

TEACHER PACK

THE TWO NOBLE
KINSMEN

JOHN FLETCHER &
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

ABOUT THIS PACK

This pack supports the RSC's 2016 production of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, directed by Blanche McIntyre. The production opened on 17 August 2016 at the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The activities provided are specifically designed to support KS3-4 students attending the performance and studying *The Two Noble Kinsmen* in school, with extension activities suggested for older or more capable learners.

CONTENTS

About this Pack and Production	Page 2
Exploring the Story	Page 3
Nobility and Friendship	Page 5
Women in the Play	Page 6
Resources	Page 10

These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ
Notes from the production, background info or extracts



ACTIVITY
A practical or open space activity



WRITE
A classroom writing or discussion activity



LINKS
Useful web addresses and research tasks

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

In the 2016 production of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* Blanche McIntyre and designer Anna Fleischle have created a striking set for the Swan Theatre which you can see in the image opposite. Framing the thrust stage with iron bars, the action of the play has a constant sense of being watched, but also imprisoned. Anna and Blanche referenced fighting pits in their initial discussions about the set, looking to create the sense of the audience as spectators of violent sport in watching the events of the play unfold.

A play about two young men, separated by a conflict over a woman and forced to fight one another for the right to pursue her, this play explores chivalry, honour and nobility.



The set of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Photo by Donald Cooper.

The Two Noble Kinsmen has not been staged in Stratford by the RSC for 30 years and was also one of the first plays to be performed in the Swan Theatre when it opened in 1986. Written by William Shakespeare and collaborator John Fletcher, the play is rarely performed.

EXPLORING THE STORY

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

In the first few weeks of rehearsal Blanche spent time reading through scenes with the actors who appear in them, working out meaning together before getting it on its feet very quickly. Blanche emphasised the importance of playing with the text and trying things out, encouraging the actors to look at different ways of staging and experimenting with each scene to see what it brought out in the text.



SYNOPSIS

A full synopsis of the play is available at:

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-two-noble-kinsmen/the-plot>



ACTIVITY 1: THE STORY IN FIVE ACTS

The following activity will introduce students to the play in the five acts in which it was written. This play was written by John Fletcher and William Shakespeare, and it's widely believed that Shakespeare wrote the majority of Acts 1 and 5 and that Fletcher wrote most of Acts 2 - 4. Introducing the play this way may help you to introduce the question of the play's authorship.

- Organise students into groups of four or five and allocate each group one of the 'Acts' from the resource materials.
- Ask the groups to create a short version of their Act, showing each of the five main points of action they have been given and incorporating some of the language.
- Allow students time to prepare their act and encourage them to use one person in their group as a narrator to keep the story as clear as possible.
- Invite all the groups to come back together and watch each of the Acts, performed in order.
- As they watch, reflect with students on how the story changes from one act to another and whether they can see any differences in Fletcher's approach and Shakespeare's.
- Discuss how the play is often defined as a 'tragicomedy' and think about what this means. Is it true? Do they think it has more comedy or more tragedy and why?
- Develop this by asking students to create a single sentence or summary for the play that sums up what happens in it.
 - The following is a shortened version of the summary on the RSC website and offers an example:
Two best friends see a beautiful woman from their prison window and fall in love with her. One is released and goes after her into the forest and the other is freed by the jailer's daughter, who loves him, but he follows after the beautiful woman into the forest as well. The stage is set for absurd adventures and painful confusions in this study of the intoxication and strangeness of love.



ACTIVITY 2: DISCOVERING THE CHARACTERS

- Provide each student with one of the character descriptions and ask them to think about the character they have been assigned, looking at the list of actions they have been given as well. These actions are all things their character does in the play.
- Ask students to create a walk or way of moving and a single freeze frame which they think show what their character is like. Encourage them to think about experimenting, as Blanche and the company did in rehearsal, so their walk or way of moving does not have to be realistic but can be exaggerated to convey character.
- Invite students to then move around the room, using the walk they have created for their character. Each time you tell them to stop, ask students to adopt their freeze frame position, showing what their character is like.
- Encourage students to watch other people as they play, taking in as much as they can and thinking about what the other characters are like.
- Invite all the students who had a character profile with a 1 on it to hold their frozen picture and encourage all the students with a 2 on their profile to sit and face them. Ask the students who are sitting to appoint one person to stick the labels on the characters and allow them to walk through the frozen pictures and label each character. The students sitting are allowed to ask questions and the frozen characters can answer using the information from their profile.
- Allow group 1 to then question and label group 2 once all characters have been identified.
- Reflect with students on what kind of characters there are in this play. Are there any who feel out of place? Would it be easy to organise them into three or four groups, or not?



