

Othello

Act I, sc. 1 (line 10)

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 bombast 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 theoretic,

Wherein the toged consuls can propose

As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practise,

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 be-lee'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.