

A TRANSLATION INTO MODERN PROSE OF CHAUSER'S  
"KNIGHT'S TALE."

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Once as old stories tell us there was a duke called Theseus who was lord and governor of Athens. In his time there was no greater conqueror under the sun than he. He had won many a rich country; with his wisdom and chivalry he conquered all the kingdom of the Amazon which was once called Scithia, and had then married the queen Hippolita and brought her with much glory and great festivity home with him into his own country. He also brought her young sister Emilia. Thus with victory and music this noble duke rode with all his host into Athens.

If it were not too long I certainly would tell you how the kingdom of the Amazon was conquered by Theseus and by his chivalry, and of the great battle for once between the Athenians and the Amazons; and how Hippolita the fair queen of Scithia was besieged, and of the feast at her wedding and of the tempest at her home coming; but all this I must forbear. I have, God knows, a large field to plow and the oxen to my plow are weak; the remainder of my tale is long enough. I will not take up all the time, but let each companion tell his tale and see who wins the supper, so where I left off I will again begin.

When this duke, whom I mentioned, with all his wealth and pride come near the city, he looked about him and there kneeling in the highway were a company of women clad in black. No creature in this world had heard such a crying and lamenting as they made and they would not stop until they had seized the rein his bridle.

"Who are you that you disturbe my feast and home coming with such crying?" said Theseus, "Have you such great envy of my honor that you cry and and complain thus? ~~For~~ who has injured or offended you?"

And tell me if it may be amended and why are you all clothed in black

The oldest lady of them all after she had swooned with a death like countenance so that it was sad to see and hear spake and said, "Lord to whom Fortune has given Victory and as a conqueror to live, we grieve not because of your glory and your honor, but we beseech mercy and succour, have mercy on our woe and our distress. Through your gentleness let some drop of pity fall on us wretched women. For surely there is none of us but has been a dutchess or a queen, now we are wretched as is plainly seen. Thanks to fortune and her false wheel that insures no estate to be always good. And, lord, we have been waiting here in this temple of the goddess Clemency a fortnight for you to come. Now help us lord since it is in your power. I who weep and wail so was once the wife of the king Capaneus that died at Thebes, cursed be that day. All of us who are in this array and make all this lamenting lost husbands at the town while the siege lay about it. And the old Creon, that is now lord of the city Thebes is full of ire and iniquity and for malicious anger and tyranny, disgraces the dead bodies of our lords which were slain, had all their bodies thrown in a heap and will not consent for them to be buried or burned but makes dogs eat them in despite." With that word and without delay they fell with their faces to the ground and cried piteously, "Have some mercy on us wretched women and let our sorrow sink into your heart.

The gentle duke alighted from his horse as he heard them speak. He thought his heart would break when he saw those who once were of great estate so cast down and piteous. He took them all in his arms and comforted them with his good intentions and swore by his oath as he was a true knight he would do all in his power to take vengeance upon this tyrant Creon so that all the people of Greece should know

how Creon who deserved his death was served by Theseus. Right then without more waiting he displayed his banner and with his host rode toward Thebes. He would ride no nearer Athens nor rest a half day but camped on his way that night, he sent the queen Hippolita and Emilie her younger sister into Athens to dwell, and he rode forth. There is no more to tell.

The red statue of Mars with spear and target shone in his large white banner so that all the fields glistened. His banner bore the rich gold penant into which was beaten the Minotaur whom he had slain in Crete. Thus rode the duke, thus rode this conqueror the flower among his chivalry until he came to Thebes and landed fair into the field to fight. But to speak shortly of this, he fought with Creon king of Thebes and as a manly knight slew him in a fair fight and put to flight the people. Afterwards he conquered the city by assault and tore down both wall and rafter, and restored to the ladies the bones of their dead husbands, that as was the custom they might make obsequies. It is too long to describe the clamouring and lamenting that the ladies made at the burning of the bodies, and of the great honor that Theseus the conqueror did to the ladies when they went from him. It is my intention to tell shortly when this worthy duke Theseus, had slain Creon and won Thebes rested all night in that field doing what he pleased with all the country.

With care he searched in the dead bodies for armours, clothing, and plunder. In the heap he found two young knights lying side by side who were pierced through with many grievous wounds. Both were in one kind of arms, Palamon was one and Arcite the other. They were more dead than alive, but by their coat of arms and equipments he knew they were of royal blood of Thebes and sons of sisters. He had them carried carefully from the heap of plunder into the tent of

Theseus and soon had them sent to Athens to dwell in prison forever. He would accept no ransom. When this worthy duke had done this he took his host and like a conqueror crowned with laurels he rode home again. In joy and in honor he lived the remainder of his days. In a tower in anguish and woe where gold could not free, Palamon and Arcite dwelt.

Thus passed year by year and day by day until one morning in May when Emilie who is fairer to look on than the lilies on their green stems and fresher than this May morning with its new flowers—for with the rose vied her complexion I know not which was the fairer, before it were day as was her custom arose and dressed, for May will have no sluggards. The season pierces every gentle heart and makes him start out of his sleep and say, "Arise and do observance now to May." This made Emilia remember to rise and do honor to May. She was clothed fresh, her yellow hair was braided and hung a yard down her back. She walked up and down the garden at sunrise and gathered flowers as she pleased some red and some white to make a woven garland for her head, she sung as a heavenly angel. The great tower thick and strong which was the chief dungeon of the castle where the knights were imprisoned closely joined the garden where Emilia was enjoying herself. The sun was bright and clear that morning and Palamon as was his custom by leave of the jailor had risen and walked in a room on high from which he could see the city and the garden full of green branches and the beautiful Emilia as she roamed. This sorrowful prisoner Palamon was roaming to and fro and complaining of his woe to himself, He often said, "Alas that I was born." By chance through the window that was covered with a grate of iron bars, he cast his eyes on Emilia, drawing suddenly back he cried, "A!", as

though he were stung through the heart. With that cry Arcite started  
 hasand said, "My cousin what ails you? Why do you cry? who has  
 offende you? For God's love take our prison all in patience for it  
 will never be other, fortune has given us this adversity, some wicked  
 planet or disposition of Saturn, by some constellation, has given us  
 this although we had sworn it. So the heavens stood when we were  
 born ; we must endure it, this is short and plain.

Palamon answered and said, "Cousin you may have indeed a false  
 imagination of this opinion. This prison did not cause me to cry. I  
 was hurt just now through my eye in my heart by what I saw. The  
 beauty of that lady walking in the garden is the cause of my crying  
 and my woe. I know not if she be Venus. Here he fell down on his  
 knees and cried, "Venus if it be thy will to transfigure yourself  
 thus in yonder garden before me a sorrowful wretched creature, help  
 us to escape out of this prison If to die in prison be my destiny  
 have some compassion on our linage that is brought so low by tyranny."  
 With that word Arcite looked where the lady roamed to and fro. If  
 Palamon was wounded sore by her beauty Arcite was hurt as much if  
 not more, and with a sigh he pteously said, "The fresh beauty of  
 her who roams in yonder place slays me suddenly and unless I have  
 her favor that I may at least see her I am but as dead; there is no  
 more to say."

When Palamon heard these words he looked angry and answered, "Do you  
 say this in earnest or in play?"

"In earnest by my faith," said Arcite, "God help me it pleaseth me  
 very badly to play."

Palamon began tonknit his brows and, said, "It is no great honor to  
 you to be false nor to be traitor to me, to me who is your cousin  
 and brother, each of us sworn to the other that never, though its cost

is a miserable death, until death shall part us to hinder the other in his love nor in any other case my dear brother, but that in every case you were truly to help me and I to help you. This certainly was your oath and mine also, I know right well that you dare not gainsay it. You may now rest out of doubt. Now you were about to falsely love my lady whom I love and serve and shall until my heart dies. Certainly now false Arcite you shall not do so. I loved her first and told you my woe as to a confidant and brother sworn to further me. You are bound as a knight to help me if it lay in your power or else you are false"!

