her) ‘else she’ll betray more men.’

1. **How does Desdemona react to Othello in this scene?** Frightened: ‘Talk you of killing?’ (line 33) ‘Have mercy on me (line 34) but protests her innocence: ‘I never did/ Offend you in my life…’
2. **How is tension built in this scene?**

Desdemona’s gradual realisation that Othello is going to kill her. Audience wonder whether Othello will carry out his intentions or will he be stopped in time. Tension of Emilia hammering on door – will she be let in and prevent the tragedy?

1. **Look at Othello’s speech beginning on line 91. What impression do we receive about his state of mind?**

Very agitated (lots of short utterances, staccato speech, punctuation marks). Can’t think what to do. Should he let Emilia in? Can’t afford to let her speak to Desdemona. Is Desdemona still alive? How terrible that he no longer has a wife.

1. **Why do you think Desdemona will not say Othello killed her?**

Still loyal to him. Believes she somehow deserved it? Loves him.

1. **Othello says Desdemona was ‘false as water’ and Emilia claims he is ‘rash as fire.’ What makes these similes effective?** They refer to the elements therefore there is something essential and fundamental about them. Water appropriate because Desdemona is a Venetian and Venice is built on water. Associated with lack of constancy and fidelity (ironic in Desdemona’s case). Fire is unpredictable, comes from nowhere, can do a lot of damage. Suggests Othello’s hot-headedness. Also perhaps that he comes from a hot country (north Africa).
2. **How does Emilia react to the news that it was Iago who told Othello that Desdemona had been unfaithful?** Horrified it was her own husband who did this (note repetition of ‘my husband.’) Never suspected it. Shocked.
3. **What insults does Emilia hurl at Othello in this scene**? ‘You the blacker devil.’ (132), ‘thou art a devil’ (134), ‘Thou art rash as fire to say.’ (line 135).
4. **How does Iago treat Emilia?** Badly! Tells her to be quiet (lines 216 and 221) threatens her with his sword, (221), stabs her from behind (233).
5. **What do we learn about Brabantio in lines 202-207?** He’s died! Perhaps from a broken heart? So another character who has possibly been killed by Othello’s actions.
6. **What impression do we get of Othello in lines 258-**279?

He is determined to kill himself, having hidden a weapon on his body. He’s done amazing things in his life but it is destined to end now. He deserves to roast in hell for killing Desdemona.

1. **What does Othello suggest about Iago in lines 283 to 284?**

He’s a snake. He looks at Iago’s feet to see if he is the devil incarnate. If he does indeed have cloven feet, like the devil, he won’t be able to kill him

1. **Why do you think Iago refuses to explain himself?**

Interesting question! Maybe he doesn’t want to make things too easy for them. Maybe he doesn’t really know himself why he did what he did. (cf Coleridge ‘Motiveless Malignity’)

1. **What does Othello ask in his final speech before he stabs himself? How does he describe himself?**

He wants to be remembered for what he is – neither excused nor vilified for his behaviour**.** He describes himself as ‘One that loved not wisely, but too well.’

**Other Sheet**

1. **What reason does Othello give for killing Desdemona?**

If she is allowed to live she will betray more men.

1. **What is meant by the line ‘Put out the light and then put out the light’?**

Extinguish the torch and then put out the light of his life (i.e Desdemona).

1. **What is the ‘flaming minister’ and what else could this suggest?**

On one level it is the light (torch?) he is carrying, but it could also mean an officer of justice. In this speech, Othello imagines he is judging Desdemona’s behaviour (‘It is the cause’) and pronouncing the death sentence on her, inadvertently alerting the audience to how warped he’s become in his thinking.

1. **What is ‘Promethean heat’?**

Life-giving fire. In Greek legend, Prometheus stole heat from the gods and gave it to men. I.e once Desdemona’s fire is extinguished Othello won’t be able to steal any heat to reignite it.

1. **What does Othello mean by ‘thy unprepared spirit’?**

Jacobeans believed that if someone died before they could confess their sin (hence Othello’s question to Desdemona as to whether she has yet prayed) then they were destined to go to purgatory.

1. **Explain the comment by Othello, ‘had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge had stomach for them all.’** Othello implies he hates Cassio so much that if Cassio had as many lives as he had hairs on his body he would want to kill them all in revenge for Cassio’s supposed affair with Desdemona.
2. **What are Desdemona’s final words and to whom does she say them? Why is this important?** Line 126: ‘Commend me to my kind lord. O farewell.’ These words are spoken to Emilia. They are important because she dies asserting Othello’s goodness, thus elevating his character to the audience.
3. **Give two quotes from Emilia describing Othello at this point:**

Blacker devil/devil (lines 132 and 4).

1. **Why does Emilia repeat ‘My husband’ several times?**

Because she’s in shock. She can’t believe it’s Iago who is behind all these terrible events.

1. **Once Emelia realises what has happened, she considers herself relieved of her marital obligations Find the quote that shows this.**

Line 195: Tis proper I obey him but not now.

1. **What does Emilia say to Othello next? Why are these words important?**

She tells him he has killed ‘the sweetest innocent.’ It’s important because it is declarations like these that reveal to Othello what he has really done.

1. **Why does Iago kill Emilia?**

To silence her as she is at risk of exposing him. (Or maybe to punish her for what she’s revealed so far).

1. **How does Montano describe Othello?**

The Moor – suggesting he has reverted to being labelled by his race again.

1. **What does Emilia sing as she dies?**

The Willow song, suggesting she is identifying with Desdemona and stressing her loyalty to her mistress