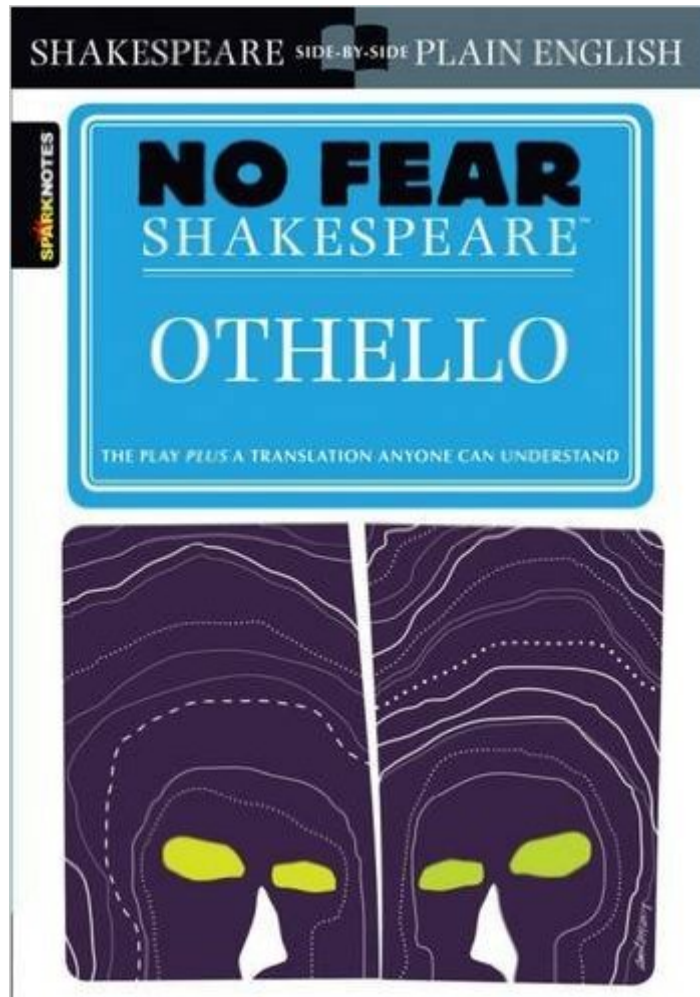


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Spark Notes No Fear Shakespeare Othello (SparkNotes No Fear Shakespeare)



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Customer Reviews

As a play, "Othello" encompasses many things but more than anything else it is a study of pure evil. Although Othello is an accomplished professional soldier and a hero of sorts, he is also a minority and an outcast in many ways. As a Black man and a Moor (which means he's a Moslem), Othello has at least two qualities, which make him stand out in the Elizabethan world. He is also married to a Caucasian woman named Desdemona, which creates an undercurrent of hostility as evidenced by the derogatory remark "the ram hath topped the ewe". Othello's problems begin when he promotes one of his soldiers, Michael Cassio as his lieutenant. This arouses the jealousy and hatred of one of his other soldiers, Iago who hatches a plot to destroy Othello and Michael Cassio. When Cassio injures an opponent in a fight he is rebuked, punished, and subsequently ignored by Othello who must discipline him and teach him a lesson. Iago convinces Desdemona to intervene on Cassio's behalf and then begins to convince Othello that Desdemona is in love with Cassio. This is actually one of the most difficult Shakespeare plays to watch because the audience sees the plot begin to unfold and is tormented by Othello's gradual descent into Iago's trap. As with other

Shakespeare plays, the critical components of this one are revealed by language. When Othello is eventually convinced of Cassio's treachery, he condemns him and promotes Iago in his place. When Othello tells Iago that he has made him his lieutenant, Iago responds with the chilling line, "I am thine forever". To Othello this is a simple affirmation of loyalty, but to the audience, this phrase contains a double meaning.

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