Arcite spoke again proudly, "You will be false sooner than I, you are false, utterly false, for by love I loved her first. What will you say? You know not yet if she is woman or goddess, yours is a sacred affection, mine is love as to a creature. I told you my adventure as to a cousin and a sworn brother. But I will suppose that you loved her before. Do you not know that the old writers say who shall give a lover any law? Love is a greater law by my head than may be given by any earthly man. Therefore positive law and such an ordinance is broken everyday for love in every rank of life. A man must love in spite of his head. He cannot escape it though he die be she maid, widow or wife. And moreover it is not likely that ever in all your life you shall stand in her favor more than I, for you know yourself that you and I are condemned to prison forever we gave no ransom. We strive as did the hounds for the bone, they fought all day and yet received no part, but there came a kite (hawk) when they were angry and bore away the bone from between them. Therefore at the kings court each man for himself. Love if you wish, for I love and shall, truly believe me brother this is all. Here in this prison we must live and each take his chance.

The strife between them was great and long, I would tell of it if I

had the leasure but to the out come. It happened on a day (to tell it now as shortly as I can) a worthy duke called Perotheus that had been a companion of Theseus since they were little children came to Athens to visit and to play with Theseus as was his custom to do, for he loved no man in the world so much, and he lo ed him as tenderly yet. As old books say they loved so well that when one was dead his fellow went and sought him down in hell, but that story I wish not to write. Duke Perotheus loved Arcite well and visited him at Thebes once a year and finally at the request and prayers of Perotheus and without randsom Duke Theseus let him out of prison to go freely where he wished in such a guise as I shall tell you. This is the first agreement to tell between Arcite and Theseus that if ever Arcite was found ever in his life by night or day a moment in any country of this Theseus and if he were caught that he should lose his head by a sward. There was no other remedy or plan but to take his leve and to speed homeward let him war his neck was in jeopardy.

How great a sorrow Arcite now suffered! He felt death smite through his head. He wept and wailed and cried piteously and watched for a chance to kill himself without being perceived. He said, "Alas the day that I was born my prison is worse now than before, now I am destined to dwell not in purgatory but in hell. Alas that I ever knew Perotheus for then I would have dwelled with Theseus, held in his prison forever. Then I would have been in bliss and not in woe. The sight of her whom I serve would have been enough for me although I may never deserve her grace. O dear cousin Palamon you are the victor of this adventure, may you stay blissfully in prison. In prison? Certainly not but in paradise! Fortune has well turned the dice to you, you that have the sight of her and I the absence. For it is possible since you have her presence and are a worthy and able

knight and by some chance fortune is changeable you may attain your desire sometime. But I who am expelled and devoid of all grace and in such great despair as there is not in earth, water, fire, nor air, no creature that is made of them can give me help or comfort in this. I ought to die in despair and distress, farewell my life, my lust, my gladness. Alas why is it that complaining people in the common providence of God or fortune get more and better than they themselves devise? Some men desire riches which cause them to be murdered or have great sickness. And another man would fain get out of prison who has slain in his household. Great harm is in the nature of thinking to excell God's providence we never know what thing it is we pray for here below, we fare as he that is drunk as a mouse; the drunk man knows he has a house but he does not know the right way and to him the way is slippery and certainly we fare this way in the world, we seek after the right but we go wrong many times, we may say always, namely, I that had an opinion that if I might escape from prison then would I be in love and perfect health but now it is an exile for my woe. Since I cannot see you now my Emilia I am but as dead there is no other remedy.

Upon the other side when Palamon knew that Arcite was gone made such a noise because of his sorrow that the great tower, resounded with his cries and clamor. The very fetters on his shins were wet with his salty tears.

He said, "Alas Arcite, my cousin, of all our strife the fruit is yours. You walk at large in Thebes and care little for my woe. You may since you have wisdom and manhood, assemble all our kindred and make a war on this city so that by some adventure or treaty you may have the lady for a wife whom I must lose for all my life. For since you are at large and free from prison you have a greater

advantage than I who must die here in a cage. For while I live I must weep and wail because of the woe the prison will give, also for the love I give which only doubles my torment and woe. The fire of jealousy was started up in his breast and held him by the heart so madly that he was white like a boxwood or ashen grey and cold. Then he said, O cruel goddess that governs this world with binding of your word eternal and writing in the table of adamant your parliament and your grant. What is mankind to hold unto more than the sheep that roam in the field? For man is slain as any beast or dwells in prison and custody and has sickness and great adversity and often times when free from guilt. What management is then in this free presistance that torments innocence? Yet this increases all my pain that man is bound to observe and for God's sake to refrain from his will. And when a beast is dead he has no more pain, but man after his death must weep and complain although in this world he has pain and woe without doubt this is true? The answer of this I leave to be guessed but I know well that there is great pain in this world.

Alas I serpent or a thief who to many a true man has done mischief go at large and where he wishes. But I must be in prison through Saturn and also through Juno, jelouse and also mad that has nearly destroyed all the blood of Thebes with his wantomless wide waste. And on the other hand Venus slew me for jealousy and fear of Arcite.

Now will I pause on Palamon a little and let him dwell in prison and tell you of Arcite. The summer passed and the long nights increased in a double way the great pains of the lover and prisoner. I know not which was mor woeful. For Palamon is forever from the country and he shall never see his lady. Now decide as you wish, you that can for I will go on as I begun.

When Arcite had come to Thebes for many days he was faint and said,

"Alas!" for he shall never see his lady anymore. To conclude shortly his woe no creature that is or shall be will be will have such sorrow while the world may endure. His sleep, his meat, and his drink are bereaft of him until he grew lean and dry as a shaft. His hollow eyes were horrible to behold. His color pale, pale as cold ashes, ever solitary and alone, wailing all the night and making complaint. If he heard son or instrument he would weep, he was not stuned, also his spirits were so low and so changed that no man could know his voice, though men heard it. For all the world he conducted himself not merely like one suffering from the lovers disease of Eros but rather like mania engendered of melancholy humor in his fantastic cell. Shortly all was turned up side down both habit and disposition of this woeful lover Arcite. Why should I relate of his woe all day? When he had endured for a year or two this cruel torment, pain, and woe at Thebes in his country as I have said, upon a he slept as he laid and thought how the winged god Mercury stood before him and bade him to be merry. He bore his sleepy rod upright in his right hand and wore a hat upon his bright hairs. This god was arrayed as he was when Argus took his sleep. He said, "To Athens shall you go there is shaped an end of your woe!" With that word Arcite woke and started. He said, "Now truly how sore I do pain to Athens right now will I go. I will not spare the dread of death to see my lady that I love and serve. In her presence I do not care to die". With that word he caught a great mirror and saw that his color was changed and saw his visage as another kind. Just then it ran in his mind that since his face was so disfigured of malady that he had endured he might well conclude that if he conducted himself as one of low estate he might live in Athens forever unknown and see his lady day by day. With that he changed his array and clad himself as a poor laborer. And all alone save a squire that knew his secret and

his case, poorly disguised as he was he went to Athens the nearest way. Upon a day he went to the court and at the gate he offered his service to drudge and draw what some men dispise. To say shortly of this matter he fell in office with a chamberlain that was dwelling with Emilia. He was wise and could soon spy every servant that served there. Well could he hew wood and carry water for he was young and mighty for the occasion. He was strong and big of bones to carry any weight that he might devise. A year or two he was in this service page of the chamber of the bright Emilia. He said that he was called Philostrate. There never was a man of his degree in court so well beloved. He was so gentle that throughout the court he was renounced They said that it was charity that Theseus would raise his degree and put him in a worshipful service there that he might his virtue exercise. And thus in a short while his name is spread both for his deeds and his good tongue that Theseus had taken him so near that he made him squire of his chamder and gave him gold to maintain his degree. Also men brought privately from his own country year by year his rent. But honestly and wisely he spent it that no man wondered how he had that. Three years in this way he lead his life and bore himself in peace and also in war. There was no man that Theseus had that was dearer. In this bliss I now leave Arcite and I will speak of Palamon a little.

