Othello Undone

by Deni Fuson

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DEDICATION

For Dean Scofield, my dearest confidant ... my encourager.

STORY OF THE PLAY

This richly-textured play weaves the dark energy of one of Shakespeare's most intense plays with compelling, current-day characters and problems.

Andreya, a selfish student who gets what she wants by being manipulative and cruel, is affronted when she doesn't get the lead female role for the school's production of "Othello." Instead the part of Desdemona goes to Miranda, a quiet but talented teen whose dysfunctional family has kept her out of many school activities. The part of Othello goes to Aaron, a well-rounded and popular student.

As the rehearsals progress, Andreya devises a payback. Like Shakespeare's character Iago, she uses the love that springs up between Othello and Desdemona, in this case Aaron and Miranda, to try to destroy them. However, in this play Othello is redeemed by not being completely hoodwinked by Iago and drawing the line at actual murder. And Andreya is ultimately undone.

ORIGINAL CAST

First performed at Mesa Verde High School in Citrus Heights, California, in the spring of 2002 under the direction of the playwright, Deni Fuson. The original cast included:
JASON ANDREWS: As Aaron Lancaster.
ASHLEY KIMBLE: As Miranda Mills.
TAMI ALWARD: As Andrea Richards.
CHRISTINA DAVIE: As Tamara Jenkins.
JOSH BROVALD: As Ben Anderson.
ALYSSA DEARING: As Marci Kahn.
KEVIN JORDAN: As John Miller.
ERIC CHILDERS: As Conrad Wilson.
PATRICK O'REILLY: Lights and Sound.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
4 m, 4 w, extras

AARON LANCASTER: High school senior who has it all. Cast as Othello.
MIRANDA (RANDI) MILLS: Fears rejection, but is solid, honest. Cast as Desdemona.
ANDREYA RICHARDS: Has beauty, poise, and charm, yet under it all is truly selfish. Cast as Emilia.
BEN ANDERSON: A "nice guy" who is also savvy and can level a good comeback when he needs to. Cast as Cassio.
TAMARA (TAMI) JENKINS: Enjoys teaming up with Andreya and ruling the masses. Cast as Bianca.
JOHN MILLER: More trickster than devil. Cast as Iago.
CONRAD WILSON: Easily manipulated. Cast as Roderigo.
MARCI KAHN: The college student director. The role can be cast with a male "Marcus." New at directing, but tries hard.
EXTRAS: Four to five extras.

(For more in-depth character descriptions, please see end of script.)

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I
Scene 1: School hallway.
Scene 2: School classroom.
Scene 3: Audition room.
Scene 4: In front of school.

ACT II
Scene 1: School hallway.
Scene 2: School classroom.
Scene 3: Phones.
Scene 4: Rehearsal room.
Scene 5: Phones.

ACT III
Scene 1: Before the play.
Scene 2: Middle of play.
Scene 3: End of play.

PROPS are listed at the end of the script.
SETTING: The time is present. Many of the scenes occur around a high school campus.

TIME

The play is approximately an hour and a half long. It can be performed with or without an intermission. A range of music is needed from light and romantic to dark and threatening. There is no need to close the curtains between acts/ scenes: quickly timed scene changes with the appropriate "foreshadowing" music works very well.

SFX: Include school bell, announcements, phone dial tone, phone ringing, and answering machine message.

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: A busy school hallway as a school bell is heard. A poster advertising the upcoming audition of the school play, "Othello," is in plain view. Several STUDENTS cross DS; some general murmurs are heard, looks given, books carried, etc.)

ANDREYA: *(Entering while looking in a compact and reapplying lip gloss. SHE carries herself as if she owns the world. She tosses a snotty look at two girls who almost get in her way. She stops when she notices the poster and reads it. Thinking aloud.)* Hmm … "Othello." That will be perfect for me. *(TAMARA approaches while saying goodbye to someone on a cell phone.)* There you are. Timeliness has never been your fashion, has it?

TAMARA: *(Tired of the lecture, yet not willing to cause a problem.)* I'll work on it. *(Sees ANDREYA motion toward the poster.)* Oh, "Othello." Shakespeare. You love Shakespeare. "Othello" ... who's the female lead in that play?

ANDREYA: Desdemona.

TAMARA: Oh, that's right. The chick who gets that great death scene. Beautiful. I take it you want?

ANDREYA: I want. *(SHE laughs.)*

TAMARA: What are you laughing at? You're up to something, aren't you?

ANDREYA: Well, remember the fall play …

TAMARA: "The Odd Couple"? Two male leads ... um hm.

ANDREYA: Yeah, well, I just happened to casually mention to Ms. Meyers that I hoped she would consider the female talent.

TAMARA: *(Interrupting with enthusiasm.)* The great female talent.

ANDREYA: Yes, the great female talent in the school before deciding her spring play.

ANDREYA: *(Continued.)* After all, it would be a … a travesty to have a complaint made about the sexism in the drama department. It could just cast a shadow of doubt that I'm sure Ms. Meyers just doesn't want to deal with.

TAMARA: Oh, you are so evil, but so good. *(THEY high-five each other.)* Having Daddy as a school board member helps, huh?

ANDREYA: Yeah. (*Smiling.)*

TAMARA: Hey, you're thinking the lead is yours … hands down.

ANDREYA: Correct.

TAMARA: And what if I want to go for it?

ANDREYA: Not advised.

TAMARA: *(Challenging.)* Is that so?

ANDREYA: *(Steely.)* That's so.

TAMARA: *(Backing down, takes a big breath.)* Well, I hope there's another role worth tackling.

ANDREYA: There is. Emilia.

TAMARA: Emilia? Who's she?

ANDREYA: My gentlewoman.

TAMARA: You mean, your servant? I'm going to play your servant?

ANDREYA: That tone is not necessary. Oh, come on. It's a great role. You get to be killed by your husband. It's cool.

TAMARA: I get to die onstage?

ANDREYA: Absolutely.

TAMARA: All right, then. *(Looking again at the poster.)* Interesting, the auditions are tonight. Not like letting us know with a space. I'm going to have to cancel my date with Rick.

ANDREYA: *(Amused.)* Rick? Did I get the ask?

TAMARA: Dreya, you finished with him over a month ago. I thought he was fair game by now.

ANDREYA: Has it been a month? Oh, a month is cool; no permission needed. I'll have to cancel my nails. Pick you up at six? *(Notices TAMARA'S eyes motioning and sees AARON approaching.)*

AARON: Ladies, the air is thick … what have you been up to?

End of Freeview

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