Jamie Wilkes as Arcite and James Corrigan as Palamon in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Photo by Donald Cooper.

NOBILITY AND FRIENDSHIP

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

To develop a deeper understanding of Arcite and Palamon's relationship, and outlook, the company had copies of Leon Gautier's code of chivalry and the Noble Habitas to look at the kind of qualities that these two characters might have prized. They also spent time interrogating the ways they are each described in the text, looking for key differences between them and shared references, drawing their impressions of the characters using evidence from the text.

Ask students to begin by thinking about what it means to be noble. Are people still noble now and what does it mean today? What do they think would be important to a 'noble' man; what might they prioritise?



ACTIVITY 3: KNIGHTS AND CHIVALRY

As the company did, encourage students to look at the extract in the resource materials describing Arcite and Palamon. This is taken from Emilia's speech in Act 5 Scene 3 where she tries to compare her two prospective husbands.

- Provide each student with the extract and task half the group to look at Arcite and half at Palamon.

- Ask students to work through the extract and pick out any descriptive words they can find, which help them to create an image of Arcite or Palamon, depending on the character they have been given.
- Allow students the opportunity to create a drawing of the character they have been introduced to, labelling it with features from the text.
 - The company did this exercise themselves, exploring the idea that these two characters and the knights that fight with them in Act 5 are put forward almost as caricatures of warriors in the text by others.
- Invite students to form pairs, matching those who have been looking at Arcite with those who have been looking at Palamon. Ask them to look at what the key differences between them are? Are there any similarities in the way they are described? What qualities does each have that the other might not?



ACTIVITY 4: TWINS OF HONOUR (2:2)

It is clear from the text that Arcite and Palamon are very close friends and comrades, who have known each other from childhood and fought side by side their whole lives. Act 2 Scene 2 is a crucial scene in the play, which begins with both men in prison and sees them change from good friends comforting each other to arguing rivals.

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

In discussion with James Corrigan and Jamie Wilkes, who play Palamon and Arcite, Blanche explored the idea that in Act 2 Scene 2, Arcite and Palamon are very much like two sides of the same coin. Palamon seems to talk about what has already happened and is much more ruled by his heart where Arcite talks about where they are now and is more rational. As a team, this can make them strong and in the opening of the scene they pull each other out of despair. They experimented with different ways of showing this on stage, trying the scene with both actors in boxes unable to see each other and then on opposite sides of the stage, as it seemed too easy for them to move without obstacles.

- Organise students into pairs and provide each of them with copies of the first part of Act 2 Scene 2.
- Ask pairs to line up opposite each other, so that there are two lines with them facing each other. Invite one line to read Arcite's lines and the other Palamon's.
- Allow students to read the lines through once, speaking them together.
- Ask students to then reflect on the situation these men are in, in Duke Theseus' prison. Discuss what kind of environment they think that might be. Do they think Arcite and Palamon can see each other?
- Invite students to repeat the reading, this time facing away from each other. Did any different words stand out for them when they couldn't see the person they were speaking to?
- Repeat the exercise with students, asking them to:
 - Turn and face the other person when saying something to remind them how great they are and make them feel positive again.



James Corrigan as Palamon and Jamie Wilkes as Arcite in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Photos by Donald Cooper.



- Turn and face away from the other person when saying something negative about their situation.
- Reflect with students on whether they seemed to be facing towards the other person or away more, or was it even?
- Explain that in rehearsal Blanche and the company talked about these two characters as two halves of the same person, bringing each other up and helping each other focus on surviving.