These seven years in darkness and horror and strong prison Palamon has sat , wasted away for woe and distress who feels double sore and heaviness but Palamon? Love destroys so that out of his understanding he goes mad for his sorrow. Alas there he is a prisoner forever not only for a year. Who could make rhyme properly in English of his martydom? It is not I. Therefore I pass as lightly as I may. It fell that in the seventh year in May, the third night (as old books

say that tell all this story more plainly), were it by adventure or destiny (as when a thing is shaped it shall be that way), that Palamon by the help of a friend broke his prison and fled from the city as fast as he could go, for he had given his jailor a drink of claree made of a certain wine with narcotics and opium of Thebes fine all that night though men would shake him the jailor slept, he would not wake; and thus he fled as fast as he could. The night was short and fast by the day he must of necessity hide himself and to a grove that was close by with fearful foot Palamon went. For shortly this was his opinion that in the grove he would hide all day and at night he would goon his way towards Thebes to pray to his friends to help him revenge Theseus and shortly he would lose his life or win Emilia for his wife. This is the effect and his intention.

Now will I return unto Arcite again that little knew how nearly that was his care until fortune had brought him in his snare.

The buisy lark, messenger of day, saluted in her song the morning gray; and fiery Phebes rises up so bright that all the orient laugh ed of the light and with his streams of light dries in the groves the silver drops hanging on the leaves. And Arcite that is royal in the court with his principal squire is risen and looks on the merry day and to do his observance to May remembering on the point of his dispair he on a courser starting as the fire has ridden into the fields to play, out of the courts a mile or two and to the grove of which I told you by adventure his way he began to hold, to make him a garland of the groves, it were of woodbine or hawthorne leaves and loud he sung again the beautiful sonnet; "May with all thy flowers and thy green welcome be thou fair May, I hope that I may get some green". And from his courser with a lusty heart into the grove hastily he started and in a path he roamed up and down, there

as by adventure this Palamon was in a bush that no man might see him for he was sore afraid of his deed. But he knew that it was Arcite. God wishes he would have not known it. But so it is said many years ago that fields have eyes and woods have ears. It is full fair to bear a man even for every day men meet at no set time. Little knew Arcite of his fellow that was near to hearken to all he saw for he now sit still in the bush.

When Arcite had roamed all he cared and sung all the song lustily he fell into a study suddenly as to these lovers in their quaint behaviors now in the top now in the briars, now up now down as a bucket in a well right as the Friday sorry to tell, now it shines, now it rains fast. The changeable Venus can rightly overcast the hearts of her folk, as her day is gratefully right so changes she her array. Seldom is Friday like all the week. When Arcite had sung he began to sigh and settle down without any more. "Alas," said he, "the day that I was born, How long Juno through your cruelty will you make war against the city of Thebes? Alas the royal blood of Cadmus and Amphion is brought to confusion. O Cadmus that was the first man that built Thebes or the first to begin the town and was crowned king of the city first, of his lineage am I and his offspring by true lineage as of the royal stock and I am so wretched and a slave to him that is my mortal enemy, I serve him poorly as a squire. And yet does Juno shame me well for I dare not acknowledge my own name, but then as I was called Arcite now I am called Philostrate not worth a mite. Alas you fellow Mars, alas Juno your ire has ruined all our kindred save only me and wretched Palamon, that Theseus has martyred in prison. And over all this to slay me utterly has love sent his fiery dart so fearfully struck through my true careful heart that my death was shaped before my shirt. You slay me with

your eyes Emilia, you are the cause whereof I die. Of all the remenant of my other care I set not the amount of a tare if I could do ought to your pleasure." And with word he fell down in a trance for a long time and he afterwards arose.

This Palamon that thought that through his heart he felt a cold sward suddenly glide, for ire he shook his head no longer would he hide. When he had heard Arcites tale, as he was made with face dead and pale he arose out of the thick bushes and said, "Arcite false traitor, now you are caught, that loved my lady so, she for whom I have all this pain and woe and are my blood and are to my council sworn as I full often have told you before and have here deceived duke Theseus and falsely changed your name I will be dead or you shall die. Yoy shall not have my lady Emilia but I will love her and no more, for I am Palamon your mortal foe. Though I have no weapon in this place, but I am by grace escaped out of prison I have no fear that you shall die or that you shall love Emilia. Chose what you will for you shall not escape. This Arcite with angry heart when he knew him and heard his tale as fierce as a lion pulled out a sward and said, "By God that sits above near sick are you and mad with love and also that you no weapon have in this place, you shall not move out of this grove. You shall not die at my hand for I defy the surety and the bond which you say I made to you. What very fool, think well love is free and I will love in spite of all your might, but for as much as you are a worthy knight and will you dare to fight out here by battle, have here my trouble tomorrow I will not fail without knowledge of any other person that here I will be found as a knight and bring armor enough for you, chose the best and leave the worst for me, and meat and drink this night will I bring enough and clothes for your bedding and if it be so that you

my lady win and slay me in the wood ther am I in, you may have your lady as for me."

"This Palamon answered, "I grant it thee",and thus they were departed until tomorrow when each of them had laid his faith to pledge.

O cupid out out of all charity! O kingdom that will have no sharer in goods with thee! Full truth is said, no lordship will not have her thanks no fellowship will provide for Palamon and Arcite. Arcite has ridden now unto the town and on the morrow before it was day light privately two armors had he prepared both sufficient to meet and contest the battle in the field between those two. And on his horse alone as he was borne he carried all this armor before him and in the grove at the time and place set this Arcite and the Palamon meet. Though the color in their face is changed again right as the hunter in the kingdom of Trace that stood at the gap with spear when the lion or the bear hunted and hear him come rushing in the groves and break both boughs and leaves and tthink here comes my mortal foe without fail he must be dead or I. For I must slay him at the gap or he must slay me if that happen to me so acted they in the changing of their countenances as far as each of them knew the other. There was no good day nor no saluting but straight without word or rehearsing each of them helped the other as friendly as if he were his own brother and after that with sharp spears strong they thrust each at the other long. You may think this Palamon in his fighting were as a mad lion and as a cruel tigerArcite; as wild boars they fought white with foam,with madness. Up to the ankle fought they in their blood. And in this wise I will let them dwell fighting and will now tell you of Theseus.

The detiny minister general. that executes in the world over all providence that God has said before is so strong that th ough the

world had sworn contrary of a thing by yea or nay yet sometimes it shall fall on a day that comes not often within a thousand years. For certainly our desires here, be they of war or peace or hate or love all is ruled by the sight above. I mean yhis now by mighty Theseus that is so desirous to hunt and namely at the great heart in May he dwells not in his bed a day that he is not dressed and ready to ride with hunter and hounds and horns beside him. For he has such delight in his hunting that it is all his joy and desire to be himself the great hearts bane after Mars he serves Diana.

The day was clear as I have told before this, and Theseus with all joy and bliss with his Hippolita, his fair queen and Emilia clothed all in green were riding royally on hunting. And to the grove that stood close by in which ther was a hart as men told him, Duke Theseus went straight this way. And thither to the hunting grounds for thither was the hart went to have his flight and over a brook and so forth in his way. The duke will have a courset brstwoy at him with his hounds such as are at his command. When this duke was come unto the land he looked under the sun and he was aware of Arcite and Palamon that fought fiercely as if it were wild beasts, the bright swards went to and fro so hideously that with the least stroke it seemed as if it would kill an oak. But what they were he knew not. This duke his courser smote with his spear and in a moment he was between the two, and pulled out a sword and cried "ho!" "No more upon pain of losing your head by mighty Mars he shall soon be dead, that smites any stroke that I may see. But tell me what master men are you that are hardy enough to fight here without judge or other or other office as it is in a place of royalty?"

Palamon answered hastily and said, "Sir what need of more words we have both deserved the deed. We are two woeful wretches that

have been encumbered with our own lives and as you are a rightful lord and judge, but give us neither mercy nor refuge but slay my fellow as well as me. Or slay him first though you know it not this is thy mortal foe this is Arcite that from your land is banished on his honor for which he has deserved to be dead. For this is he that come unto your gate and said that he was called Philostrate. Thus has he tricked you many a year and you have made him your chief squire and this is he who loves Emilia. For since the day has come that I shall die I make plain my confession that I am that woeful Palamon that has broken your prison wickedly. I am your mortal foe and I am he that so hotly love the bright Emilia that I would die in her sight, therefore I ask death and my justice, but slay my brother for we both have deserved to be slain."

