

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

Sometime in the future.

Following a crisis, the world has become a wasteland and civilization has collapsed. In the ashes of the old world, warlords and their tribes form new societies built on honour and the rule of the strongest.

Theseus, Duke of Athens, is preparing to marry Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, accompanied by her sister, Emilia, and his friend, Pirithous, when he is called upon to wage war on the corrupt Theban king, Creon.

Palamon and Arcite, two noble nephews of Creon, are captured in the war. As they languish in prison, their protestations of eternal friendship stop the instant they glimpse Emilia through a window. Both fall in love with her, and their friendship turns to bitter rivalry. Arcite is unexpectedly released and banished, but he returns in disguise; Palamon escapes with the help of the lovelorn Jailer's Daughter.

The kinsmen continue quarreling over Emilia, and Theseus orders that Palamon and Arcite be arrested and executed. Hippolyta and Emilia intervene, and so Theseus agrees to a public tournament between the two for Emilia's hand. Each warrior will be allowed three companions to assist them. The loser and his companion knights will be executed.

Meanwhile, the abandoned Jailer's Daughter, distraught from love for Palamon and fear for her father's and her own safety, goes mad. She is saved (?) by a devoted but unnamed Wooer, who courts her disguised as Palamon. Arcite wins the tournament but is killed in a fall from his horse. Before he dies, the two young noblemen are reconciled, and Arcite bequeaths his bride to his friend.

ROLES

Theseus [/'θi:sju:s/ or /'θi:siəs/] (m)

Duke of Athens, husband of Hippolyta. Warrior, ruler, tyrant? Has a bit of a temper and a “deep friendship” with Pirithous.

Palamon [/'pʌlɪmən/] (m) & **Arcite** [/'a:kɪt/] (m)

The kinsmen. Exceedingly manly, tough, handsome and noble. The only thing they love more than themselves is their honour.

Jailer's Daughter (w)

Star of the subplot. Falls in love with Palamon and frees him from prison, risking her father's life. Her love (or lust?) is not requited and she goes mad when she gets lost in the woods. Sings a lot.

Emilia (w)

Sister to Hippolyta, Amazonian princess and the kinsmen's object of desire. Knows what she doesn't want, (the kinsmen and senseless violence), but maybe not quite what she *does* want.

Hippolyta [/'hɪ'pɒlɪtə/] (w)

Warrior Queen of the Amazons. Strong and fierce, but bested in war and wife'd by Theseus. Can be just as bloodthirsty as her husband, but with a kinder heart.

Pirithous [/'pɪrɪθəs/ or /,pɪ'rɪθʊ.əs/] (m, potentially x)

“famous classical example of friendship”. Can't help himself commenting on how “manly” and “noble” the other male characters are.

Woman (w)

Emilia's handmaid. A bit of a flirt.

Jailer (x)

Runs the prison. Maybe not that great as his job. Or as a parent.

Wooper (x, preference for m)

Suitor to the Jailer's Daughter. Not the smartest, but means well.

Doctor (x)

Called in to cure the Jailer's Daughter's madness. Bit of a weirdo.

Schoolmaster (x)

Organises the big dance with the wastelanders. Pompous, pretentious pedant.

Artesius (x)

Athenian warrior.

Roles without an audition text:

Messenger (x)

Delivers messages. Enthusiastically. Enjoys gossip.

Three Queens (w)

Urge Theseus to go to war so they can bury their husbands.

Jailer's Brother (x)

Helps with “curing” the Jailer's Daughter.

Valerius (x)

Theban warrior and squire to Palamon.

Musician (x)

A musician lol

Five Countrymen

Wastelanders celebrating that they're not dead yet (dancers).

Five Countrywomen

Wastelanders celebrating that they're not dead yet (dancers).

Knights

Noble followers of the kinsmen.

Scene I.3 Pirithous, Hippolyta, Emilia (pp. 3 – 5)

Theseus, Hippolyta's husband and Emilia's brother-in-law, is going to war. Pirithous, his best friend is joining him, and the women accompany him for a bit. Male friendships are one of the driving forces of the play, but in this scene, the most important relationship is between Emilia and her dead friend, Flavina. Flavina might have been more than just a friend, just like there might be more than "friendship" between Theseus and Pirithous ...

