

# The Two Noble Kinsmen

## 5.2

*Enter Palamon and his Knights with the former observance*

**PALAMON** *(to his Knights)*

Our stars must glister with new fire, or be  
Today extinct. Our argument is love,  
Which if the goddess of it grant, she gives  
Victory too. Then blend your spirits with mine,  
You whose free nobleness do make my cause 5  
Your personal hazard. To the goddess Venus  
Commend we our proceeding, and implore  
Her power unto our party.

*Here they kneel before the altar, [fall on their faces  
then on their knees again]*

*(Praying to Venus)* Hail, sovereign queen of secrets,  
who hast power

To call the fiercest tyrant from his rage 10  
And weep unto a girl; that hast the might,  
Even with an eye-glance, to choke Mars's drum  
And turn th'alarum to whispers; that canst make  
A cripple flourish with his crutch, and cure him  
Before Apollo; that mayst force the king 15  
To be his subject's vassal, and induce  
Stale gravity to dance; the polled bachelor  
Whose youth, like wanton boys through bonfires,  
Have skipped thy flame, at seventy thou canst catch  
And make him to the scorn of his hoarse throat 20  
Abuse young lays of love. What godlike power  
Hast thou not power upon? To Phoebus thou  
Add'st flames hotter than his±±the heavenly fires  
Did scorch his mortal son, thine him. The huntress,  
All moist and cold, some say, began to throw 25  
Her bow away and sigh. Take to thy grace  
Me, thy vowed soldier, who do bear thy yoke  
As 'twere a wreath of roses, yet is heavier  
Than lead itself, stings more than nettles.  
I have never been foul-mouthed against thy law; 30

Ne'er revealed secret, for I knew none; would not,  
 Had I kenned all that were. I never practised  
 Upon man's wife, nor would the libels read  
 Of liberal wits. I never at great feasts  
 Sought to betray a beauty, but have blushed 35  
 At simp'ring sirs that did. I have been harsh  
 To large confessors, and have hotly asked them  
 If they had mothers±±I had one, a woman,  
 And women 'twere they wronged. I knew a man  
 Of eighty winters, this I told them, who 40  
 A lass of fourteen bridged±±'twas thy power  
 To put life into dust. The ageÁd cramp  
 Had screwed his square foot round,  
 The gout had knit his fingers into knots,  
 Torturing convulsions from his globy eyes 45  
 Had almost drawn their spheres, that what was life  
 In him seemed torture. This anatomy  
 Had by his young fair fere a boy, and I  
 Believed it was his, for she swore it was,  
 And who would not believe her? Brief±±I am 50  
 To those that prate and have done, no companion;  
 To those that boast and have not, a defier;  
 To those that would and cannot, a rejoicer.  
 Yea, him I do not love that tells close offices  
 The foulest way, nor names concealments in 55  
 The boldest language. Such a one I am,  
 And vow that lover never yet made sigh  
 Truer than I. O, then, most soft sweet goddess,  
 Give me the victory of this question, which  
 Is true love's merit, and bless me with a sign 60  
 Of thy great pleasure.

*Here music is heard, doves are seen to flutter. They  
 fall again upon their faces, then on their knees*

O thou that from eleven to ninety reign'st  
 In mortal bosoms, whose chase is this world  
 And we in herds thy game, I give thee thanks  
 For this fair token, which, being laid unto 65  
 Mine innocent true heart, arms in assurance  
 My body to this business. *(To his Knights)* Let us rise  
 And bow before the goddess.

*They rise and bow*

Time comes

on.

*Exeunt*