This worthy duke answered again and said, "This is a short conclusion, your own mouth has condemned you with the cord. You shall be dead by mighty Mars the red. The queen in an instant, for womanly feeling began to weep and so did Emilia and also the ladies of the company. They all thought it was a great pity that ever such a chance should fall; for they were gentlemen of great estate and this debate was for nothing but love, and saw their blood wounds wide and sore and all cried both lass and more, "Have mercy lord, upon us women all!" and they fell down on their bare knees and would have kissed his feet as he stood there until at last the wrath was appeased for pity reigneth soon in gentle heart. Though at first he quaked and startled and considered shortly in a clause the trespass of them both and also the cause and although his ire their guilt accused yet in his reason he excused them both. And thus he thought well thst every man will help himself in love if he can, and also

deliver himself from prison. Also his gentle heart had compassion of women for they wept every one. And in his gentle heart he thought again and softly unto himself said, "Fie upon a lord who will have no mercy but is a lion both in word and deed to them that are in repentence and dread as well as to a proud merciless man that will maintain that he first begun! That lord has little discretion that in such a case knows no distinction but weighs pride and humbleness after one mode. And shortly when his ire was passed he began to look up with cheerful looks and spoke these same words on high, "The god of love a benedict! how mighty and how great a lord is he! Against his might there goes no obstacle he may be called a god for his miracles for he can make at his own fashion of every heart that he wishes to devise. Lo here this Arcite and Palamon that were quietly out of prison and might have lived in Thebes royally and and knows that I am their mortal foe and that their death lies in my might also love in spite of their two eyes brought them both here to die. Now look is not that high folly? Behold for God's sake who sits on high see how they bleed be they not well arrayed? Thus has their lord the god of love paid them wages and fees for their service! And yet they hope to be wise that serve love for ought that may befall! But yet this is the best game of all that she whom they have this amusement can them therefore thank as much as me. She knows no more of this hot affair by God than knows a cuckoo or a hare. But all may be tried, hot or cold for man may be a fool young or old, I know it by myself a long time ago for in my time I was once a servant And therefore since I know of loves pains and know how sore it can distress man as he that has often been caught in his net, I forgive you all wholly this trespass at request of the queen that kneels

here and also of Emilia my dear sister and you shall both again swear to me that you shall nevermore my country injure nor make war upon me night or day but be my friend in all you may I now forgive this trespass every bit. And they swore him his asking and him of mercy pride and him of lordship and he granted them grace and thus he said; "To speak of royal lineage and riches though she were a queen or princess each of you are doubtless worthy to wed when the time is but never the less I speak as far my sister Emilia for whom you have this strife and jealousy. You know yourself she can not wed two at once though you fight forever more that one of you all be he disagreeable or pleased he may go piping in an ivory leaf this is to say she may not have you both all be you so jealous nor so wrought and for I now put in this degree that each of you shall have his destiny as he is shaped; and hearken in what wise; lo, hear your end of what I shall devise.

For plain conclusion my will is this with out reply, if you like it take it for the best, that each of you shall go freely where he wishes without ransom or danger and this day fifty weeks for not nearer each of you shall bring a hundred knights armed for the lists, right in all respect all ready to contest him in the battle and this I promise you without fail upon my promise and as I am a knight that which of you both that has might this is to say whether he or you may with his hundred as I spoke of now shall slay his opponent or drive him out of the lists, he shall I give Emilia as a wife to him that fortune gives so fair a grace. The lists I shall make in this place and God so wisely have compassion on my soul as I shall an even and true judge be. You shall make no other end with me that one of you shall be dead or taken and if you think this well said say your

ays and hold your peace, this is your end and your conclusion!

Who looks lightly now on Palamon? Who springs up for love but Arcite? Who could tell or who could end it, the love that is made in this place when Theseus has done so fair a grace? But every living creature went down on his knees and thanked him with heart and might and namely the Thebans often said, "And thus with good hope and light heart they took their leave and homeward they rode to Thebes with its old wide walls.

I believe that men would decide it negligence if I forgot to tell the expense of Theseus that went so busily to make up lists royally that such a noble theater as it was I dare say was never in the world. The circuit was a mile about, walled of stone and ditched around without. It was round in shape and in the manner of a compass full of steps that when a man was placed on one step he could not see his fellow.

Eastward there stood a gate of white marble. Westward right opposite was such another and shortly to conclude there was none other such a place in earth in so little a space. For in the land there was no man that could draw geometrically or work arithmetic nor carve images that Theseus did not give meat and wages to make and devise the theater. And to do his right and sacrifice he had above the east gate in worship of Venus goddess of love an altar and an oratory made. And westward in remembrance and in memory of Mars he had made such another that cost a large load. And northward in a turret on the wall of white alabaster and red coral an oratory rich to see, in worship of Diana of chastity has Theseus in noble wise had wrought. But yet I have forgotten to devise the noble carving and pictures, the shape, the countenance and the figures that were there in the oratory

First in the temple of Venus you may see wrought on the wall piteous to see the broken sleep and the cold sighs, the sacred tears, the lamenting, the fiery strokes of the desire that loves servants in this world endure. The others that their covenants assure, pleasure and hope, desire, fool hardiness, beauty and youth, riches charms and force, loss, flattery, dispense, business and jealousy. There was a garland of yellow gold and sitting in her hand a cockoo; feasts, instruments, carols, dances, lust and array and always the circumstance of love of which I tell and shall tell were by order painted on the wall and more than I can mention for truly all the height of Citharon there Venus had there principal dwelling was shown on the wall in portrature will all the garden and pleasure. Nor was the behavior of idleness forgotten nor Narcisus the fair in years gone by, nor yet the folly of king Solomon, nor the great strength of Hercules, the enchantment of Medea and Circes, nor of Turnus with the hardy fierce courage, the riches of Cresus wretched in service. Thus you may see that wisdom, nor hardiness may not hold company with Venus as for her lists may she guide the world. Lo all these folk were so caught in her lance until for woe they said, "alas"! Sufficeth her examples one or two though I could reckon a thousand more.

The statue of Venus glorious to see was naked floating in the large and from the naval down was all covered with green waves and bright as glass, a citole had she in her right hand and on her head seemly to see a rose garland fresh and well smelling, above her head the doves fluttered, before stood her son cupid, upon his shoulders he had two wings he was blind as is often seen, he bore a bow and arrows bright and keen.

Why should I not tell you all the pictures that were on the wall

within the temple of the mighty red Mars? The length and breadth of the wall was painted like the inside of a horrible place. High in this great temple of Mars in Trace in a thick cold frosty region there Mars had his soverign mansion.

First on the wall was painted a forest, in which there dwelt neither man nor beast, with knotty gnarred old oak trees with stubs of shape hideous to see in which there was a rumbling in a gust of wind as though a storm should break every bough. And downward under a hill stood the temple of Mars mighty in arms, wrought all of burned steel, of which entree was long and straight and ghastly to see. And there out came a rage and such a rush of wind that it made all the gates shake. The northern light shone in at all the doors for there were no windows on the wall through which men might discern any light. The doors were all of adamant, entrance fastened across and endways with tough iron and to make it strong every pillow that sustained the temple was a great ton of beautiful bright iron.