PIRITHOUS

No further.

HIPPOLYTA

Sir, farewell. Repeat my wishes
To our great lord, of whose success I dare not
Make any timorous question. Speed to him!
Store never hurts good governors.

PIRITHOUS

Though I know
His ocean needs not my poor drops, yet they
Must yield their tribute there. *[To Emilia]* My precious maid,
Those best affections that the heavens infuse
In their best-tempered pieces keep enthroned
In your dear heart!

EMILIA

Thanks, sir. Remember me
To our all-royal brother. Our hearts
Are in his army, in his tent.

HIPPOLYTA

In 's bosom.
We have been soldiers, and we cannot weep
When our friends don their helms or put to sea,
Or tell of babes broached on the lance, or women
That have boil'd their infants in the tears they wept
At killing them, and after eat them. Then if
You stay to see of us such spinsters, we
Should hold you here forever.

PIRITHOUS

Peace be to you
As I pursue this war, which shall be then
Beyond further requiring. *[Exit Pirithous.]*

(continued)

EMILIA

How his longing
Follows his friend! Have you observèd him
Since our great lord departed?

HIPPOLYTA

With much labor,
And I did love him for 't. They two have cabined
In many as dangerous as poor a corner,
Peril and want contending. Their knot of love,
Tied, weaved, entangled, with so true, so long,
And with a finger of so deep a cunning,
May be outworn, never undone.

EMILIA

I was acquainted
Once with a time when I enjoyed a playfellow;
You were at wars when she the grave enriched.

HIPPOLYTA

'Twas Flavina.

EMILIA

Yes.
You talk of Pirithous' and Theseus' love.
Theirs has more ground, is more maturely seasoned,
But I,
And she I sigh and spoke of, were things innocent,
Loved for we did, and like the elements
That know not what nor why, yet do effect
Rare issues by their operance, our souls
Did so to one another. What she liked
Was then of me approved, what not, condemned,
No more arraignment. The flower that I would pluck
And put between my breasts—Oh, then but beginning
To swell about the blossom—she would long
Till she had such another, and commit it
To the like innocent cradle, where, Phoenix-like,
They died in perfume. Her affections—pretty,
Though happily hers careless were—I followed
For my most serious decking. This rehearsal—
Which fury-innocent knows well comes in
Like old importment's bastard—has this end,
That the true love 'tween maid and maid may be
More than in sex dividual.

(continued)

Scene I.2 Palamon, Arcite (pp. 6 – 7)

Palamon and Arcite reside in Thebes with their uncle Creon. They resent the city and their uncle for being corrupt and decadent and debate whether to leave the city.

ARCITE

Dear Palamon, dearer in love than blood
 And our prime cousin, let us leave the city
 Thebes, and the temptings in 't, before we further
 Sully our gloss of youth.

PALAMON

Your advice
 Is cried up with example. What strange ruins,
 Since first we went to school, may we perceive
 Walking in Thebes! Scars and bare weeds
 The gain o' th' martialist, and now mocked
 By peace for whom he fought.

ARCITE

'Tis not this
 I did begin to speak of. This is virtue
 Of no respect in Thebes. I spake of Thebes—
 How dangerous, if we will keep our honors,
 It is for our residing, where every evil
 Hath a good colour; where every seeming good's
 A certain evil.

PALAMON

'Tis in our power
 {To} be masters of our manners. What need I
 Affect another's gait, which is not catching
 Where there is faith? Or to be fond upon
 Another's way of speech, when by mine own
 I may be reasonably conceived—saved too,
 Speaking it truly? That which rips my bosom
 Almost to th' heart's—

ARCITE

Our Uncle Creon.

PALAMON

He.
 A most unbounded tyrant, whose successes
 Makes the gods unfeared and villainy assured
 Beyond its power there's nothing; Let
 The blood of mine that's sib to him be sucked
 From me with leeches; let them break and fall
 Off me with that corruption.

