Father Of The Bride: Brabantio Essay, Research Paper

Father of the Bride

While little girls are eagerly anticipating the day they will meet the man of their dreams, they are also imagining up their dream wedding. Fathers, on the other hand, are secretly dreading the day to come. They do their best to see that the “right” man will marry their daughter. But at the same time, they want to try to keep them from meeting him so soon. In William Shakespeare’s Othello, Brabantio is protective, racially prejudiced, and a heartbroken man. He represents the typical father who is disappointed when he realizes that “daddy’s little girl” is all grown up and ready to leave the nest.

Brabantio is a very protective father. He makes sure that his daughter Desdemona lives a sheltered life under his care. She is his only child so he treats her like a prized possession. He also made certain to keep her under a tight leash, especially with male callers. When Roderigo tries to court her, he disapproves, “The worser welcome!/ I have charged thee not to haunt my doors./ In honest plainness thou hast heard me say/ My daughter is not for thee” (1.1.93-95). Brabantio is in disbelief when Roderigo instead tells him of Desdemona’s elopement with Othello and says:

O heaven! How got she out? O treason of

the blood!

Fathers from hence trust not your daughters’ minds

by what you see them act. Is there not charms

By which the property of youth and maidhood

May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,

Of some such thing? (1.1.165 – 170)

Here, Brabantio is shocked by this information. He directs his statement toward Roderigo, but almost seems as if he were scolding himself for trusting his daughter too much. Brabantio was convinced that his daughter was obedient and followed his rules. He was almost certain that his careful upbringing would not lead to the very thing he tried so hard to prevent.

Brabantio is also racially prejudiced. He is upset when he discovers that Othello, the Moor, is the man that Desdemona has chosen. He feels that Othello is not worthy of his daughter’s love because he possesses darker skin and is of Arabian descent. The kind of man he feels his daughter should marry would be someone who is her equal, meaning a white man. He accuses Othello of kidnapping his daughter and insists that she has been fooled, “O thou foul thief, where hast thou stowed/ my daughter?/ Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her!” ( 1.3.61-62) Brabantio believes that black magic would be the only way that Othello would be able to win Desdemona’s heart, “That thou hast practiced on her with foul charms, / Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals/ That weaken motion” (1.3.72-74). He couldn’t understand why his daughter would choose such a man over her own father.

When Brabantio realizes that nothing he could do or say will prevent Desdemona from staying with the moor, he becomes heartbroken. He ungraciously accepts defeat:

God be with you. I have done.

Please it your Grace, on to the state affairs.

I had rather adopt a child than get it.

Come hither, Moor.

I here do give thee that with all my heart

Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart

I would keep from thee. For your sake, jewel,

I am glad at soul I have no other child,

For they escape would teach me tyranny,

To hang clogs on them. I have done, my lord. (1.3.187-196)

Here, Brabantio sadly gives his daughter to Othello. He tells Othello that he loves his daughter so much that by taking Desdemona, he is also taking a piece of his heart. Brabantio is willing to let her go because he sees that he can no longer make her happy. He is also glad that he has no other children because he doesn’t want to go through the pain of seeing them leave his side again. He’s afraid that if he had other daughters he would become a jail keeper and hold them captive to ensure that the past does not repeat itself.

For some parents, it is a blessed thing to love and nurture their children. Sometimes, a parent can get caught up in the whole process that they forget that their children will grow up and have to leave one day. Brabantio was not prepared for this day to come so soon. While he was busy trying to be the best father he could be, his little found true love and blossomed into a woman.