There I first saw the dark image of crime and all the compassing of cruel ire as red as any live coal. The pickpurse and also the pale dread, the smiles with the knife under the coat, the stables burning with their black smoke, the treason of murder in the bed, the open war with all the wounded bleeding. Contest with bloody knife and sharp menace, all full of shrieking was that bloody place. The slayer of himself I saw there his heart blood had bathed all his brain. The nail driven in the temple at night, the cold death with mouth gaping upright. In the midst of the temple sat mischance with discomfort and sorry countance. Yet I saw madness laughing in his rage, armed complete, outcries, and fierce outrage. The carcass in the bush with throat cut; a thousand slain and none of them strove

with sickness, the tyrant, with the prey by force bereft, the town destroyed ther was nothing left. Yet I saw the burning of the dancing ships, the hound strayed with the wild bears, the sow eating the child in the cradle, the cook is scalded for all of his long ladle. Nought was forgotten by the unfortunate Marte. The carter was over with his cart, he lay full low under the wheel. There were also of Martes division the barber the baker and the smith that forges sharp swords on his anvil. And all above painted in a tour I saw conquest sitting in great honor with the sharp sword hanging by a subtle twine thread hanging over his head. Painted was the slaughter of Julius, of great Nero, and of Antonius. All was like the time before they were born yet was their death painted there before by threats of Mars right by figures. So it was shown in that picture as it is painted in the stars above who shall be slain or who shall die for love. Sufficeth one sample in old stories I may not reckon them all though I would.

Upon a chariot stood the statue of Mars, armed and looked grim as if he were mad and over his head shone two figures of stars that in scripture had been called the one Puella and the other Rubens. This god of arms was arrayed thus, a wolf stood there before him at his feet with red eyes and he ate of a man, with a subtle pencil was this story of revenge of Mars and his glory painted.

Now to the temple of Diana the chaste as shortly as I can I will make haste to tell you all the description. The walls were painted up and down of hunting and of modest chastity. There I saw woeful Callisto when Diana was grieved with here was turned from woman into bear and after she was made the bodes star, thus was it painted, I can say you no fear, her son is also a star as men may see. There

I saw Daphne turned to a tree, I mean not the goddess Diana, but Penneus daughter which which is called Daphne. There I saw Actaeon made into a hart for revenge because he saw Diana all naked. I saw how his hounds caught and ate him for they knew him not. Yet a little further was painted how Atalanta hunted the wild boar and Meleager and many others for which Diana wrought him care and woe. I saw there many another woeful story the which I cannot draw from memory. This goddess set high on a hart with small hounds about her feet and under neath her feet was a moan increasing, it was soon diminished. Her statue was clothed in a light green, with a bow in hand and arrows in a case. She cast her eyes down where Plato had his dark region. A woman was traveling before her, but for her child so long unborn she and said, "Help for you can best of all." Well could he paint life-like what he wrought, he bought the hues with many a florin.

Now the lists were made and Theseus at great cost arrayed thus the temples and theater every part and when it was done he liked his wonder well. But I must stop at Theseus a little and speak of Palamon and Arcite.

The day for their approaching, that each should bring a hundred knights to contest the battle as I told you and unto Athens their covenant to hold each of them have brought a hundred knights armed for the wars at all rights. And certain many a man knew that never since the world began as to speak of knighthood of their land as God has made land and sea was not of so noble a company. For every living creature that loved chivalry and would give his thanks for a passing name had prayed that he might be of that game. And well was he that was chosen for if there filled tomorrow such a case you know well that every lusty knight that loves the way of love and has his might were it in England or elsewhere would give their thanks to be

there to fight for a lady benedictine. It was a lusty sight to see. They acted so right with Palamon. With him there went many knights one by one. They were armed as I have told you each after his own oplnion.

There may be seen coming with Palamon, Lycurgus himself the great king of Trace, black was his beard and manly was his face. The circles of his eyes glowed between yellow and red, he looked like a griffin with kept hair on his strong brows. His great limbs, his muscles strong and hard, his shoulders broad, his arms round and long and as was the fashion of the country he sat high upon a chair of gold with four white bulls in the traces. Instead of coat of arms over his armor, nails yellow and bright as gold, he had a bear skin coal black and very old. His long hair was shaggy on the back and as ravens feathers shone very black. A wreath of gold as large as a mans arm and of great weight upon his head set full of bright stones of fine rubies and diamonds. About his chair there went twenty or more white dogs as great as any steer to hunt at the lion or the deer and followed with nose bound round fast with colors of gold and rings cut round. He had an hundred lords in his route armed well with hearts stern and strong.

When Arcite as men find in stories the great Emetreus, the king of India, upon a day steed trapped in steel covered in gold cloth well varigated come riding like the god of Mars. His coat of arms was of the cloth of Tars, inlaid with pearls white and round and great. His saddle was of burnished newly beaten. A mantle hung upon his shoulders brimful of red rubies that sparkled as fire. His crisp hair was clustered like rings and that was yellow and glittered like as the sun. His nose was high, his eyes were bright citrin, his lips were round and his color blood red. A few freckles mingled between yellow

and somber black spread in his face and as a lion he is looking plots  
Of five and twenty years I suppose. His beard has begun to spring  
well. His vow was as a thundering trumpet. Upon his head he wore  
a green laurel, a garland fresh and lusty to see. Upon his hand for  
pleasure to tame an eagle as white as any lily. With him there he  
had a hundred lords all their gear full richly in all their things.  
For trusted well that dukes, earls, kings, were gathered in their  
company for love and increase of chivalery. About this king on every  
part ran many a tamed lion and leopard. And in this wise these  
lords all in all came on Sunday to the city about the first of the  
day and in the town alighted. This Theseus, this duke, this worthy  
knight when he had brought them into the city and inned them each in  
his degree, he feasted them and did such great honor to entertain  
them and do them all honor that yet men think no mans wit of no  
estate could amend it. The minstrelsy, the service at the feast,  
the great gifts to the most and least, the rich array of the palace  
of Theseus not who sat first or last upon the days, what ladies fair-  
est are or dancers best or which of them can dance best and sing nor  
who most freely speaks of love. What hawks sit on the perch above,  
what hounds lay on the floor, of all this I do not now mention but  
all the effect that I think best, now comes the point and hearken if  
you please.

The Sunday night, before day begun to spring when Palamon heard the  
lark sing, although it was not day by two hours, yet sung the lark  
and Palamon too. With holy heart and with high courage he rose to go  
on his pilgrimage unto the blissful Citherea beyond, I mean Venus  
honorable and benign. And in her hour he walked forth a pace unto  
the lists there was her temple and down he kneeled and with humble

appearance and sore heart he said as you shall hear;

"Fairest of the fair O my lady Venus daughter of love and wife of Vulcanus thou who makes glad of the mount of Citheron for like the love thou hadst to Adonius have pity of my bitter grievous tears and take my humble prayer to your heart. Alas I have not language to tell the effect of the torment of my hell my heart may not my brain make known. I am so confused that I can not say. But mercy lady bright that knows well my thought and sees what harms I feel, consider all this and be sorry for my sorrow as wisely as I shall forever henceforth my might thy true servant be and hold war always with chastity that I make as my vow so you help me. I care not to boast of arms nor I ask not to have victory tomorrow nor renown in the case nor vain glory of praise of arms blown up and down but I would have full possession of Emilia and die at your service find you the manner and how and in what wise. I take not heed but it may better be to have victory of them or they of me so that I have my lady in my arms. For though it be that Mars is god of arms your virtue is so great in heaven above that if you will I shall well have have my love. I will worship your temple ever more and on your altar where I ride or go I will do sacrifice and kindle fires. And if you will not so my lady sweet then I pray a spear that Arcite will pierce me through the heart. Then I care not when I have lost my life though Arcite win her for wife. This is the effect and end of my prayer, give me my love, my blissful lady dear." When Palamon had done his prayer he did his sacrifice and that full piteously with all circumstances. Itell you not now his observances. But at the last the statue of Venus shook and made a sign whereby that he took that his prayer was accepted that day. For though the sign showed a delay yet he knew well that his bone was granted and with glad heart soon went home.

The third hour unequal that Palamon begun to go to the temple of Venus up rose the sun and up rose Emilia and did hasten to the temple of Diana. Her maids that she lead thither with her had with them the fire, they had the incense the clothes and the remnant that all that to the sacrifice shall long for. The horns full of mead as was the fashion there lacked nothing to do her sacrifice. Smoking the temple, full of fine clothes, this Emilia with kind heart, her body washed with water from a well, but I dare not tell how she did her right but it be anything in general, and yet it were a pleasure to hear all, to him that means well it were no charge. Her bright hair was kept all untressed. A crown of green oak Cerrus upon her head fair and meet. Two fire she began to burn on the alter and did her things as men may behold in Stage of Thebes and these wise old books. When the fire was kindled with piteous cheer she spoke unto Diana as you shall hear.