(continued)

ARCITE

Clear-spirited cousin,
Let's leave his court, that we may nothing share
Of his loud infamy; and we must
Be vile or disobedient, not his kinsmen
In blood unless in quality.

PALAMON

Nothing truer.
I think the echoes of his shames have deafed
The ears of heav'nly justice.

Scene I.4 Theseus, Artesius

Theseus returns victorious. He defeated Creon and returns the bones of the dead kings to the Queens (he's talking to them in the first paragraph). The unconscious bodies of Palamon and Arcite are brought in and, although they were his enemies, he decides to let them live.

THESEUS

Th' impartial gods, who from the mounted heavens
View us their mortal herd, behold who err
And, in their time, chastise. Go and find out
The bones of your dead lords and honor them
With treble ceremony; rather than a gap
Should be in their dear rites, we would supply 't;
But those we will depute which shall invest
You in your dignities and even each thing
Our haste does leave imperfect. *[Exeunt Queens.]*
What are those?

ARTESIUS

Men of great quality, as may be judged
By their equipment. Some of Thebes have told us
They are sisters' children, nephews to the King.

THESEUS

By th' helm of Mars, I saw them in the war,
Make lanes in troops aghast. I fixed my note
Constantly on them, for they were a mark
Worth a god's view. What prisoner was 't that told me
When I enquired their names?

ARTESIUS

Wi' leave, they're called
Arcite and Palamon.

THESEUS

'Tis right; those, those.
They are not dead?

ARTESIUS

Yet they breathe
And have the name of men.

THESEUS

Then like men use 'em.
For forty-thousandfold we had rather have 'em
Prisoners to us than Death. For our love
And great Apollo's mercy, all our best
Their best skill tender.—Lead into the city,
Where, having bound things scattered, we will post
To Athens 'fore our army.

[Flourish. Exeunt all.]

Scene II.1 Jailer, Wooer, Jailer's Daughter (pp. 9 – 10)

The Jailer and the Wooer talk about the Wooer's intention to marry the Jailer's Daughter. When the daughter enters, the conversation shifts to the celebrity inmates: the handsome, noble, strong, manly, dashing kinsmen, who appear as from a different planet compared to the rather squalid life in and around the prison. NB: This scene is entirely in prose.

JAILER

I may depart with little while I live; something I may cast to you, not much. Alas, the prison I keep, though it be for great ones, yet they seldom come. I am given out to be better lined than it can appear to me report is a true speaker. I would I were really that I am delivered to be. Marry, what I have, be it what it will, I will assure upon my daughter at the day of my death.

WOOER

Sir, I demand no more than your own offer, and I will estate your daughter in what I have promised.

JAILER

Well, we will talk more of this when the solemnity is past. But have you a full promise of her? When that shall be seen, I tender my consent.

ENTER the JAILER'S DAUGHTER, carrying rushes.

WOOER

I have sir. Here she comes.

JAILER

Your friend and I have chanced to name you here, upon the old business. But no more of that now; so soon as the court hurry is over, we will have an end of it. I' th' meantime, look tenderly to the two prisoners. I can tell you they are princes.

DAUGHTER

These strewings are for their chamber. 'Tis pity they are in prison, and 'twere pity they should be out. The prison itself is proud of 'em, and they have all the world in their chamber.

JAILER

They are famed to be a pair of absolute men.

(continued)

DAUGHTER

By my troth, I think fame but stammers
'em. They stand a grise above the reach of report.

JAILER

I heard them reported in the battle to be the only doers.

DAUGHTER

Nay, most likely, for they are noble suff'ers.
I marvel how they would have looked had they
been victors, that with such a constant nobility enforce
a freedom out of bondage, making misery
their mirth and affliction a toy to jest at.

JAILER

Do they so?

DAUGHTER

It seems to me they have no more sense
of their captivity than I of ruling Athens. They eat
well, look merrily, discourse of many things, but
nothing of their own restraint and disasters. Yet
sometimes a divided sigh, martyred as 'twere i' th'
deliverance, will break from one of them—when
the other presently gives it so sweet a rebuke that
I could wish myself a sigh to be so chid, or at least
a sigher to be comforted.

WOOER

I never saw 'em.

