



HeForShe #GetFree University Tour, UK

University of Cambridge | 6 October 2015

REMARKS BY: Gugu Mbatha-Raw

Thank you for joining us here today, for our #GetFree tour. We are thrilled to be here with you. Thank you to the University of Cambridge and Vice-Chancellor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz for opening up their campus to this important initiative. I also want to extend a huge thank you to UN Women, whose visionary leadership started the movement that I believe will achieve gender equality.

Being here and seeing all of you makes me so excited for the future. I am humbled and honoured to share with you what HeForShe means to me. Now I don't think it will come as a surprise to any of you that the entertainment industry hasn't always been the most evolved place for women to work, but today there are countless female actors working to change this culture from the inside out.

In the last few years I have had incredible opportunities to work on film and in theatre that has enabled me to explore my own Identity. As I have learned, our own fears can sometimes be our greatest liberators, IF we are willing to stand up and face them.

Right now I am on a short break from working on a new play about one of the first ever Actresses "Nell Gwynn". Before her generation, all the female roles on stage were always played by men. Nell Gwynn was a pioneer of her time. Being here at Cambridge today, I am reminded how deeply we are all already connected to each other in the quest for gender equality. The playwright of Nell Gwynn, Jessica Swale also wrote the acclaimed "Blue Stockings" about the first women to attend University, right here in Cambridge at Girton College back in the 1890s. Did you know that when women were first permitted to study here in the 1868, even though they did exactly the same work as men, they were not allowed to Graduate... It seems so preposterous to us now looking back... but thirty years later a movement of young women launched a campaign to have the right to graduate with the qualifications they had earned... yet it was not until 1948... Almost 100 years after women first came to University that women were finally allowed to graduate from Cambridge.



You are part of this legacy, by the very fact that you are here. This is your history... And it's not over...Let's not wait another hundred years before we take change to the next level...!

I hope this tour and the incredible people standing on this stage will provide you with the inspiration to stand up on this campus, in your community, and demand equality. Did you know there isn't a single country in the world today that can say they have achieved gender equality? Let's change that. Let's start with us, here in the UK. To do that, we need everyone; we are always stronger when we work together, and that's why we're here. The #GetFreeTour takes HeForShe on the road to students across the world. We are putting the movement in your hands, turning to you to help us create a world where we can all be free to be ourselves. To follow our dreams. To be who we are.

Youth advocates across the world have raised their voices in support of HeForShe. Let's add your name to the list. After today, with what you have heard and learned, there is no excuse not to challenge inequality happening around you. I'd like to end with a quote from Blue Stockings, from Tess one of the first female Cambridge students: "We're not passengers. People like us don't get buffeted by the wind, we change its course."

Don't be a passenger; gender equality is actually quite simple. It's accepting each other, for exactly who we are. Let's decide right here, right now, to change the course of gender equality.