

The Two Noble Kinsmen

3.2

Enter the Jailer's Daughter, with a file

JAILER'S DAUGHTER

He has mistook the brake I meant, is gone
After his fancy. 'Tis now wellnigh morning.
No matter±±would it were perpetual night,
And darkness lord o'th' world. Hark, 'tis a wolf!
In me hath grief slain fear, and, but for one thing, 5
I care for nothing±±and that's Palamon.
I reckon not if the wolves would jaw me, so
He had this file. What if I hollered for him?
I cannot holler. If I whooped, what then?
If he not answered, I should call a wolf 10
And do him but that service. I have heard
Strange howls this livelong night±±why may't not be
They have made prey of him? He has no weapons;
He cannot run; the jangling of his gyves
Might call fell things to listen, who have in them 15
A sense to know a man unarmed, and can
Smell where resistance is. I'll set it down
He's torn to pieces: they howled many together
And then they fed on him. So much for that.
Be bold to ring the bell. How stand I then? 20
All's chared 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±± 25
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. 30
O state of nature, fail together in me,
Since thy best props are warped. So which way now?
The best way is the next way to a grave,
Each errant step beside is torment. Lo,

The moon is down, the crickets chirp, the screech-owl 35
Calls in the dawn. All offices are done
Save what I fail in: but the point is this,
An end, and that is all.
Exit