- Ask students to focus on Arcite's longer speech in bold. Invite them to read it out loud together while standing in a circle so everyone can hear the words.
- Allow students to move back into their pairs. In pairs, ask them to read the speech, swapping reader every time Arcite says we, our, us or one another. Encourage the person listening to also clap when they hear the words I, mine, you, or your.
- Reflect with students on what they learnt from doing that. There will have been very little clapping during the first part of the speech, but a lot of switching reader. What does this show them about what Arcite wants to emphasise at the start? At the end there will have been far more claps; what is the topic here? What does Arcite think the advantages of being in prison are for them? He states four things that could happen to break them apart if they were free and not in prison together.
 - This section contains the first mention of a 'wife' or relationship with a woman and is seen very negatively – as something that might separate them.



ACTIVITY 5: I SAW HER FIRST (2:2)

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act 2 Scene 2 sees Arcite and Palamon transform from the two friends students explored in the last activity to two men sworn against each other, after seeing Emilia for the first time. This argument creates a rivalry between the two kinsmen and forms the basis of the rest of the play.



Frances McNamee as Emilia and Jamie Wilkes as Arcite in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Photo by Donald Cooper.

- Ask students to look at the second extract from 2:2 on the page and invite them to discuss how it looks different. Are there any differences they can see already in the way these men are talking?
- Reflect with them on how the two men gave each other time to speak in the first part of the scene but don't seem to do that here. What does that reveal about their attitude towards one another? Students might also notice the number of question marks at the end of lines, contrasting to the statements they make in the first part of the scene. What kind of discussion do they think this will be?
- Ask students to read through the scene in pairs.
- Reflect with students on how this scene felt to read. Who feels in control and does it change? Who do they think should win this argument? In rehearsal they discussed why and how each character would think they were 'right' and why. Which character do they feel is 'right' in this argument – Palamon who noticed Emilia first and feels like his best friend should support him, or Arcite who thinks Palamon is being selfish to not let him love and admire a woman neither of them can talk to anyway? Why do they think Arcite refuses to support Palamon and Palamon refuses to back down until it has become a challenge at the end of the scene?
- Ask students to work in their pairs and ask them to read this scene again. Explain that during rehearsal they discussed the idea that normally, if two friends like the same person, they would act on it but because these two men are in prison and can't talk to Emilia they have to use words to fight it out between them. While they read, ask students to stand fixed to the spot, just out of each other's reach.
- Encourage students to think about the language the characters are using, repeating one word that the previous speaker uses which stands out to them each time they read a line. There aren't many words used, so encourage students to think carefully.

- For example, 'PALAMON: You love her, then?' 'ARCITE: **Her.** Who would not?' 'PALAMON: **Who?** And desire her?'. Encourage them not to always pick the last word in the line, but the one they think spurs their character's thought.
- Remind students that they cannot move from where they are standing but if they want to move up or down they can and if they want to try and reach towards the other character then they can.
- Allow two or three groups to perform their versions of the scene.
- Discuss with students how easy it was to find the words to re-stress. Did it tend to be the last word in the previous line or was there more to it? In this scene, Arcite borrows a lot of Palamon's language so that they echo each other. Did students find that some of the words they were repeating were similar? What does this shared vocabulary show about these two men, even when arguing?
- Invite students to reflect on how it felt to have their movement restricted during the conversation as well. Were there any moments when they felt the need to move or reach for the other one? Were there particular words that angered them or made them wish they could react more, where they might have walked away if they could?
- Explain that almost immediately after this, the Jailer enters and takes Arcite away. Shortly after that Arcite is pardoned and able to pursue Emilia. If they were Palamon, how would that make them feel?

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Blanche organised rehearsal so that the company spent roughly an hour rehearsing each page of the text. This meant that scenes like Act 2 Scene 2 were rehearsed over several hours and had to be broken down into sections.

WOMEN IN THE PLAY

In Act 3 Scene 6, Arcite and Palamon finally meet after Palamon's escape. The Duke stops their fight and the men explain why they have been fighting, committing treason by duelling. Arcite says to the Duke:

**'For scorning thy edict, Duke, ask that Lady
Why she is fair, and why her eyes command
me
Stay here to love her'**

- Discuss what this line shows them about the view Arcite has of women in general. What is Arcite suggesting here? Who does he blame for their treason?
- Ask students to imagine that they are Emilia, at this point in the play. How do they think she would be feeling about these accusations?