JAILER

The Duke himself came privately in the night,
and so did they.
What the reason of it is, I know not. Look, yonder
they are; that's Arcite looks out.

DAUGHTER

No, sir, no, that's Palamon. Arcite is the
lower of the twain; you may perceive a part of him.

JAILER

Go to, leave your pointing; they would not
make us their object. Out of their sight.

DAUGHTER

It is a holiday to look on them. Gods, the
diff'rence of men!

Scene II.2 Palamon, Arcite (pp. 11 – 14)

Palamon and Arcite are in prison. They take comfort in each other's company, but everything changes once Palamon catches sight of Emilia. This scene is funny, but also shows the kinsmen's capacity for narcissism and deluding themselves.

PALAMON

How do you, noble cousin?

ARCITE

How do you, sir?

PALAMON

Why, strong enough to laugh at misery
And bear the chance of war; yet we are prisoners.

ARCITE

Let's think this prison holy sanctuary
To keep us from corruption of worse men.
We are young and yet desire the ways of honor
That liberty and common conversation,
The poison of pure spirits, might like women
Woo us to wander from.
We are an endless mine to one another;
We are one another's wife, ever begetting
New births of love; we are father, friends, acquaintance,
we are, one in another, families;
I am your heir, and you are mine. This place
Is our inheritance. Were we at liberty,
A wife might part us lawfully, or business;
Quarrels consume us; envy of ill men
Crave our acquaintance. A thousand chances,
Were we from hence, would sever us.

PALAMON

You have made me—

I thank you, cousin Arcite—almost wanton
With my captivity. What a misery
It is to live abroad and everywhere!
What had we been, old in the court of Creon,
Where sin is justice? Cousin Arcite,
Had not the loving gods found this place for us,
We had died as they do, ill old men, unwept,
And had their epitaphs, the people's curses.
Shall I say more?

ARCITE

I would hear you still.

(continued)

PALAMON You shall.
Is there record of any two that loved
Better than we do, Arcite?

ARCITE Sure there cannot.

PALAMON
I do not think it possible our friendship
Should ever leave us.

ARCITE Till our deaths it cannot.

[Palamon catches sight of Emilia.]

Speak on, sir.
Cousin, cousin! How do you, sir? Why, Palamon!

PALAMON
Never till now I was in prison, Arcite.

ARCITE
Why, what's the matter, man?

PALAMON Behold, and wonder!
By heaven, she is a goddess.

ARCITE
[sees Emilia] Ha!

PALAMON Do reverence.
She is a goddess, Arcite.

ARCITE
She is wondrous fair.

PALAMON She is all the beauty extant.
What think you of this beauty?

ARCITE 'Tis a rare one.

PALAMON
Is 't but a rare one?

(continued)

ARCITE

Yes, a matchless beauty.

PALAMON

Might not a man well lose himself and love her?

ARCITE

I cannot tell what you have done; I have,
Beshrew mine eyes for 't! Now I feel my shackles.

PALAMON

You love her, then?

ARCITE

Who would not?

PALAMON

And desire her?

ARCITE

Before my liberty.

PALAMON

I saw her first.

ARCITE

That's nothing.

PALAMON

But it shall be.

ARCITE

I saw her, too.

PALAMON

Yes, but you must not love her.

ARCITE

I will not, as you do, to worship her
As she is heavenly and a blessèd goddess.
I love her as a woman, to enjoy her.
So both may love.

PALAMON

You shall not love at all.

(continued)

ARCITE

Not love at all!

Who shall deny me?

PALAMON

I, that first saw her; I that took possession
First with mine eye of all those beauties
In her revealed to mankind. If thou lov'st her,
Thou art a traitor, Arcite. Friendship, blood,
And all the ties between us I disclaim
If thou once think upon her.

Scene II.2 Emilia, Woman

This happens outside the prison's window and contrasts with the kinsmen scene. Their distance in social status is quite high, but maybe not in other things.

EMILIA

What flower is this?

WOMAN

'Tis called narcissus, madam.

EMILIA

That was a fair boy certain, but a fool
To love himself. Were there not maids enough?
Or were they all hard-hearted?

