

Othello

William Shakespeare

What does Othello's refusal to name what he is about to do allow him to believe about himself?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Othello renames murder as a cause
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Act V, Scene II
START	It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul
END	This sorrow's heavenly, it strikes where it doth love. She wakes.
PASSAGE ID	sec-oth-04

THE MOVE

Track euphemism and self-justification

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Before killing Desdemona, Othello repeatedly calls the act 'the cause' rather than naming murder. The euphemism lets him imagine himself as a judge carrying out necessity rather than as a husband choosing violence.

MARK

Circle every word Othello uses instead of saying kill or murder. Underline the phrases in which he presents the act as justice, necessity, or prevention. Star the line that most clearly protects his image of himself.

NOTICE

- What does the phrase 'the cause' hide about Othello's agency?
- How does Othello's language turn a personal act into something that sounds judicial or impersonal?
- What becomes harder for Othello to admit about himself if he names the act plainly?

THINK

Answer provisionally: What does Othello's refusal to name what he is about to do allow him to believe about himself? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: What does Othello's refusal to name what he is about to do allow him to believe about himself? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	By calling murder 'the cause' and presenting it as justice or necessity, Othello can imagine himself as an agent of moral correction rather than a husband choosing violence. Euphemism protects the identity he wants to preserve.
EVIDENCE	Use substitute language for killing and any phrases that recast the act as duty, justice, prevention, or impersonal necessity.
WATCH FOR	Do not say euphemism makes Othello unaware of what he is doing. The point is that it changes how he morally frames the action to himself.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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What does Othello's refusal to name what he is about to do allow him to believe about himself?

START ANCHOR	It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul
END ANCHOR	This sorrow's heavenly, it strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** - Circle every word Othello uses instead of saying kill or murder. Underline the phrases in which he presents the act as justice, necessity, or prevention. Star the line that most clearly protects his image of himself.
2. **NOTICE** - What does the phrase 'the cause' hide about Othello's agency? How does Othello's language turn a personal act into something that sounds judicial or impersonal? What becomes harder for Othello to admit about himself if he names the act plainly?
3. **THINK** - Answer provisionally: What does Othello's refusal to name what he is about to do allow him to believe about himself?
4. **WRITE** - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.