

PERFORMING INTERPRETATION: THE OTHELLO QUESTION

Shakespeare's great tragedy, *Othello*, tells the story of a prideful man who falls prey to jealousy. A spiteful enemy convinces Othello that his wife, Desdemona, is cheating on him. Consumed with sorrowful rage, Othello murders her in their bed. This dialogue appears in Act V, Scene II:

Desdemona: Who's there? Othello?

Othello: Ay, Desdemona.

Desdemona: Will you come to bed, my lord?

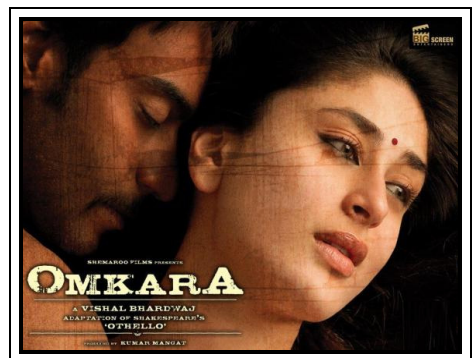
Othello: **Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?**

Desdemona: Ay, my lord.

Othello: If bethink you of any crime
Unreconciled as to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.



Othello approaching the sleeping Desdemona in a 1952 film version; Iago goading Othello in a 1995 version.



Characters Desi and Odin in *O*, a 2001 retelling of *Othello*; a poster for *Omkara*, a 2006 Bollywood adaptation.