WOMAN

They could not be to one so fair.

EMILIA

Thou wouldst not.

WOMAN

I think I should not, madam.

EMILIA

That's a good wench.
But take heed to your kindness, though.

WOMAN

Why, madam?

EMILIA

Men are mad things.
Canst not thou work such flowers in silk, wench?

WOMAN

Yes.

EMILIA

The sun grows high. Let's walk in. Keep this flower.
We'll see how near art can come near its colour.
I am wondrous merry-hearted. I could laugh now.

WOMAN

I could lie down, I am sure.

EMILIA

And take one with you?

WOMAN

That's as we bargain, madam.

EMILIA

We'll agree, then.

Scene II.5 Emilia, Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, Arcite (pp. 16 – 18)

Arcite, disguised as a wastelander, won a sporting competition and is presented to the duke. Pirithous and the women fawn over him (Emilia maybe less so), and Theseus rewards Arcite by making him Emilia's servant.

[ENTER Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, Emilia; Arcite in disguise with a garland.]

THESEUS *[to Arcite]*

You have done worthily.
Whate'er you are, you run the best and wrestle
That these times can allow.

ARCITE

I am proud to please you.

THESEUS

What country bred you?

ARCITE

This; but far off, prince.

THESEUS

Are you a gentleman?

ARCITE

My father said so,
And to those gentle uses gave me life.

THESEUS

What profess you?

ARCITE

A little of all noble qualities.
I dare not praise
My feat in horsemanship, yet they that knew me
Would say it was my best piece. Last, and greatest,
I would be thought a soldier.

THESEUS

You are perfect.

PIRITHOUS

[to Emilia] Upon my soul, a proper man.

EMILIA

He is so.

(continued)

PIRITHOUS

[to Hippolyta] How do you like him, lady?

HIPPOLYTA

I admire him.

PIRITHOUS

Mark how his virtue, like a hidden sun,
Breaks through his baser garments.

HIPPOLYTA

He's well got, sure.

THESEUS

[to Arcite] What made you seek this place, sir?

ARCITE

Noble Theseus,

To purchase name and do my ablest service
To such a well-found wonder as thy worth;
For only in thy court, of all the world,
Dwells fair-eyed Honor.

PIRITHOUS

All his words are worthy.

THESEUS

[to Arcite] Sir, we are much indebted to your travel,
Nor shall you lose your wish.—Pirithous,
Dispose of this fair gentleman.

PIRITHOUS

Thanks, Theseus.—

[to Arcite] Whate'er you are, you're mine, and I shall give you
To a most noble service: to this lady, *[He brings Arcite to Emilia.]*
This bright young virgin. Pray observe her goodness;
Now, as your due, you're hers. Kiss her fair hand, sir.

ARCITE

Sir, you're a noble giver.—Dearest beauty,
Thus let me seal my vowed faith. *[He kisses her hand.]*
When your servant,
Your most unworthy creature, but offends you,
Command him die, he shall.

(continued)

EMILIA

That were too cruel.
If you deserve well, sir, I shall soon see 't.
You're mine, and somewhat better than your rank
I'll use you.

PIRITHOUS

[to Arcite] I'll see you furnished, and because you say
You are a horseman, I must needs entreat you
This afternoon to ride—but 'tis a rough one.

ARCITE

I like it better, prince; I shall not then
Freeze in my saddle.

THESEUS

[to Hippolyta] Sweet, you must be ready,—
And you, Emilia,—and you, friend,—and all,
Tomorrow by the sun.—Wait well, sir,
Upon your mistress.—Emily, I hope
He shall not go afoot.

EMILIA

That were a shame, sir,
While I have horses.—Take your choice, and what
You want at any time, let me but know it.

PIRITHOUS

Sister, beshrew my heart, you have a servant
That, if I were a woman, would be master;
But you are wise.

EMILIA

I hope too wise for that, sir.

Scene II.6 Jailer's Daughter

The Jailer's Daughter has freed Palamon from prison. She knows that this act means death for her father and for herself if she is caught, and she knows that Palamon, nephew to a king, would normally never throw a second glance at a lowly jailer's daughter. But her hopes and her feelings are stronger.

