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ROSSNER. Can I sit down?

DANIELLE. No! You stand there before us as a living symbol of a society whose capacity to comprehend, much less attain, the genius of William Shakespeare has been befouled by The Bachelor, violated by The Voice, and profanely ravished by professional wrestling.

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ALEX. [*to the light booth*] Bob, can we have some stage lights, please?

DANIELLE. Ross? Uh... what are you doing?

ALEX. What's with the boats?

ROSSNER. I'm Othello, the Moor of Venice.

DANIELLE. I don't think you got 'moor' right...

ROSSNER. [*into cell phone*] Alexa, define 'moor'.

ROSS'S PHONE. Moor: make fast a boat by attaching it by cable or rope to the shore or to an anchor.

[*ROSSNER makes a "See!" gesture towards his phone.*]

ALEX. Lose the boats. [*ROSSNER slinks off. To audience*] Sorry, Rossner can be really ignorant sometimes. [*To DANIELLE*] So, what is a 'moor'?

DANIELLE. Well, interestingly, this is the subject of a blazing scholarly debate. For Elizabethans, 'moor' could refer either specifically to the Berbers of North Africa, or more generally, to any people of sub-Saharan African descent.

ALEX. So, Othello's black.

DANIELLE. Well...

ALEX. Wait, Justin Bieber isn't black!

DANIELLE. [*after puzzling it out*] No, not Bieber. Berbers, indigenous North Africans.

ALEX. Okay, so Othello's black. So are we... Do we... do blackface?

DANIELLE. Do you want to be on a split-screen on CNN tomorrow morning apologizing? Absolutely not!

[*ROSSNER enters, sans boats*]

ROSSNER. Well then, who gets to play Othello?

[*If there is a black audience member, they all look at them for a few seconds. Then*]

DANIELLE. It's not that easy. Look, people expect sensitive, ethnically appropriate casting of minority characters. In today's political climate, even talking about minorities or marginalized peoples requires a delicate touch and certain level of care. [*scoffing*] I mean, unless you're on cable news...

ROSSNER. Oooo! I got it! *[runs off-stage]*

ALEX. We could rap about Othello!

ROSSNER *(from off)* and DANIELLE. NO!

ALEX. There's a *town* of Othello in eastern Washington?

DANIELLE. How do we incorporate that?

[ROSSNER returns wearing a blazer]

DANIELLE. What are you doing?

ROSSNER. Cable news! *[as a cable news anchor, to audience]* Good evening. You're watching the Venice News Network, and I'm Rossner Randolph. *[turns to face another "camera"]* Chaos in the Duke's palace tonight, as a ~~scuffle~~ **fight** broke out between Senator Brabantio and General Othello during a senate meeting, **setting the tone for 21st century politics in general.** ~~General Othello was before the senate to brief them on the rumors that a Turkish fleet was headed towards Cyprus when it came out that the general had secretly married Senator Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona. It was revealed that General Othello, a moor, had married the Senator's daughter, Desdemona in secret. Brabantio was quoted as saying 'it's probably just a phase'. was accused of using witchcraft to beguile the young lady, obviously, but proved his innocence by explaining she fell in love with the general after hearing stories of his life and hardships before he joined the relative safety of the Venetian military.~~ *[looks at DANIELLE]* Where's your blazer? *[back to audience]* Now we throw it over to Alex, to find out what's happening in stocks!

[ALEX having snuck off stage during the previous bit, returns wearing a blazer, and tosses another one at DANIELLE, who is unready to catch it]

ALEX. *[a la Jim Cramer's 'Mad Money']* Thank you Rossner, things are crazy in stocks right now! Cassio, Cassio, CASSIO! And I'm not talking keyboards! Young Venetian soldier Cassio's stocks have never been higher with General Othello! Zoom! Right past Roderigo! Zoom! Right past Iago! Cassio is poised to fly right to the head of the Venetian army, leaving older, begrudged soldiers and swooning young women in his wake! Get in on the ground floor NOW!

ROSSNER. Thank you, Alex! Now here's Danielle with weather!

