

# The Two Noble Kinsmen

## 3.5

*Enter Gerald (a schoolmaster), five Countrymen, one of whom is dressed as a Babion, five Wenches, and Timothy, a taborer. All are attired as morris dancers*

**SCHOOLMASTER** Fie, fie,  
What tediousness and disinsanity  
Is here among ye! Have my rudiments  
Been laboured so long with ye, milked unto ye,  
And, by a figure, even the very plum-broth 5  
And marrow of my understanding laid upon ye?  
And do you still cry 'where?' and 'how?' and  
'wherefore?'  
You most coarse frieze capacities, ye jean judgements,  
Have I said, 'thus let be', and 'there let be',  
And 'then let be', and no man understand me? 10  
*Proh deum, medius fidius*—ye are all dunces.  
Forwhy, 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 learne'd things  
And many figures. He hears, and nods, and hums, 15  
And then cries, 'Rare!', and I go forward. At length  
I fling my cap up—mark there—then do you,  
As once did Meleager and the boar,  
Break comely out before him, like true lovers,  
Cast yourselves in a body decently, 20  
And sweetly, by a figure, trace and turn, boys.

**FIRST COUNTRYMAN**  
And sweetly we will do it, master Gerald.

**SECOND COUNTRYMAN**  
Draw up the company. Where's the taborer?

**THIRD COUNTRYMAN**  
Why, Timothy!

**TABORER** Here, my mad boys, have at ye!

**SCHOOLMASTER**  
But I say, where's these women?

**FOURTH COUNTRYMAN** Here's Friz and Madeline. 25

**SECOND COUNTRYMAN**

And little Luce with the white legs, and bouncing  
Barbara.

**FIRST COUNTRYMAN**

And freckled Nell, that never failed her master.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

Where be your ribbons, maids? Swim with your bodies  
And carry it sweetly and deliverly,  
And now and then a favour and a frisk. 30

**NELL**

Let us alone, sir.

**SCHOOLMASTER** Where's the rest o'th' music?

**THIRD COUNTRYMAN**

Dispersed as you commanded.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

Couple, then,  
And see what's wanting. Where's the babion?  
(*To the Babion*) My friend, carry your tail without  
offence  
Or scandal to the ladies; and be sure 35  
You tumble with audacity and manhood,  
And when you bark, do it with judgement.

**BABION**

Yes, sir.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

*Quousque tandem?* Here is a woman wanting!

**FOURTH COUNTRYMAN**

We may go whistle±±all the fat's i'th' fire.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

We have, 40  
As learneÁd authors utter, washed a tile;  
We have been *fatuus*, and laboured vainly.

**SECOND COUNTRYMAN**

This is that scornful piece, that scurvy hilding  
That gave her promise faithfully she would be here±±  
Cicely, the seamstress' daughter. 45  
The next gloves that I give her shall be dogskin.  
Nay, an she fail me once±±you can tell, Arcas,  
She swore by wine and bread she would not break.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

An eel and woman,  
A learneÁd poet says, unless by th' tail 50  
And with thy teeth thou hold, will either fail±±  
In manners this was false position.

**FIRST COUNTRYMAN**

A fire-ill take her! Does she flinch now?

**THIRD COUNTRYMAN** What

Shall we determine, sir?

**SCHOOLMASTER** Nothing;

Our business is become a nullity, 55

Yea, and a woeful and a piteous nullity.

**FOURTH COUNTRYMAN**

Now, when the credit of our town lay on it,  
 Now to be frampold, now to piss o'th' nettle!  
 Go thy ways±±I'll remember thee, I'll fit thee!

*Enter the Jailer's Daughter*

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER** (*sings*)

The *George Alow* came from the south, 60  
 From the coast of Barbary-a;  
 And there he met with brave gallants of war,  
 By one, by two, by three-a.  
 `Well hailed, well hailed, you jolly gallants,  
 And whither now are you bound-a? 65  
 O let me have your company  
 Till I come to the sound-a.'

There was three fools fell out about an owlet±±  
 The one he said it was an owl,  
 The other he said nay, 70  
 The third he said it was a hawk,  
 And her bells were cut away.

**THIRD COUNTRYMAN**

There's a dainty madwoman, master,  
 Comes i'th' nick, as mad as a March hare.  
 If we can get her dance, we are made again. 75  
 I warrant her, she'll do the rarest gambols.

**FIRST COUNTRYMAN**

A madwoman? We are made, boys.

**SCHOOLMASTER** (*to the Jailer's Daughter*)

And are you mad, good woman?

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER** I would be sorry else.  
 Give me your hand.

**SCHOOLMASTER** Why?

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER** I can tell your fortune.  
*[She examines his hand]*

You are a fool. Tell ten±±I have posed him. Buzz! 80

Friend, you must eat no white bread±±if you do,  
Your teeth will bleed extremely. Shall we dance, ho?  
I know you±±you're a tinker. Sirrah tinker,  
Stop no more holes but what you should.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

*Dii boni±±*

A tinker, damsel?

