

OTHELLO | FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Shakespeare's language can seem scary, but give it a try! *Go at your own pace, and have fun!*



SHAKESPEARE IN PRISON

DETROIT PUBLIC THEATRE'S
SIGNATURE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Iago is out for revenge against Othello (his boss) and Cassio, who got a promotion Iago thinks *he* deserved. In this scene, Iago tricks Cassio into drinking too much and getting into a fight—which results in Cassio being fired.

The Shakespeare

IAGO

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Ay, past all surgery.

IAGO

Marry, God forbid!

CASSIO

Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation, I have lost the immortal part of myself. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO

As I am an honest man I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more of sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition, oft got without merit and lost without deserving. You have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser.

The Translation

IAGO

Are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO

Yes, but no doctor can help me.

IAGO

Oh, I hope that's not true!

CASSIO

My reputation, my reputation, my reputation! I've lost my reputation, the longest-living and truest part of myself! Oh, my reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO

I swear I thought you meant you'd been hurt physically. Your body is more capable of feeling than your reputation. A reputation is a useless and fake quality that others impose on us—often gotten without having been earned and lost for no reason. You haven't lost your reputation unless you think of yourself as having lost it.

- 1 Read the Shakespeare.
- 2 Read the translation.
- 3 Read the Shakespeare again!

Cassio says a person's reputation is "immortal." Iago says it is "false." Who do you think is right?

This play was written 400 years ago!
How would you update the scene to take place in our time?

Why do you think Cassio repeats the word "reputation" so many times? What about Iago?





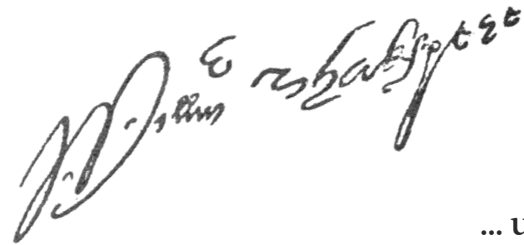
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You can respond to these in any way you choose:

- Write
- Draw
- Talk about it
- Think about it



... up to you!

We can learn a lot about characters by experimenting with different ways of saying their lines.

Try playing Cassio. As you speak his lines, leave room to take a full breath after each "reputation." What does that tell you about Cassio's emotions? If you were playing Cassio in a performance, how would you perform these lines?

This next exercise might seem a little weird, but give it a try if you want and see what happens!

Try playing Iago—but *only* say the vowels in his speech. Let the sounds flow together. Now say the lines again. Do you have new ideas about how Iago is trying to make Cassio feel?

If you were directing this scene, how would you stage it?

How can you help the audience understand the characters and the situation?

What are the characters' emotions?

How close together are the actors? Is there movement in the scene? Are they sitting? Standing? Kneeling?

What would the set look like? Would there be a backdrop? Any objects?

Go ahead: set the stage.

If you were an actor in this play, would you rather play Cassio or Iago? Why?

Later in the play, Iago says that jealousy is "the green-eyed monster." If "reputation" were a creature of some kind, what would it be?

If you were in Cassio's shoes, what would you say back to Iago?