DANIELLE. *[getting on board]* Thank you Rosser! Blue skies are ahead for Cyprus, as a freak storm has blown west across the eastern Mediterranean, managing to wipe out the ENTIRE Turkish fleet! All of them! A welcome deus ex machina for the people of Cyprus, but a serious blow to this network's war correspondents, who felt a nice sacking could do wonders for their careers. ~~In fact, with the exception of a single cloud of discontent and jealousy settling in an area of roughly five feet around wherever army ensign Iago is standing, it looks like clear skies ahead for Cyprus.~~

ROSSNER. Thank you, Danielle. Are Venetian soldiers out of control? Partying gets out of hand in the streets of Cyprus tonight as the visiting Venetian army celebrates their total defeat of the Turkish fleet, culminating in Cassio clashing with Montano, leaving Montano injured and Cassio stripped of rank by General Othello. Iago is being investigated for over-serving.

ALEX. Sell, sell, SELL! Cassio's stock is PLUMMETING with General Othello! The toast of Venice, no more! Cassio is so desperate for a win, he's been in talks with Iago! Iago recommends employing Desdemona to spin some positive PR for Cassio with Othello! Horrible mistake! Huge! Iago has convinced Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are in bed together for more than good publicity! Cassio is spiraling out of control!

DANIELLE. This just in! Cyprus has been struck by a sudden BLOODstorm! Othello, in a rage, has smothered Desdemona with a pillow! Iago's wife, Emilia, has drifted in from the north to reveal that the whole Cassio and Desdemona debacle was a dark plot by Iago, causing more torrents of blood to cover the streets as Iago injures Cassio and kills Roderigo and Emilia in an attempt to cover his tracks. Othello storms in from the south, grievously injuring Iago, but purposely keeping him alive so as he can live with his own crimes, shortly before Othello kills himself. Blood everywhere, wear your galoshes. Rossner?

ROSSNER. Dark days indeed for Venice, Cyprus, Turkey, and the Mediterranean as a whole. This is Rossner Randolph signing off. Good night, and take care of each other.

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DANIELLE. Well, Shakespeare obviously should have written one exemplary play rather than sixteen sucky ones. Which is why I have taken the liberty of condensing Shakespeare's comedic diarrhea into a single, solid, well-formed lump of hilarity, which I have entitled "*The Comedy of Two Well-Measured Gentlemen Lost in the Merry Wives of Verona on a Midsummer's Twelfth Night in Winter.*" Or...

ALEX. [reading cover] "*Cymbeline Taming Pericles the Merchant in the Tempest of Love as Much as You Like It for Nothing.*" Or...

ROSSNER. "*Four Weddings and RuPaul's Drag Race.*"
"*The Englishman who Went Up a Hill and Came Down a Venetian Woman.*"
"*My Big, Fat, Greek Twin Brother*"
"*How to Lose a Guy in Three Years of Study and Fasting*"
"*10 Things I Hate About Shrew*"
"*How Hermia Got Her Groove Back*"
"*Puck Actually*"

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DANIELLE. No! That woman was laughing at me!

[DANIELLE lunges to attack the woman who was laughing, but is restrained by ALEX and ROSSNER.]

ROSSNER. Don't worry about her. That's Jennifer, and she's on Prozac.

DANIELLE. She laughed at me! Just like they laughed at Sasha!

ALEX. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a heavy-duty emotional speech, and, frankly, Danielle hasn't been herself lately—

DANIELLE. Sasha...!

ROSSNER. Who's this Sasha she keeps going on about?

ALEX. I don't know. I mean, the only Sasha I can think of is that bratty wrestler Sasha Banks on WWE.

DANIELLE. She is *not* bratty! She's going through hell! She was absolutely torn apart when she and her best friend Bayley lost the Tag Team Championship at Wrestlemania, but Bayley didn't care, she just abandoned Sasha in her moment of need and went on to win the Smackdown Championship and...
[DANIELLE updates the audience on the current week's storyline developments.] And you don't even care!

ALEX. You watch WWE?

DANIELLE. [*barely audible*] Maybe...

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ALEX. [*stunned*] I... don't even know who you are!

DANIELLE. I thought the world of Shakespearean scholarship would be all glamorous parties and hot guys. But it's not! It's full of folios and quartos and quatrains and ibids. So cold. But when I'm watching WWE, everyone is so strong and confident, so powerful and in control—[DANIELLE collapses in a heap, quietly sobbing.] I just love my stories.

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ALEX. See you guys? That speech is emotional *and* intellectual. The two can live side by side.

DANIELLE. Like Sheamus and Cesaro?