

Othello

4.3

Enter Othello, Desdemona, Lodovico, Emilia, and attendants

LODOVICO

I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

OTHELLO

O, pardon me, 'twill do me good to walk.

LODOVICO *(to Desdemona)*

Madam, good night. I humbly thank your ladyship.

DESDEMONA

Your honour is most welcome.

OTHELLO

Will you walk, sir?

O, Desdemona!

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DESDEMONA My lord?

OTHELLO Get you to bed on th' instant. I will be returned forthwith. Dismiss your attendant there. Look't be done.

DESDEMONA I will, my lord.

Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and attendants

EMILIA How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did. 10

DESDEMONA

He says he will return incontinent.

He hath commanded me to go to bed,

And bid me to dismiss you.

EMILIA

Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA

It was his bidding. Therefore, good Emilia,

Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.

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We must not now displease him.

EMILIA I would you had never seen him.

DESDEMONA

So would not I. My love doth so approve him

That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns±±

Prithee unpin me±±have grace and favour in them. 20

Emilia helps Desdemona to undress

EMILIA

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

DESDEMONA

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!

If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me
In one of these same sheets.

EMILIA

Come, come, you talk.

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid called Barbary. 25
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
And did forsake her. She had a song of willow.
An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,
And she died singing it. That song tonight
Will not go from my mind. I have much to do 30
But to go hang my head all at one side
And sing it, like poor Barbary. Prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA

Shall I go fetch your nightgown?

DESDEMONA

No. Unpin me here.

This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA

He speaks well. 35

EMILIA

I know a lady in Venice would have walked
barefoot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DESDEMONA (*sings*)

`The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
Sing all a green willow.
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee, 40
Sing willow, willow, willow.

The fresh streams ran by her and murmured
her
moans,

Sing willow, willow, willow.
Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones,
Sing willow'±± 45
Lay by these.±±

`willow, willow.'
Prithee, hie thee. He'll come anon.
`Sing all a green willow must be my garland.
`Let nobody blame him, his scorn I approve'±± 50
Nay, that's not next. Hark, who is't that knocks?

EMILIA

It's the wind.

DESDEMONA

(*sings*)

'I called my love false love, but what said he then?
Sing willow, willow, willow.

If I court more women, you'll couch with more men.' 55
So, get thee gone. Good night. Mine eyes do itch.
Doth that bode weeping?

EMILIA 'Tis neither here nor there.

DESDEMONA

I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!
Dost thou in conscience think±±tell me, Emilia±±
That there be women do abuse their husbands 60
In such gross kind?

EMILIA There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA

Why, would not you?

DESDEMONA No, by this heavenly light.

EMILIA Nor I neither, by this heavenly light. I might do't
as well i'th' dark. 65

DESDEMONA

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

EMILIA The world's a huge thing. It is a great price for
a small vice.

DESDEMONA In truth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA In truth, I think I should, and undo't when I had 70
done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint
ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns,
petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but for
all the whole world? Ud's pity, who would not make
her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I 75
should venture purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA

Beshrew me if I would do such a wrong
For the whole world.

EMILIA Why, the wrong is but a wrong i'th' world, and
having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your 80
own world, and you might quickly make it right.

DESDEMONA

I do not think there is any such woman.

EMILIA

Yes, a dozen, and as many

To th' vantage as would store the world they played
for.

But I do think it is their husbands' faults 85
If wives do fall. Say that they slack their duties,
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite: 90
Why, we have galls; and though we have some grace,
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them. They see, and smell,
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do 95
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is. And doth affection breed it?
I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?
It is so, too. And have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have? 100
Then let them use us well, else let them know
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DESDEMONA

Good night, good night. God me such uses send
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

Exeunt