WAYS TO EXTEND THIS WORK

- You may want to look at the exchange between Emilia and Diana in Act 2 Scene 2 as well, when Palamon and Arcite first see her.
- Ask students to cut out all the interjections from the men and look at the language Emilia and Diana use as they discuss the flowers, looking at the imagery used and all references to chastity.
- Why do they think Fletcher and Shakespeare chose to make the relationship between these two women so explicit? Does it have any impact on how we view Arcite and Palamon when their conversation is layered over it?

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Blanche placed a lot of emphasis on uncovering multiple layers and meaning in the language while working on the play, focusing in on individual words and their impact. One strategy that the team used for unlocking these kind of layers was to focus on individual words, touching objects in the room each time things were named. Blanche was also keen to experiment with very different stagings, even trying staging one of the Jailer's daughter's speeches in the dark as she talks about 'little stars' and 'cold' to see how that impacted the meaning of the language.



ACTIVITY 4: THE JAILER'S DAUGHTER

- Organise students into pairs and allocate each pair one of the four speeches from the Jailer's daughter, taken from different points in Acts 2 and 3..
- Ask students to read the speech they have been given in their pair. Ask them to take turns reading the whole speech, and moving to touch an object or thing in the room each time they use a noun or name something.
- Encourage both readers to think carefully about what they touch as they deliver the speech, trying to connect the word and the object if they can.
 - For example, someone reading the line 'My **Father** the mean **Keeper** of his **Prison**' might touch two contrasting pieces of furniture or opposite walls to show how different 'my Father' and the 'Keeper' are and a window or door lock for 'Prison'.
- Ask pairs to reflect together on what they each emphasised. Did they pick similar objects and why did they pick them? Where in the speech are they more active and where are less nouns or names used? Is there anything that connects the nouns she is using, any themes? In Speech 2 for example, a lot of natural imagery is likely to come out.
- Allow each pair to come back and watch each of the speeches being read by volunteers.
- Reflect together on how they think the Jailer's daughter has changed. How would they describe her journey? Is there a different feel to each of the speeches? Spend time discussing any ideas the groups had when looking at themes in the speeches. What do we learn about her from looking at these as a whole?
- Discuss with students what else in the speech offered clues as to the Jailer's daughter's state of mind. Thinking about how Blanche experimented with staging the fourth speech in the complete darkness in rehearsal, what experiments would students like to run with some of the other speeches? Where and how could they try staging Speech 2, for example? As it mentions 'brooks' and 'floods' is it as simple as her drinking as she speaks or using the sound of moving water? Remind students these aren't final choices or actions they imagine putting on stage, just experiments to see how drastic changes can impact on meaning and the feeling the speaker experiences.

WAYS TO EXTEND THIS WORK

- It is widely believed that Shakespeare wrote Acts 1 and 5 of this play and that Fletcher wrote the rest.
- The jailer's daughter's speech in Act 3 Scene 4, however, feels more like Shakespeare's writing and different from her other speeches. One of the main reasons people believe he wrote this speech, rather than Fletcher, is how similar some of the language is to that in other plays by him. Where the Jailer's daughter says 'The Moon is down, the Crickets chirp, the Screech owl / Calls', Lady Macbeth says to Macbeth: 'I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry'. This shared language suggests the author is the same.
- Ask students to explore some of the other images in these four speeches. Can they see how Shakespeare's speech differs from those written by Fletcher?

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Blanche described the Jailer's daughter's speeches as being a story that is paused for a bit and then resumed, so they almost run together to tell you the story of the young woman.

Below are some images of Danusia Samal as the Jailer's daughter in the 2016 production. As the play progresses her costume changes, becoming more and more dishevelled.

- Invite students to create their own costume designs for the Jailer's daughter, thinking about how it might change between the speeches she makes in Act 2 and the way her story ends.



Danusia Samal as the Jailer's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Photos by Donald Cooper.

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RESOURCES

THE STORY IN FIVE ACTS

ACT ONE

Three Queens come to Athens to talk to Theseus. They are angry because the King of Thebes has killed their husbands and they want Theseus to go to war with him. He agrees to go to battle against Thebes.

