

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

# OTHELLO

Bird Publisher, 2012

## About this eBook

OTHELLO

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare, 1606

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## **Dramatis Personae**

**OTHELLO**, the Moor, general of the Venetian forces

**DESDEMONA**, his wife

**IAGO**, ensign to Othello

**EMILIA**, his wife, lady-in-waiting to Desdemona

**CASSIO**, lieutenant to Othello

**THE DUKE OF VENICE**

**BRABANTIO**, Venetian Senator, father of Desdemona

**GRATIANO**, nobleman of Venice, brother of Brabantio

**LODOVICO**, nobleman of Venice, kinsman of Brabantio

**RODERIGO**, rejected suitor of Desdemona

**BIANCA**, mistress of Cassio

**MONTANO**, a Cypriot official

**A CLOWN** in service to Othello

**SENATORS, SAILORS, MESSENGERS, OFFICERS, GENTLEMEN, MUSICIANS,  
AND ATTENDANTS**

SCENE:  
*Venice and Cyprus*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*Venice. A street.*

*Enter Roderigo and Iago.*

**RODERIGO.** Tush, never tell me! I take it much unkindly  
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse  
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

**IAGO.** 'Sblood, but you will not hear me.  
If ever I did dream of such a matter,  
Abhor me.

**RODERIGO.** Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

**IAGO.** Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,  
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Off-capp'd to him; and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place.  
But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,  
Evades them, with a bumbast circumstance  
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war,  
And, in conclusion,  
Nonsuits my mediators; for, »Certes,« says he,  
»I have already chose my officer.«  
And what was he?  
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine  
(A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife)  
That never set a squadron in the field,  
Nor the division of a battle knows  
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoric,

Wherein the toged consuls can propose  
 As masterly as he. Mere prattle without practice  
 Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election;  
 And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
 At Rhodes, at Cyprus, and on other grounds  
 Christian and heathen, must be belee'd and calm'd  
 By debtor and creditor. This counter-caster,  
 He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
 And I- God bless the mark!- his Moorship's ancient.

**RODERIGO.** By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

**IAGO.** Why, there's no remedy. 'Tis the curse of service,  
 Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
 And not by old gradation, where each second  
 Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself  
 Whether I in any just term am affined  
 To love the Moor.

**RODERIGO.** I would not follow him then.

**IAGO.** O, sir, content you.

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:  
 We cannot all be masters, nor all masters  
 Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark  
 Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
 That doting on his own obsequious bondage  
 Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,  
 For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd.  
 Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are  
 Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,  
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,  
 And throwing but shows of service on their lords  
 Do well thrive by them; and when they have lined their coats  
 Do themselves homage. These fellows have some soul,  
 And such a one do I profess myself.



For, sir,  
 It is as sure as you are Roderigo,  
 Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.  
 In following him, I follow but myself;  
 Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,  
 But seeming so, for my peculiar end.  
 For when my outward action doth demonstrate  
 The native act and figure of my heart  
 In complement extern, 'tis not long after  
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
 For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

**RODERIGO.** What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,  
 If he can carry't thus!

**IAGO.** Call up her father,  
 Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,  
 Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen,  
 And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
 Plague him with flies. Though that his joy be joy,  
 Yet throw such changes of vexation on't  
 As it may lose some color.

**RODERIGO.** Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

**IAGO.** Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell  
 As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
 Is spied in populous cities.

**RODERIGO.** What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

**IAGO.** Awake! What, ho, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!  
 Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!  
 Thieves! Thieves!

*Brabantio appears above, at a window.*