DAUGHTER

Let all the dukes and all the devils roar!
 He is at liberty. I have ventured for him,
 And out I have brought him; to a little wood
 A mile hence I have sent him, for yet
 His iron bracelets are not off. O Love,
 What a stout-hearted child thou art! My father
 Durst better have endured cold iron than done it.
 I love him beyond love and beyond reason
 Or wit or safety. I have made him know it;
 I care not, I am desperate. If the law
 Find me and then condemn me for 't, some wenches,
 Some honest-hearted maids, will sing my dirge
 And tell to memory my death was noble,
 Dying almost a martyr. That way he takes
 I purpose is my way too. Sure he cannot
 Be so unmanly as to leave me here.
 If he do, maids will not so easily
 Trust men again. And yet he has not thanked me
 For what I have done; no, not so much as kissed me,
 And that, methinks, is not so well. Yet I hope,
 When he considers more, this love of mine
 Will take more root within him. Let him do
 What he will with me, so he use me kindly;
 For use me so he shall, or I'll proclaim him,
 And to his face, no man. I'll presently
 Provide him necessaries and pack my clothes up,
 And where there is a path of ground I'll venture,
 So he be with me. By him like a shadow
 I'll ever dwell. Within this hour the hubbub
 Will be all o'er the prison. I am then
 Kissing the man they look for. Farewell, father!
 Get many more such prisoners and such daughters,
 And shortly you may keep yourself. Now to him.

Scene III.2 Jailer's Daughter

The Jailer's Daughter can't find Palamon and thinks him dead. She starts to fully realise the foolishness of her actions and the consequences for herself and for the people she holds dear.

DAUGHTER

He has mistook the bush I meant, is gone
 After his fancy. 'Tis now well-nigh morning.
 No matter; would it were perpetual night,
 And darkness lord o' th' world. I have heard
 Strange howls this livelong night; why may 't not be
 Creatures have made prey of him? He has no weapons;
 He cannot run; the jingling of his shackles
 Might call fell things to listen, who have in them
 A sense to know a man unarmed and can
 Smell where resistance is. I'll set it down
 He's torn to pieces; so much for that.
 Be bold to ring the bell. How stand I then?
 All's done when he is gone. No, no, I lie.
 My father's to be hanged for his escape;
 Myself to beg, if I prized life so much
 As to deny my act, but that I would not,
 Should I try death by dozens. I am moped;
 Food took I none these two days;
 Sipped some water. I have not closed mine eyes
 Save when my lids scoured off their brine. Alas,
 Dissolve, my life! Let not my sense unsettle,
 Lest I should drown, or stab, or hang myself.
 So, which way now?
 The best way is the next way to a grave;
 Each errant step beside is torment.
 All offices are done
 Save what I fail in. But the point is this—
 An end, and that is all.

Scene III.3 Palamon, Arcite (pp. 21 – 22)

After both escaped prison, the kinsmen's fates have differed quite a bit: Arcite is Emilia's servant at Theseus's court, whereas Palamon has been living in the woods. Arcite vowed to nurture Palamon back to his former strength before a duel should decide who of them gets Emilia. They share a tender moment reminiscing former conquests before they once again begin to quarrel.

ARCITE

Is 't not mad lodging
Here in the wild woods, cousin?

PALAMON

Give me more wine. Here, Arcite, to the wenches
We have known in our days! The Lord Steward's
daughter—
Do you remember her?

ARCITE

After you, coz.

PALAMON

She loved a black-haired man.

ARCITE

She did so; well, sir?

PALAMON

And I have heard some call him Arcite, and—

ARCITE

Out with 't, faith.

PALAMON

She met him in an arbor.
What did she there, coz? Play o' th' virginals?

ARCITE

Something she did, sir—

PALAMON

Made her groan a month for 't.
Or two, or three, or ten.

ARCITE

The Marshal's sister
Had her share, too, as I remember, cousin,
Else there be tales abroad. You'll pledge her?

PALAMON

Yes.

(continued)

ARCITE

A pretty brown wench 'tis. There was a time
When young men went a-hunting...
Heigh ho!