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER** Or a conjurer±± 85

Raise me a devil now and let him play  
*Qui passa o'th' bells and bones.*

**SCHOOLMASTER**

Go, take her,

And fluently persuade her to a peace.

*Et opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira, nec ignis±±*

Strike up, and lead her in.

**SECOND COUNTRYMAN** Come, lass, let's trip it. 90

**JAILER'S DAUGHTER** I'll lead.

**THIRD COUNTRYMAN** Do, do.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

Persuasively and cunningly±±

*Wind horns within*

away, boys,

I hear the horns. Give me some meditation,  
And mark your cue.

*Exeunt all but Gerald the Schoolmaster*

Pallas inspire me.

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*Enter Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta, Emilia, Arcite,  
and train*

**THESEUS** This way the stag took.

**SCHOOLMASTER** Stay and edify.

**THESEUS** What have we here?

**PIRITHOUS**

Some country sport, upon my life, sir.

**THESEUS** *(to the Schoolmaster)*

Well, sir, go forward±±we will edify. 100

Ladies, sit down±±we'll stay it.

*They sit: [Theseus] in a chair, the others on stools*

**SCHOOLMASTER**

Thou doughty Duke, all hail! All hail, sweet ladies.

**THESEUS** This is a cold beginning.

## SCHOOLMASTER

If you but favour, our country pastime made is.  
We are a few of those collected here, 105  
That ruder tongues distinguish `villager';  
And to say verity, and not to fable,  
We are a merry rout, or else a rabble,  
Or company, or, by a figure, chorus,  
That fore thy dignity will dance a morris. 110  
And I, that am the rectifier of all,  
By title *pedagogus*, that let fall  
The birch upon the breeches of the small ones,  
And humble with a ferula the tall ones,  
Do here present this machine, or this frame; 115  
And dainty Duke, whose doughty dismal fame  
From Dis to Daedalus, from post to pillar,  
Is blown abroad, help me, thy poor well-willer,  
And with thy twinkling eyes, look right and straight  
Upon this mighty `Moor'±±of mickle weight±± 120  
`Ice' now comes in, which, being glued together,  
Makes `morris', and the cause that we came hither.  
The body of our sport, of no small study,  
I first appear, though rude, and raw, and muddy,  
To speak, before thy noble grace, this tenor 125  
At whose great feet I offer up my penner.  
The next, the Lord of May and Lady bright;  
The Chambermaid and Servingman, by night  
That seek out silent hanging; then mine Host  
And his fat Spouse, that welcomes, to their cost, 130  
The galleÁd traveller, and with a beck'ning  
Informs the tapster to inflame the reck'ning;  
Then the beest-eating Clown; and next, the Fool;  
The babion with long tail and eke long tool,  
*Cum multis aliis* that make a dance±± 135  
Say `ay', and all shall presently advance.

## THESEUS

Ay, ay, by any means, dear dominie.

## PIRITHOUS

Produce.

## SCHOOLMASTER (*knocks for the dance*)

*Intrate filii*, come forth and foot it.

*[He flings up his cap.] Music.*

*[The Schoolmaster ushers in  
May Lord, May Lady.  
Servingman, Chambermaid.  
A Country Clown,  
or Shepherd, Country Wench.  
An Host, Hostess.  
A He-babion, She-babion.  
A He-fool, The Jailer's Daughter as  
She-fool.  
All these persons apparelled to the life, the men  
issuing out of one door and the wenches from the  
other. They dance a morris]*

Ladies, if we have been merry,  
And have pleased ye with a derry, 140  
And a derry, and a down,  
Say the schoolmaster's no clown.  
Duke, if we have pleased thee too,  
And have done as good boys should do,  
Give us but a tree or twain 145  
For a maypole, and again,  
Ere another year run out,  
We'll make thee laugh, and all this rout.

**THESEUS**

Take twenty, dominie. *(To Hippolyta)* How does my  
sweetheart?

**HIPPOLYTA**

Never so pleased, sir.

**EMILIA**

'Twas an excellent dance, 150  
And for a preface, I never heard a better.

**THESEUS**

Schoolmaster, I thank you. One see 'em all rewarded.

**PIRITHOUS**

And here's something to paint your pole withal.  
*He gives them money*

**THESEUS**

Now to our sports again.

**SCHOOLMASTER**

May the stag thou hunt'st stand long, 155  
And thy dogs be swift and strong;  
May they kill him without lets,  
And the ladies eat his dowsets.

*Exeunt Theseus and train. Wind horns within*  
Come, we are all made. *Dii deaeque omnes,*  
Ye have danced rarely, wenches.

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*Exeunt*