"O chase goddess of the green woods to whom both heaven and earth and sea is seen, queen of the region of Pluto dark and low, goddess of maidens that my heat has known a year and knows what I desire as keeps me from the vengeance and wrathly ire that Atheron cruelly suffered for. Chase goddess well you know that I desire to be a maiden all my life, nor never will I be a lover or a wife. I am you know yet of thy company a maid and love hunting and chase and to walk in the wood and not be a wife and be with child. Not well I know the company of man. Now help me lady since you may and can for you have three forms in you. And Palamon that has given so much love for me and also Arcite that loves me so sore, this grace I pray thee without more and send love and peace between them two. And from me tear away their hearts and all their high love and their desire and all their busy torment and their fire be quenched or turned in another place; and

if it me so that you do me so great a grace or if my destiny be so shaped that I shall needs have one of the two send me him that most deserves me. Behold goddess of clean chastity the bitter tears that fall on my cheeks. Since thou art maker and keeper of us all, my maiden keep thou and well preserve, and while I live a maiden I will serve thee.

The fires burned clear upon the alter while Emilia was thus in her prayer but suddenly she saw a quaint sight for right then one of the fires was quenched and alive again and after that soon that other fire, fire was quenched and all gone and as it was quenched it made a whistling as do these wet brands in their burning and at the brands end ran out again as it were many bloody drops for which so sore aghast was Emilia that she was well near mad and began to cry for she knew not what it signified but only for fear had she cried and wept so that it was a pity to see. And there with all Diana again appeared with bow in hand as a huntress and said, "Daughter stop your weeping Among the goddess high it is affirmed and by eternal word written and confirmed that you shall be wedded unto the one of them that has for thee so much care and woe but unto the which of them I can not tell. Farewell for I may no longer dwell." The fires that burned on my alter shall declare to you before you go home your adventure of love as in this case". And with that word the arrows in the case of the goddess clattered and rang fast as she went forth and vanished for which this Emilia was astonished and said, "What amounts this alas, I put myself in your protection, Diana and in thy disposition. And now she goes home the nearest way". This is the effect there is no more to say

The next hour of Mars following this Arcite to do his sacrifice with all the rights of his wise pay. With piteous heart, high devot-

ion right thus to Mars he said his prayers "O strong god that in the region cold of Trace art honored and lord hold hast in every reign and every land of arms all the bridle in thy hand and those fortunate as you wish to devise, accept of me my piteous sacrifice. If so it be that my youth may deserve and that my might be worthy to serve thy god head, that I may be one of thine then I pray thee to be sorry for my pain for like pain, and not like hot fire for which you once burned in for despair. .... for like sorrow <sup>that</sup> was in your heart have compassion upon my grievous pains. I am young and as unknowing as you were and as I think with love that was evermost offended by any living creature; for she for whom I have all this woe endure cares not where I sink or flee. And well I know before she promices me mercy I must with strength win win her in this place, and well I know without strength or grace of you nothing my strength avail. Then help me lord tomorrow in my battle for think fire once burned you as think fire now burns me, and cause it to pass that I tomorrow have victory. Mine be the victory thine be the glory; thy soverign temple will I most honor of any place and always labor most in thy pleasure and in thy strong crafts as in thy temple I will hang my banner. And all the arms of my company and ever more unto the day I die I will before thee find eternal fire. And also to this vow I will bind myself. My beard my hair that hangs down long that never yet has felt offense of razor nor of shear I will give thee and be thy true servant while I live. Now lord have compassion on my sorrow sore give me victory I ask no more.

The prayer of Arcite stopped, the rings that hung on the temple doors and also the doors clattered fast, which made Arcite somewhat aghast. The fires burned bright upon the alter that it again lighted

all the temple and sweet smell went up from the ground. And Arcite held up his hand and cast more insence into the fire with more other rights; and at last the statue of Mars begun to ring his coat of mail, and with that sound he heard a murmuring low and dim that said thus, "Victorie", for which he gave to Mars honor and glory and thus with joy and hope to fare well Arcite proceeds to his inn as joyful as is the bird of the bright sun.

And right there such strife is then begun for like contest in the heavens above between Venus the goddess of love and Mars the stern god mighty in arms that Jupiter is busy it to stop, until paled Saturn the cold that knows so many old adventures found in his old experience an art that he soon pleased every part. As truth is said age has great advantage in age is both wisdom and usage, men may the old outrun but not out tread. Saturn to still strife and dread, be it all against his kind, he began of all this strife to find a remedy.

"My dear daughter Venus," quoth Saturn, "mcourse that has such wide space to turn has more power than man knows. Mine is the drenching in the sea so wan, mine is the prisoner in the dark coat, mine is the strangling and the hanging by the throat the murmur and the cheerless rebelling, the groans and the poisoning. I do vengence and pain, while I dwell in the sign of the lion. Mine is the running of high halls, the falling of the towers and of walls upon the miner and the carpenter. I slow Sampson in the shaking of the pillar and is the cold maladies, the dark treasons, my looking is the fader of pestilence. Now weep no more I shall do diligence that Palamon that is thine own knight shall have his lady as you have him high. Though Mars shall help his knight yet never the less between you there may be some time peace ye be not all of the complexion that causes all day division, I am thy grandfather ready at thy will weep thou no

more, I will thy lust fulfil. Now I will stop of the gods awhile of Mars and of Venus goddess of love and tell you as plainly as I can the great affect for which I begun

Great was the feast in Athens that day and also the lusty season of that May made every living creature be in such happiness, that all that Monday they joust and dance and spend it in the high service of Venus. But because they should arise early to see the great fight they went unto their rest at night. But on the morrow when that day begun to spring there was in the hotelries all about, horse and armor, noise and clattering, and to the place rode there many a company of lords upon their steeds and palfreys. So uncouth and so rich and wrought so well of goldsmith, of embroidery, and of steel the bright, shields, hemlets, and trappings, gold hewn helms, coat of mail, and coat of arms, lords in paramount on their coursers, nailing their spears and buckling their hemlets providing with straps of corns with whip lashes lacing ther as need is, there was nothing idle, the foaming steeds gnawing on the bridle and fast the armors with file and hammer driving to and fro; yoeman on foot and many a commonsone on foot as they may go; pipes kettles, drums, trumpets, clarions that in the battle blow bloody sounds; the palace full of people up and down here three and there ten holding their question, guessing of those Theban knights two. Some said it shall be so, some held with him with the black beard, some with the bald, some with the thick herd, some said he looks grim and he would fight. He had a battleax of two pounds weight. Thus was the hall full of guessing long after the sun began to spring.

The great Theseus that was awakened from his sleep with minstrelly and noise that was made kept the chamber of his rich palace until

both the Theban knights honored alike were brought into the palace Duke Theseus was seated at the window, arrayed as if he were a god in a throne. The people pressed thither to see him and to do high reverence and also to hear his command and his sentence. A herald on a scaffold made a "ho" until all the noise of the people was done, and when he saw the people of the noise all still he showed the mighty dukes will.

"The lord has considered that it were destruction to gentle blood to fight in the fashion of mortal battle, wherefore to shape that they will not die he will his first purpose modify. No man therefore upon pain of loss of life, no manner shoot nor poleax nor short knife send into the lists, or bring thither no short sword to strike with biting point no man may draw nor bear by his side. No man shall ride into his fellow, but with a sharp ground sword push if he wishes himself to guard. And he that is at mischief shall be taken and not slain, but be brought unto the stake that shall be ordered on either side, but thither by force and there abide. And if the chieftain on either side so fall and be taken or else be slain no longer shall the turning last. God speed Gyon, go forth and lay on fast. With long sword and according to your fancy fight your fill, go now your way, this is the lords will.

