

OTHELLO - MASCULINITY & TRUST

EXCERPT FROM ACT 4, SCENE 3

DESDEMONA

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

EMILIA

There be some such, no question.

DESDEMONA

Would 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' the dark.

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 troth, I think thou wouldst not.

EMILIA

In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had
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,--why, who would
not make her husband a cuckold to make him a
monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

DESDEMONA

Beshrew me, if I would do such a deed
For all the world.

EMILIA

Why the wrong is but a wrong i' the world: and
having the world for your labour, tis a wrong in your
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 the vantage as would
store the world they played for.
But I do think it is their husbands' faults
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;
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
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?
Then let them use us well: else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

DESDEMONA

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

Exeunt

Taken from the English Touring Theatre's production of Othello, available on Digital Theatre+