

The Two Noble Kinsmen

2.5

Short flourish of cornetts and shouts within. Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, Emilia, Arcite disguised, with a garland, and attendants

THESEUS

You have done worthily. I have not seen
Since Hercules a man of tougher sinews.
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. 5

THESEUS

Are you a gentleman?

ARCITE

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

THESEUS

Are you his heir?

ARCITE

His youngest, sir.

THESEUS

Your father

Sure is a happy sire, then. What proves you?

ARCITE

A little of all noble qualities. 10
I could have kept a hawk and well have hollered
To a deep cry of dogs; 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. 15

PIRITHOUS

Upon my soul, a proper man.

EMILIA

He is so.

PIRITHOUS (to Hippolyta)

How do you like him, lady?

HIPPOLYTA

I admire him.

I have not seen so young a man so noble±±
If he say true±±of his sort.

EMILIA Believe
 His mother was a wondrous handsome woman±± 20
 His face methinks goes that way.

HIPPOLYTA But his body
 And fiery mind illustrate a brave father.

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, 25
 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 honour.

PIRITHOUS All his words are worthy.

THESEUS (to Arcite)
 Sir, we are much indebted to your travel, 30
 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,
 This bright young virgin; pray observe her goodness. 35
 You have honoured her fair birthday with your
 virtues,
 And as your due you're hers. Kiss her fair hand, sir.

ARCITE
 Sir, you're a noble giver. (To Emilia) Dearest beauty,
 Thus let me seal my vowed faith.
He kisses her hand

When your servant,
 Your most unworthy creature, but offends you, 40
 Command him die, he shall.

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 45
This afternoon to ride±±but 'tis a rough one.

ARCITE

I like him better, prince±±I shall not then
Freeze in my saddle.

THESEUS *(to Hippolyta)* Sweet, you must be ready±±
And you, Emilia, *[to Pirithous]* and you, friend±±and
all,

Tomorrow by the sun, to do observance 50
To flow'ry May in Dian's wood. *(To Arcite)* Wait well,
sir,

Upon your mistress.±±Emily, I hope
He shall not go afoot.

EMILIA That were a shame, sir,
While I have horses. *(To Arcite)* Take your choice, and
what

You want, at any time, let me but know it. 55
If you serve faithfully, I dare assure you,
You'll find a loving mistress.

ARCITE If I do not,
Let me find that my father ever hated±±
Disgrace and blows.

THESEUS Go, lead the way±±you have won it.
It shall be so: you shall receive all dues 60
Fit for the honour you have won. 'Twere wrong else.
(To Emilia) 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.
Flourish. Exeunt