The voice of the people touched the heavens so loud they cried with merry sound, "God save such a lord that is so good he wills no destruction of blood up goes the trumpets and the melody". And to the lists rode the company by ordinance throughout the large city hung with cloth of gold and not with sarge. Like a lord again rode this noble duke, these two Theban knights upon either side; and after rode the queen and Emilia and after that another company of one another degree

other after their degree. And thus they passed through the city and came to the lists by time. It was not of the day fully prime when Theseus was seated rich and high, Hippolita the queen and Emilia and other ladies in degree about. Unto the seats pressed all the company; and westward through the gates under Mars, Arcite and also the hundred of his part with red banner is entering right that instant and in that selfsame moment Palamon is under Venus eastward in the place with white banner and hardy cheer and face. In all the world to seek up and down so even without variation there were no two such companies. For there were none so wise that could say that any had advantage of the other of worthiness, nor of estate nor age, so even were they chosen. In the two ranks fair they set themselves in order. When their names were read every one, that in their company there was no deceit, then the gates were shut, and the cry was loud, "Do now your duty proud young knights!"

The heralds left their riding up and down; now rang trumpets loud and clarion there is no more to say, but west and east the spears sadly go in their supports. The sharp spear went into the side. There saw men who can joust and who can ride there shiver shafts upon thick shields, he feels through the heart spoon the prick. Up springs spears twenty feet high, out goes the swords bright as silver, the hemlets to hew and to shread, out burst the blood with a red stream with mighty maces they burst the bones assunder. He through the thickest of the throng began to press. There strong steeds stumble and down goes all. He rolls under foot as does a ball. He raises on his foot with his trunchon and he hurled him down with his horse. He is hurt through the body and taken in spite of his head and brought unto the stake as foward was, right there he must abide;

another lad is on the other side. And some time Theseus lets them rest, themselves to refreash and drink if they wished. Often that day these two Thebans met together and wrought his fellow woe, unhorsed had each the other of them two. There was no tiger in the vale of Galgopheye when their whelps is stolen when it is little is so cruel on the hunt as is Arcite for jelous heat upon this Palamon. Nor in Belmarie there is hunted no lion that is so cruel or is mad for hunger, nor of his prey desireth so the blood as Palamon to slay his foe Arcite. The jelous stroke hit on their helms but out runs blood on both their red sides.

There is an end sometime to every deed, for before the sun went unto his rest the strong king Emetreus begun to take hold of this Palamon as he fought with Arcite and made his sword bite deep into his flesh, and by the force of twenty is he taken unyielding and drawn unto the stake. And in the rescue of this Palamon, the strong king Ligurge is born down and king Emetreus for all his strength is borne a swords length out of the saddle so Palamon hit him before he is taken but all for nought for he was brought to the stake. His hardy heart might not help him, he must abide when he was caught by force or by composition.

Who sorrows now but noble Palamon who must go to fight no more? And when Theseus had seen this sight unto the folk that fought each other he cried, "Ho no more it is done! I will be a true judge and not partial, Arcite of Thebes may have Emilia, that by his fortune he has fairly won her."

Right then there is the noise of the people begun for joy of this so loud and high with all it seemed the lists would fall.

What now can fair Venus do above? What says she now? What does this Queen of love? But weeps so for want of her will that the tears fall

into the lists, she said, "I am doubtless ashamed." Saturn said,

Saturn said, "Daughter hold thy peace. Mars has his will his knight has all the bone and by my head you shall soon be eased.

The trumpets with loud minstrels, the heralds that cried loud and yelled are in their prosperity for lord Arcite. But hear me and stop a little, which a miracle fell at that instant. This fierce Arcite has done with his hemlet and on a courser to show his face he rides along the large place looking upward unto his Emilia and she casts a friendly eye unto him, (for women to speak in common follow all the favor of fortune) and she was all his cheer as in his heart. Out of the ground a fire infernal started sent by Pluto at request of Saturn for which his horse for fear began to turn and leaped aside and floundered as he leaped, and before Arcite may take his keep and pitched him on the pomel on the head that in the place he laid as if he were dead, his breast was bruised with his saddle bow. As black he lay as any coal or crow so was the blood running from his face. Then was he borne out of the place with sore heart, to the palace of Theseus, then he was cut out of his armor and brought in a bed full fair and quick, for he was yet in memory and alive and always calling for Emilia.

Duke Theseus with all his company is come home to Athens his city with all bliss and great solemnity. All be it his adventure was fallen he would not discomfort them all. Men said also that Arcite should not die, he shall be heeled of his malady. And of another thing they were as glad that of all them there was none of them slain. All were sore hurt and namely one that with a spear was pierced through the breast bone. To other wounds and to broken arms some had salves and some had charms, medicine of herbs and also salve they drank for they would have their limbs. For which this

noble duke as he well can comfort and honor every man and made revel all night long unto the strange lords as was right. Nor was there held no discomfort but as a justice or a tourneying but soothly there was discomfort for falling is only an adventure, nor to be led with fear of the stake unyielding and with twenty knights taken a person alone without more and carried forth by arm, foot and toe and and also his steed driven forth with staves with footman both yoeman and also knaves it arrested him not of villany there may no man call it cowardice.

For which at that instant duke Theseus let a cry to still all ransor and envy the prize as well of a side as the other and either side as brothers and gave them gifts afters their degree and held a feast full three days and conveyed the worthy knights out of town a three days journey. And every man went home the right way. There was no but farewell have a good day. Of this battle I will relate no more but speak of Palamon and Arcite.

The breast of Arcite swelled and the sore at his heart increased more and more. The clotted blood for the skill of any physician corrupted and is left in his body that no other blood vein nor cupping nor drink of herbs may be his helping. The virtue expulsive or animal virtue called natural may not the poisin expell, the pipes of his lungs begun to swell and every lance in his breast is shut with poison and corruption. He gains neither for to get his life, vomited upward nor downward laxative, all is to burst that region nature has now no power. For certainly nature will not work, farewell physique go bear the man to church. This is the long and short of it Arcite must die for which he sends after Emilia and Palamon that was his dear cousin, then he said thus as you shall after hear.

"Nought may this woeful spirit in my heart declare a particle of my sorrow, severe that I must love but I bequeath the services of my ghost to you above every creature, since my life may no longer endure Alas the woe! Alas the strong pains that I for you have suffered and so long! Alas my death! Alas my Emilia! Alas departing our company! Alas my hearts queen! Alas my wife! My hearts lady endeared all my life! What is the world? What asks men to have? Now with his love now in the cold grave alone without any company. Farewell my sweet foe! My Emilia! And softly take me in your two arms for the love of God and hear what I say.

I have here with my cousin Palamon had strife and ransor many a day gone for love of you and my jealousy. And Jupiter so wise my soul guided to speak of a servant properly with all circumstances truly, that is to say truth, honor, and knighthood, wisdom, humbleness, astate and high kindred, freedom and all that belongs to that art, so Jupiter have of my soul the part as in this world right now I know none so worthy to be loved as Palamon that serves you and will do so all his life. And if ever you be wife forget not Palamon the gentleman." And with this word his speech began to fail for from his feet up to his breast had come the cold of death that had overcome him. And yet moreover in his two arms the vital strength is lost and all gone. Only the intellect without more that dwells in his heart sick and sore began to fail when the heart felt death. Dusked were his two eyes and his breath failed. But on his lady he cast an eye, his last word was "Mercy Emilia!" His spirit changed houses, and went there as I can never, I can not tell where. Therefore I stop I am not a divine; of souls I find not in this register but it pleases me not of opinions to tell of them though they write where they dwell Arcite is cold, there Mars his soul guide. Now will I speak of

Emilia

Emilia shrieked and Palamon howled and Theseus took his sister away fainting and bore her away from the corpse. What help is it to delay further the day, to tell how she wept both eve and morning? For in such case women have such sorrow when their husbands go away from them that for the most part they sorrow so, or else fall in such malady that at the last they die.