**'THESEUS: Good cheer, Ladies.
Now we turn towards your Comforts'**

In Thebes, two warriors and best friends Arcite and Palamon are preparing to fight for their King, although they don't agree with him. They show daring and courage in the battle but Thebes lose and they are captured and imprisoned by Theseus at the end of the battle.

ACT TWO

Arcite and Palamon are both devastated to be in prison at first, but Arcite manages to cheer Palamon up by reminding him that at least they are together and nothing can come between them while they are there. One day they both see a beautiful woman, Emilia, in the garden with her maid servant Diana and they agree she is beautiful.

'PALAMON: Might not a man well lose himself and love her?

ARCITE: I cannot tell what you have done, I have'

When Arcite tells Palamon he loves her, Palamon becomes angry saying that he saw her first and they cannot both love her. Arcite is then released by the Jailer and taken away which makes Palamon think he will go after Emilia while he is in prison.

'PALAMON: Why is he sent for?

It may be he shall marry her'

The Jailer's daughter, who falls in love with Palamon while he is left in prison, frees Palamon in the hope he will love her back.

'DAUGHTER: What should I do to make him know I love him?

**For I would fain enjoy him. Say I ventured
To set him free? What says the law then?'**

ACT THREE

Palamon meets with Arcite after being freed by the Jailer's daughter. They agree that after Palamon has got his strength back they will fight for the right to pursue Emilia.

The Jailer's daughter meanwhile realises Palamon is not in his hiding place anymore and she goes after him into the woods to try and find him.

'DAUGHTER: The Sun has seen my Folly. Palamon!

Alas no; he's in heaven. Where am I now?'

She seems to go mad and eventually finds a group of locals who are preparing a dance to entertain Duke Theseus and Hippolyta on their hunt.

Arcite and Palamon meet to duel but are interrupted by Theseus who tells them they are breaking the law fighting in Athens. Eventually, after Hippolyta, Pirithous and Emilia have argued for him to save them, he agrees not to have them both killed. Instead he says that they should go away and find three other knights to support them and come back to fight, with the winner getting to marry Emilia.

'THESEUS: When ye return, who wins, I'll settle here;

Who loses, yet I'll weep upon his Bier'

ACT FOUR

The Wooer has found the Jailer's daughter in the river and comes back to tell the Jailer she has gone mad. Her Father calls the Doctor and they agree that to cure her they should try and convince her that the Wooer is Palamon.

'DOCTOR: take upon you (young sir, her friend) the name of Palamon; say you come to eat with her, and to commune of Love'

Meanwhile, Emilia tries to decide which of the two Thebans – Arcite or Palamon – she wants to win the fight. As she is thinking about it Diana tells her the men have arrived with their knights and Hecate and Pirithous describe each of the knights.

'EMILIA: What a mere child is Fancy,

That, having two fair guards of equal sweetness,

Cannot distinguish, but must cry for both'

ACT FIVE

Arcite and Palamon prepare for battle offering prayers to the Gods. Arcite prays to the God of War, Mars, and Palamon prays to the Goddess of Love, Venus. At the same time, Emilia asks that the one who loves her best should be the one to survive as she cannot choose one.

The Doctor, the Jailer and the Wooer have managed to convince the Jailer's daughter that the Wooer is Palamon and arrange for her to marry him.

Arcite wins the fight and Palamon waits to be executed by the jailer. However, Arcite falls from the horse that Emilia gave him causing them to halt Palamon's execution and when Arcite dies from his injuries, Palamon is granted the right to marry Emilia.

'PALAMON: nought could buy dear love, but loss of dear love!'

PALAMON AND ARCITE DESCRIPTIONS

Arcite is gently visaged; yet his eye
Is like an Engine bent, or a sharp weapon
In a soft sheath; mercy and manly courage
Are bedfellows in his visage. Palamon
Has a most menacing aspect: his brow
Is graved, and seems to bury what it frowns on;
Yet sometime tis not so, but alters to
The quality of his thoughts; long time his eye
Will dwell upon his object. Melancholy
Becomes him nobly; So does Arcite's mirth,
But Palamon's sadness is a kind of mirth,
So mingled, as if mirth did make him sad,
And sadness, merry; those darker humours that
Sticke misbecomingly on others, on them
Live in fair dwelling. [*Cornets. Trumpets sound as to a charge.*]
Hark, how yon spurs to spirit do incite
The Princes to their proof! Arcite may win me,
And yet may Palamon wound Arcite to
The spoiling of his figure. O, what pity
Enough for such a chance; if I were by,
I might do hurt, for they would glance their eyes
Toward my Seat, and in that motion might
Omit a ward, or forfeit an offence
Which craved that very time: it is much better
I am not there; oh better never born
Then minister to such harm. [*Cornets. A great cry and noice within.*] What is the chance?

