

## The Willow Song

This song is sung by Desdemona in Act IV, Scene 3 of Shakespeare's *Othello* (c. 1603). Othello is a Moor who elopes with Desdemona from Venice. They arrive on the island of Cyprus where Othello's sub-lieutenant and close friend Iago succeeds in convincing Othello that his wife has been unfaithful to him. *The Willow Song* is sung by Desdemona immediately before her death at the hands of her husband. The song, which is a moving lament about a weeping woman, thus functions as a premonitory device.

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

Sing willow, willow, willow, willow!  
Sing willow, willow, willow, willow, must be in my garland.  
Sing all a green willow, willow, willow, willow.  
Sing all a green willow, must be in my garland.

The fresh streams ran by her and murmur'd her moans,  
Sing all a green willow.  
Her salt tears fell from her and soften'd the stones.

Sing willow, willow, willow, willow!  
Sing willow, willow, willow, willow, must be in my garland.  
Sing all a green willow, willow, willow, willow.  
Sing all a green willow, must be in my garland.