Infinite are the sorrows and the tears of old folk and folk of tender years in all the town for the death of this Theban knight, for him wept both child and man; There was not so great weeping when Hector was brought to Troy all freshly slain, alas! the pity that was there, scratching cheeks and also rending of hair. "Why be dead," these women cry, "and had gold enough and Emilia?" No man might glad den Theseus save his old father Egeus that knew this worlds transmutations, as he had seen it changed up and down, joy after woe and woe after gladness, and showed him example and likeness.

"Right as there died never a man; quoth he, "that he lived not in earth in some degree, right so there lived never a man", he said, "in all this world that some time he did not die, this world is but a throughfare full of woe and we are pilgrims passing to and fro, death is an end of every worldly sore," besides all this he yet said much more to this effect, wisely to encourage the people that they should comfort them.

Duke Theseus with all his busy cure considered now where the sepulture of good Arcite may best be made and also most honorable in his degree. And at the last he concluded that ther as first Arcite and Palamon had for love the battle between them, that in the same grove, sweet and green, there as he had desire his armor, his complement and for love his hot fires he would make a fire in which

might accomplish all, that funeral office he began command to hack and hew the old oaks and lay them on a row in bunches arrainged to burn, his officers run with swift foot and rode at the instant of his commandment. And after this Theseus had sent after a bier and spread it all over with gold cloth the richest that he had and of the same suit he clad Arcite. Upon his hands he had white gloves also on his head a crown of green laurels and in his hand a sword full bright and keen. He laid him with uncovered face on the bier there with his weeping it was a pity to hear. And for all the people to see him when it was day he brought him to the hall that roared of the cry and the sound

Then came the woeful Theban Palamon with flowing beard and rough ashen hairs, in black clothes all covered with tears, and passing others in weeping, Emilia the most sorrowful of all the company. In as much as the service should be the more noble and rich in his degree duke Theseus let fort be brought three steeds that were all trapped in glittering steel and covered with arms of lord Arcite. Upon these great white steeds there sit folk of which one bore his shield, another held his spear in his hands, the third bore with him his bow of Turkeys, of burnished gold was the case and also the armor, and rode forth a face with sorrowful cheer, towards the grove as you shall hear. The noblest of the Greek that there were carried on their shoulders the bier, with slow pace and eyes red and wet, through out the city by the mainstreet that was all spread with black and wonderful high the street is all covered with the same. Upon the right hand went old Egeus and on the other side duke Theseus with vessels of fine gold in hand all full of milk and honey and blood and wine. Also Palamon with great company and after that came woeful

Emilia with fire in hand as was at that time the fashion to do the office of the funeral service.

High labor and full great preparation was all the service and fire making that with his green top the heavens reached and twenty fathoms of breadth the arms stretched this is to say the bows were so broad. Of straw there was first laid many a load. But how the fire was made upon high and also the names of the high trees as oak, fir, birch, ash, alder helm, poplar, willow, elm, plane, box, chestnut, linden, laurel, maple, thorn, beech, hasel, ewe, whippetre, how they were felled shall not be told for me, nor how the gods roamed up and down disinherited of their habitations in which they dwelt in rest and peace. Nymphs, Faunes, and Amadrias; nor how the beasts and all the birds flew for fear when the woods was fallen nor how the ground was aghast of the light that it was not used to see the sun, nor how the fire was caught first with the straw and then with dry slabs cloven in a thread and then with the green wood and spruce and with the cloth of gold and with jewelry and garlands hanging with many a flower the mir, the incense with all great odor, nor how Arcite lay among all this nor what riches is about his body, nor how Emilia as was the custom put in her fire of the funeral service, nor how she swooned when men made the fire, nor what she spoke, nor what was her desire nor what jewels men cast into the fire when the fire was great and burned fast nor how some cast their shields and some their spears and of their vestiments which as they were and cups full of wine and milk and blood into the fire that burnt as if it were wood nor how the Greeks with a large route rode thrice about the fire, upon the left hand with a large shouting and thrice with their spears clattering and thrice how the ladies went crying nor how that led Emilia homeward, nor how Arcite is burned to cold ashes, nor how the virgil was held all through the night, nor how the Greeks played the Virgil

plays I care not to say; who wrestled best when naked with oil anointed nor who bore him bestis of no advantage. I will not tell also how they went home unto Athens when the play was done. But shortly to the point and make an end to my long tale.

By process and length of certain years all the mourning is stopped and the tears of the Greeks by one general assent. There seemed to me there was a parliment at Athens upon a certain point and case among the points was spoken to have a certain country alliance and of the Thebans full obediance. For which this noble Theseus at that instant sent after gentle Palamon unknown to him the cause and why, but in his black clothes he came at his command in high. Then sent Theseus for Emilia. When they were seated and after all the place was hushed and Theseus had a space, before any word came from his wise breast his eyes were set there as was his pleasure and with a sad visage he still sighed and right after that he said his will.

"The first move of the cause above when he first made the fair chain of love great was the fact and high was his intention, well he knew why and what thereof he meant, for with that fair chain of love he bound the fire, the earth, the water, and the land in certain bounds that they may not flee, that same prince and that move," quoth he, had established down in their wretched world certain days and durations to all that is produced in this place over which day they may not face all are yet able they those days to aggravate there needs no authority for it is proved by experience but I please to declare my sentence. Then may men by their order well discern that the like moreover is staple and eternal. Well may men know but it is a fool that every part derives from his whole. For nature has not taken his beginning of no part nor no corner of a thing but of a

thing that is perfect and stable descending so until it is corruptable. And therefore of this wise providence he has so well beset his ordinance that speaks of things and progressions shall endure by succession and not be eternal without life. This you may understand and see at a glance.

Lo the oak that has so long a nutriment from the time that it first begun to spring and has so long a life as we may see, yet at the last the tree is wasted.

Consider also how that hard stone under our feet, yet it is wasted as it lays by the way. The broad river sometimes grows dry. The great towns we see wane and pass. Then may you see that all this thing has an end.

Of man and woman see we well that in one of these two terms, this is to say in youth or else age he may be dead, the king as shall a page, some in his bed, some in the deep sea, some in large fields as men may see. There helps none all goes the that same way. Then may I say that all this thing may die. What makes this but Jupiter the king? That which is prince and cause of all thing, converting all into his proper source from which it is derived truth to tell. And here again no creature on life of any degree avails to strive.

Then is it wisdom as I think to make virtue of necessity and take it well that we may not shun and namely that to us all is due. And who murmurs he does folly and rebellion is to him that all may guide. And certainly a man has most honor to die in his excellence and flower when he is sure of his good name, then has he done his friend nor him no shame. And gladder ought his friend to be of his death when with honor upheld is his life than when his name is appalled for age, for all forgotten is his valor. Then is as for a worthy fame when he is best of name. The contrary of all this is wilfulness

Why murmur we? Why have we heaviness that good Arcite of chivalery flower is departed with duty and honor out of this foul prison of his life? Can he thank them? Nay God knows never a part that both his soul and also himself offends and yet they are not able their lusts to amend.

How may I conclude this long story but after woe I advise us to be merry and thank Jupiter for all his grace? And before we depart from this place I advise that we make of two sorrows a perfect joy lasting evermore and look now where most sorrow is here there will we first amend and begin.

"Sister" quoth he, "this is my full assent with all advise here of my parliament that gentle Palamon your own knight, that serves you with will, heart, and might, and ever has done since first you knew him that ye shall of your grace have pity on him and take him for your husband and lord. Give me your hand for this is our accord. Let's see now of your womanly pity. He is a kings' brother's son, and, though he were a poor bachelor, since he has served you so many years and had for you so great adversity it must be considered believe me for gentle mercy ought to surpass rightly."

Then said he thus to Palamon full right, "I know there needs little sermoning to make you assent to this thing, come near and take your lady by the hand. Between them soon was made the bond that is called matrimony or marriage by all the council and we baronage. And thus with all bliss and melody has Palamon wedded Emilia. And God that has wrought all this wide world sent him his love that has bought it dear. For now is Palamon in all weal living in bliss, in riches and in health, and Emilia loves him tenderly and he serves her also gently that there never was a word between them of jealousy or

any other annoyance. Thus ends Palamon and Emilia, and God save all their fair company.