

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Autobiography of The Author**

William Shakespeare was born at Stratford upon Avon in 1564. His mother, Mary, came from a family of prosperous farmers and his father, John, variously described as a tanner, glove-maker and dealer in grain and meat, rose in wealth and importance during the earlier years of Shakespeare's life to occupy the most prominent positions in Stanford. As Shakespeare advanced in his fortunes, his father appears to have dropped out of public life.

It is likely that Shakespeare, because he was the eldest son, received a reasonable education in the local school. There are few records available to tell us much about Shakespeare's early adult life or how he made his way into the world of the theatre. He married Ann Hathaway when he was eighteen and, with a family to support, he must have taken some job to earn his living, but the first reference to Shakespeare's involvement in the theatre occurs in 1592 when a rival dramatist, Robert Greene, attacked the actor Shakespeare for daring to write plays. By this time he had elaborated with other authors in writing some plays and his own narrative poems and plays were establishing him as a new figure in the literary life of London. Almost certainly Shakespeare had entered the theatres as an actor in the mid-1580s and over the next twenty years there are reference to him as a competent actor at the same time as his fame as a writer was growing. In 1596 the Shakespeare family, in his father's name, but probably on the strength of Shakespeare's success, was granted a coat of arms, an acknowledgement of a rise

in society, and in 1597 Shakespeare felt prosperous enough to buy one of the largest houses in his native Stratford.

We know that from 1594 Shakespeare was a member of the theatrical company called the Chamberlain's men and we know that when the company moved into the Globe Theatre in 1599 Shakespeare was a part-owner of the project. On the accession of James I to the throne, Shakespeare's company renamed itself the King's men and the company frequently played before the king. By this time, Shakespeare was widely acclaimed as the leading playwright of his age and his popularity and financial success continued in 1616 when he was fifty-two.

The next dating of particular plays is not usually possible but a mixture of internal and external evidence helps us to place his thirty-seven plays in a rough chronically order between about 1589 and 1613. In the early years Shakespeare naturally experimented with different subject and forms. From about 1594 to 1600 he extended his writing in comedy, history plays and tragedy with particular stress on the first two categories. The period from 1600 to 1608 is dominated by his famous tragedies and in his last phase Shakespeare concentrated on sweet-sad plays in which he attempted to reconcile disappointment and loss with faith.

( Quoted from York Notes on Macbeth

by Alasdair D. F. Macrae )

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Synopsis of the Play**

#### **ACT I**

Othello has secretly married Desdemona, daughter of Senator Brabantio. Meanwhile Iago is incensed at Othello for appointing Michael Cassio instead of Iago as his lieutenant. To have some revenge on Othello, Iago stirs up Roderigo, who has been rejected by Desdemona, to go to Brabantio at night and report the marriage. Brabantio immediately dresses and goes to seek Desdemona and Othello. Meanwhile, Iago, who has sneaked away to join Othello, warns his chief that Brabantio is searching for him. Cassio arrives with the news that the Duke wishes to see Othello immediately; but while the Moor is on his way to the Council chamber, he meets Brabantio, who accuses him of drugging his daughter and orders him seized. When Othello informs Brabantio that he has been sent for by the Duke, Brabantio proposes that the Duke be made the judge of the case. At the council chamber the Duke hears that the Turks are threatening Cyprus; and as soon as Brabantio and Othello arrive, he orders Othello to lead the Venetian forces against the Turks. Before Othello can answer, Brabantio breaks in with his grief for his daughter's marriage. After Othello nobly and simply defends himself from the charge of sorcery, Desdemona enters and confirms her husband's story. Brabantio has no more to say, and Othello prepares to leave for Cyprus. He receives permission for Desdemona to follow him there and leave her with

“honest” Iago. Iago then speaks privately with Roderigo, tells him to raise money, and promises him that he shall still enjoy Desdemona. Iago, knowing that the wheels are in motion, remembers that there has been some talk about illicit relations between Othello and Emilia, Iago’s wife. Iago decides that he will make the Moor suspect that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio.

## **ACT II.**

Near Cyprus the Turkish fleet has been destroyed by a storm. First, Cassio, then Iago and Desdemona, and finally Othello arrive on the island. Iago calls Roderigo’s attention to a private conversation between Cassio and Desdemona; then he suggests that Roderigo provoke a quarrel with Cassio, who has been made Captain of the Guard. The resulting brawl, Iago feels, will bring Cassio into disgrace. Iago, who now suspects an affair between Cassio and Emilia and who feels a lust for Desdemona, intends to disgrace both Cassio and Othello. His first step is to get Cassio drunk; when Roderigo insults Cassio, Cassio strikes Roderigo and then wounds Montano, who tries to stop the brawl. Othello, highly incensed at Cassio, deprives him of his office. When Iago suggests to Cassio that he apply to Desdemona to intercede with Othello, Cassio falls into the trap. Iago now intends to convince Othello that Desdemona’s intercession for Cassio arises out of her love for the young man.

### **ACT III.**

Cassio first asks Emilia to go to Desdemona for him; Desdemona, in turn, immediately pleads with Othello to restore Cassio's honors and good name. While Cassio talks to Desdemona about his problem, Iago and Othello come surreptitiously on the pair; Iago uses his occasion to pour the first drops of the poison of jealousy into the Moor's ears. Unwillingly to believe Desdemona unfaithful, Othello is troubled by Iago's innuendoes. He insists that he will not believe without visual proof. Iago's opportunity to furnish this proof comes when Othello unwittingly drops a handkerchief handed him by Desdemona. Emilia picks it up and gives it to her husband; Iago intends to hide it in Cassio's lodgings. He then returns to Othello who demands ocular proof of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. Iago first tells the Moor that he has heard Cassio speak of Desdemona in his sleep. He then insists that he has seen Cassio with Desdemona's handkerchief, and whips Othello's jealousy to such a pitch that the Moor swears to avenge himself on his wife. When Othello asks Desdemona for the handkerchief, she hesitates, then says that she has lost it. The Moor stalks out angrily. Cassio, who has found the handkerchief in his chamber and likes it, gives it to Blaca and asks her to have it copied for him.

### **ACT IV.**

Iago's next move is to talk with Cassio about Blaca, having first placed Othello nearly out of earshot. The Moor hears just enough to be convinced of his wife's guilt and intends to murder her this night; he then orders Iago to kill

Cassio. Lodovico, who now appears with letters recalling Othello to Venice and making Cassio governor in his place, is started at the queerness of the Moor's behavior. Desdemona is also tremendously upset when Othello accuses her of being a whore; she has no notion, of course, what he is talking about. Iago then suggests to Roderigo that he kill Cassio before Cassio has the opportunity to assume the governorship.

#### **ACT V.**

When Roderigo attacks Cassio, the latter wounds him; but Iago comes up from behind and wounds Cassio in the leg. When others arrive on the scene, Iago, who has hidden, re-enter and, pretending to be indignant, kills the wounded Roderigo before he has a chance to talk. Meanwhile, in the bedchamber Othello smothers Desdemona. When Emilia enters, and, thunderstruck, asks the reason for the slaying, Othello declares that his wife has been a whore and that Iago has known it. Emilia's scream call Iago, Montano, and Brantiano to the scene. Emilia, beginning to realize that her husband is implicated in the murder, tells the truth about the handkerchief. Othello rushes at Iago but before he can reach him, Iago stabs Emilia. When the representative of the Senate enter with more proof of Iago's villainy, Othello wounds Iago and stabs himself. As the Moor dies repentant, Iago is held for torture.

(Quoted from Synopses of  
Shakespeare's Complete Plays by  
Lewis M. Magill)