ACT 2 SCENE 2

'TWINS OF HONOUR' EXTRACT. Edited by RSC Education

[Enter Palamon, and Arcite in prison.]

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,
I fear, for ever, Cousin.

ARCITE. I believe it.

PALAMON. Where is Thebes now? where is our noble Country?
Where are our friends, and kindreds? O never
Shall we two exercise, like Twins of honour,
Our Armes again, and feel our fiery horses
Like proud Seas under us: our good Swords now
Must deck the Temples of those gods that hate us:

ARCITE. No, Palamon,
Those hopes are Prisoners with us; here we are
And here the graces of our youths must wither
Like a too-timely Spring; here age must find us,
And, which is heaviest, Palamon, unmarried;

PALAMON. Tis too true, Arcite.
All valiant uses
In us two here shall perish.

ARCITE. Yet, Cousin,
Even from the bottom of these miseries,
From all that fortune can inflict upon us,
I see two comforts rising, two mere blessings,
If the gods please: to hold here a brave patience,
And the enjoying of our griefs together.
Whilst Palamon is with me, let me perish
If I think this our prison.

PALAMON. Certainly,
Tis a main goodness, Cousin, that our fortunes
Were twinned together; tis most true, two souls
Put in two noble Bodies-let 'em suffer
The gall of hazard, so they grow together-
Will never sink; they must not, say they could.

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 honour,
That liberty and common Conversation,**

**The poison of pure spirits, might like women
Woo us to wander from. What worthy blessing
Can be but our Imaginations
May make it ours? And here being thus together,
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, in one another, Families,
I am your heir, and you are mine: This place
Is our Inheritance, no hard Oppressor
Dare take this from us: were we at liberty,
A wife might part us lawfully, or business;
Quarrels consume us; I might sicken, Cousin,
Where you should never know it, and so perish
Without your noble hand to close mine eyes,
Or prayers to the gods: 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: and all those pleasures
That woo the wills of men to vanity,
I see through now, and am sufficient
To tell the world, tis but a gaudy shadow.
Shall I say more?

ARCITE. I would hear you still.

PALAMON. Ye shall.
Is there record of any two that loved
Better then 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;

ACT 2 SCENE 2

'I SAW HER FIRST' EXTRACT. Edited by RSC Education

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. 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 blessed Goddess;
I love her as a woman, to enjoy her:
So both may love.

PALAMON. You shall not love at all.

ARCITE. Not love at all!
Who shall deny me?

PALAMON. I, that first saw her; I, that took possession
First with mine eyes of all those beauties
In her revealed to mankind: if thou lov'st her,
Or entertain'st a hope to blast my wishes,
Thou art a Traitor, Arcite.

ARCITE. Yes, I love her,
And if the lives of all my name lay on it,
I must do so; I love her with my soul:
If that will lose ye, farewell, Palamon;
I am as worthy and as free a lover,
As any Palamon or any living
That is a man's Son.

PALAMON. Have I called thee friend?
ARCITE. Yes, and have found me so; why are you moved thus?
Let me deal coldly with you: am not I
Part of your blood, part of your soul? you have told me
That I was Palamon, and you were Arcite.

PALAMON. Yes.

ARCITE. Am not I liable to those affections,
Those joys, griefs, angers, fears, my friend shall suffer?

PALAMON. Ye may be.

ARCITE. Why, then, would you deal so cunningly,
So strangely, so unlike a noble kinsman,
To love alone? speak truly: do you think me
Unworthy of her sight?

PALAMON. No; but unjust,
If thou pursue that sight.

ARCITE. Because an other
First sees the Enemy, shall I stand still
And let mine honour down, and never charge?

PALAMON. Yes, if he be but one.

