

Importance of “the willow” scene

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Importance of " The Willow" Scene In " The Willow" scene of Othello by William Shakespeare, Desdemona has a deep and profound conversation with her maid Emilia about love. Both characters convey their emotions of how they feel their loved ones should treat them. Even though Desdemona's and Emilia's views on love differ they share the same desperation of losing love. Symbols and metaphors are present in this passage that will lead to the climax of Othello and Desdemona's quarrel. I learned through reading this scene that love comes with great consequences and love can equally affect the person giving it as much as the person receiving it. The use of symbolism and foreshadowing is instantly recognizable when Desdemona tells the story about her mother's maid Barbary, who died while singing The Willow Song. This song portrays the sadness and resignation felt by a woman who is betrayed by her lover. In a way this song resembles what Desdemona and Othello are going through because they are in a moment of sadness, confusion and despair. Desdemona said that she could not stop thinking about this song, which she sings along with her maid. This tale of her mother's maid gives an indication or in a sense foreshadows that something bad is probably going to happen to Desdemona or worse, she might even suffer the same misfortune as Barbary, the woman in The Willow Song, who was betrayed by her husbands. Desdemona's love for Othello is strong even though she is scared that he would break her heart, " So would doth so approve him, That even his stubbornness,--have grace and favor in them. "(24 Act 4 Scene3.) Desdemona has no doubt in her mind that she cares about Othello regardless of the way he is behaving with her. In this scene Emilia is trying to be the voice of reason for Desdemona even though she

isn't fully convinced by Emilia's advice, which is to be a care-free woman and not put too much thought into the situation. Desdemona loves Othello unconditionally and she is giving Othello the benefit of the doubt because she does not want to jump into conclusions on why Othello is behaving so indifferent with her, when she has done nothing to offend him. Desdemona is afraid that she herself will die of a broken heart like the women in willow song. Desdemona says, “ If I do die before thee prithee, shroud me in one of those same sheets”(26). Desdemona fears that the end is near, being whether is the end of her marriage or her life she would eventually die as a woman with a broken heart. Othello in the other hand seems to me like he is so blinded by Iago's dishonesty that his rage towards Desdemona could make him harm her or Cassio. Furthermore this scene in the play Othello gives an abundant amount of symbols that suggest that a tragedy is coming soon. Desdemona's talk with Emilia helps to explain these signs by giving us examples of what had happened to someone she knew and how she relates these events to her own marriage with Othello. Emilia being Desdemona's voice of reason is not able to convince her that there is more to being a wife than just being there for her husband's amusement.