PALAMON

For Emily, upon my life! Fool,
Away with this strained mirth. I say again
That sigh was breathed for Emily. Base cousin,
Dar'st thou break first?

ARCITE

You are wide.

PALAMON

By heaven and Earth,
There's nothing in thee honest.

ARCITE

Then I'll leave you.
You are a beast now.

PALAMON

As thou mak'st me, traitor.

ARCITE

There's all things needful: files and shirts and perfumes.
I'll come again some two hours hence and bring
That that shall quiet all.

PALAMON

A sword and armor.

ARCITE

Fear me not. You are now too foul. Farewell.
Get off your trinkets; you shall want naught.

PALAMON

Sirrah—

ARCITE

I'll hear no more.

[Exit ARCITE]

PALAMON

If he keep touch, he dies for 't.

[Exit PALAMON]

Scene III.5 Schoolmaster, Bavian, Countryman

The Schoolmaster organizes the wastelanders' dance – an important task, but also a difficult one, as apparently no one listens to him or understands his genius. He is learned (so learned), but nevertheless has a penchant for being a bit of a drama queen. NB: This is in prose.

SCHOOLMASTER

Fie, fie,
 What tediousness and disinsanity
 Is here among ye! Have my rudiments
 Been labored so long with ye, milked unto ye,
 And even the very pinnacle of my understanding laid upon ye,
 And do you still cry "Where?" and "How?" and "Wherefore?"
 You most coarse-frieze capacities, you wasteland philistines,
 have I said "Thus let be" and "There let be"
 and "Then let be" and no man understand me? *Proh
 deum, medius fidius*, you are all dunces!
 Here stand I; here the Duke comes; there are you,
 Close in the thicket; the Duke appears; I meet him
 And unto him I utter learned things
 And many figures; he hears, and nods, and hums,
 And then cries "Rare!" and I go forward. At length,
 I fling my cap up—mark there! Then do you
 Break comely out before him; like true lovers,
 Cast yourselves in a body decently,
 and sweetly, by a figure, trace and turn, boys.
 Draw up the company and see what's wanting.
 Where's the Bavian?—My friend, carry your tail
 without offense or scandal to the ladies; and be
 sure you tumble with audacity and manhood, and
 when you bark, do it with judgment.

BAVIAN

Yes, sir.

SCHOOLMASTER

Quo usque tandem? Here is a woman wanting.
 An eel and woman, a learned poet says,
 unless by th' tail and with thy teeth thou hold,
 will either fail. In manners, this was false position.

THIRD COUNTRYMAN

What shall we determine, sir?

SCHOOLMASTER

Nothing. Our business is become a
 nullity, yea, and a woeful and a piteous nullity.

Scene IV.2 Emilia

Theseus has ordered a competition between the kinsmen, the winner gets Emilia's hand, the loser dies. Emilia thinks she can prevent either of them dying if she chooses one of them for her husband. But coming to a decision is impossible.

EMILIA

Yet I may bind those wounds up that must open
And bleed to death for my sake else. I'll choose,
And end their strife. Two such young handsome men
Shall never fall for me.

[Looks at one of the pictures.]

Good heaven,

What a sweet face has Arcite! What an eye,
Of what a fiery sparkle and quick sweetness,
Has this young prince! Here Love himself sits smiling;
What a brow,
Of what a spacious majesty, he carries. *[Looks at the other picture.]*

Palamon

Is but his foil, to him a mere dull shadow;
Of all this sprightly sharpness not a smile.
Yet these that we count errors may become him;
O, who can find the bent of woman's fancy?
I am a fool; my reason is lost in me;
I have no choice, and I have lied so lewdly
That women ought to beat me. On my knees
I ask thy pardon: Palamon, thou art alone
And only beautiful, and these the eyes,
These the bright lamps of beauty, that command
And threaten love, and what young maid dare cross 'em?
What a bold gravity, and yet inviting,

Has this brown manly face! Lie there, Arcite. *[She puts aside his picture.]*

I am utterly lost, my virgin's faith has fled me.
For if my brother but even now had asked me
Whether I loved, I had run mad for Arcite.
Now, if my sister, more for Palamon.
Stand both together. Now, come ask me, brother.
Alas, I know not! Ask me now, sweet sister.
I may go look! What a mere child is Fancy,
That, having two fair toys of equal sweetness,
Cannot distinguish, but must cry for both.
What sins have I committed,
That my unspotted youth must now be soiled
With blood of princes, and my chastity
must be the sacrifice to my unhappy beauty?