ARCITE. But say that one
Had rather combat me?

PALAMON. Let that one say so,
And use thy freedom; else if thou pursuest her,
Be as that cursed man that hates his Country,
A branded villain.

ARCITE. You are mad.

PALAMON. I must be,
Till thou art worthy, Arcite.

ARCITE. Fie, Sir,
You play the Child extremely: I will love her,
I must, I ought to do so, and I dare;
And all this justly.

THE JAILER'S DAUGHTER'S SPEECHES

SPEECH ONE.

ACT 2 SCENE 3. Edited by RSC Education

[Enter Jailer's Daughter alone.]

DAUGHTER.

Why should I love this Gentleman? Tis odds
He never will affect me; I am base,
My Father the mean Keeper of his Prison,
And he a prince: To marry him is hopeless;
To be his whore is witless. Out upon't,
What pushes are we wenchs driven to,
When fifteen once has found us! First, I saw him;
I (seeing) thought he was a goodly man;
He has as much to please a woman in him,
(If he please to bestow it so) as ever
These eyes yet looked on. Next, I pitied him,
And so would any young wench, o' my Conscience,
That ever dreamed, or vowed her Maidenhead
To a young handsome Man; Then I loved him,
Extremely loved him, infinitely loved him;
And yet he had a Cousin, fair as he too.
But in my heart was Palamon, and there,
Lord, what a coil he keeps! To hear him
Sing in an evening, what a heaven it is!
And yet his Songs are sad ones. Fairer spoken
Was never Gentleman. When I come in
To bring him water in a morning, first
He bows his noble body, then salutes me, thus:
'Faire, gentle Maid, good morrow; may thy goodness
Get thee a happy husband.' Once he kissed me.
I loved my lips the better ten days after.
Would he would do so every day! He grieves much,
And me as much to see his misery.
What should I do, to make him know I love him?
For I would fain enjoy him. Say I ventured
To set him free? what says the law then? Thus much
For Law, or kindred! I will do it,
And this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me. *[Exit.]*

SPEECH TWO.

ACT 2 SCENE 6. Edited by RSC Education

[Enter Jailer's Daughter alone.]

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, where a Cedar,
Higher than all the rest, spreads like a plane
Fast by a Brook, and there he shall keep close,
Till I provide him Files and food, 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; Sure he cannot
Be so unmanly, as to leave me here;
If he does, 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 (me thinks) is not so well; nor scarcely
Could I persuade him to become a Freeman,
He made such scruples of the wrong he did
To me, and to my Father. 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 patch 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!

SPEECH THREE.

ACT 3 SCENE 2. Edited by RSC Education

[Enter Jailer's daughter alone.]

DAUGHTER.

He has mistook the Brake 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. Hark, tis a wolf:
In me hath grief slain fear, and but for one thing
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 halloo'd for him?
I cannot hallow: if I whoop'd, what then?
If he not answered, I should call a wolf,
And do him but that service. I have heard
Strange howls this live-long 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
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?
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,
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.
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:

SPEECH FOUR.

ACT 3 SCENE 4. Edited by RSC Education

[Enter Jailer's daughter.]

DAUGHTER.

I am very cold, and all the Stars are out too,
The little Stars, and all, that look like aglets:
The Sun has seen my Folly. Palamon!
Alas no; he's in heaven. Where am I now?
Yonder's the sea, and there's a Ship; how't tumbles!
And there's a Rock lies watching under water;
Now, now, it beats upon it; now, now, now,
There's a leak sprung, a sound one, how they cry!
Spoon her before the wind, you'll lose all else:
Up with a course or two, and tack about, Boys.
Good night, good night, y'ar gone.--I am very hungry.
Would I could find a fine Frog. Now my Father,
Twenty to one, is trussed up in a trice
Tomorrow morning; I'll say never a word.

[Sing]

For I'll cut my greene coat a foot above my knee,
And I'll clip my yellow locks an inch below mine eie.
hey, nonny, nonny, nonny,
He's buy me a white Cut, forth for to ride
And I'll go seek him, through the world that is so wide
hey nonny, nonny, nonny.
O for a prick now like a Nightingale,
To put my breast against. I shall sleep like a Top else. *[Exit.]*