Scene V.2 Doctor, Jailer, Wooer (pp. 25 – 26)

The Jailer's Daughter has gone mad. The doctor proposes that, in order to heal her, the wooer should disguise himself as Palamon and indulge whatever idea pops into the Jailer's Daughter's head. The Jailer has his concerns about the treatment.

DOCTOR

Has this advice I told you done any good upon her?

WOOER

O, very much. The maids that kept her company
Have half-persuaded her that I am Palamon;
Within this half-hour she came smiling to me,
And asked me what I would eat, and when I would kiss her.
I told her "Presently," and kissed her twice.

DOCTOR

'Twas well done; twenty times had been far better,
For there the cure lies mainly.

WOOER

She would have me sing.

DOCTOR

You did so?

WOOER

No.

DOCTOR

'Twas very ill done, then.
You should observe her every way.
If she entreat again, do anything.
Lie with her, if she ask you.

JAILER

Woah there, doctor!

DOCTOR

Yes, in the way of cure.

JAILER

But first, by your leave,
I' th' way of chastity.

DOCTOR

That's but a niceness.
Ne'er cast your child away for chastity.
Cure her first this way; then if she will be chaste,
She has the path before her.

(continued)

JAILER Thank ye, doctor.

DOCTOR
Pray bring her in and let's see how she is.

JAILER
I will, and tell her
Her Palamon stays for her. But, doctor,
Methinks you are i' th' wrong still. [Exit **JAILER**].

DOCTOR
Go, go.
You fathers are fine fools. Her chastity?
It would take forever till we find *that*!

WOOER
Why, do you think she is not chaste, sir?

DOCTOR
How old is she?

WOOER
She's eighteen.

DOCTOR
She may be.
But that's all one; 'tis nothing to our purpose.
Whate'er her father says, if you perceive
Her mood inclining that way that I spoke of,
that is, the way of flesh—you have me?

WOOER
Yes, very well, sir.

DOCTOR
Please her appetite,
And do it home; it cures her, *ipso facto*,
The melancholy humour that infects her.

WOOER
I am of your mind, doctor.

DOCTOR
You'll find it so.

Scene V.3 Emilia, Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta (pp. 27 – 28)

The competition between the kinsmen is about to begin, and most are looking forward to the spectacle. Emilia, however, is adamant that she won't go, despite protestations by the duke and her sister.

EMILIA

I'll no step further.

PIRITHOUS

Will you lose this sight?

EMILIA

I had rather see a brawl between two whimps
Than this decision; ev'ry blow that falls
Threats a brave life and sounds more like
A bell than blade. I will stay here.
It is enough my hearing shall be punished
With what shall happen; I shan't taint mine eye
With dread sights it may shun.

PIRITHOUS

Sir, my good lord,
Your sister will no further.

THESEUS

O, she must.
She shall see deeds of honor — you must be present;
You are the victor's meed, the price and garland
To crown the question's title.

EMILIA

Pardon me.
If I were there, I'd wink.

THESEUS

You must be there;
This trial is as 'twere i' th' night, and you
The only star to shine.

EMILIA

I am extinct;
There is but envy in that light which shows
The one the other.

HIPPOLYTA

You must go.

EMILIA

In faith, I will not.

(continued)

THESEUS

Why, the knights must kindle
Their valor at your eye. Know, of this war
You are the treasure, and must needs be by
To give the service pay.

EMILIA

Sir, pardon me.
The title of a kingdom may be tried
Out of itself.

THESEUS

Well, well, then; at your pleasure.
Those that remain with you could wish their office
To any of their enemies.

HIPPOLYTA

Farewell, sister.
I am like to know your husband 'fore yourself
By some small start of time. He whom the gods
Do of the two know best, I pray them he
Be made your lot.