"Let all the dukes and all the devils roar": The Jailer's Daugher's Performative Empathy

Jessica Tooker
Indiana University, Bloomington

Having recently freed the noble kinsman Palamon from prison, the Jailer's Daughter defiantly exclaims what she has done: "Let all the dukes and all the devils roar, / He is at liberty! I have ventured for him / And out I have brought him" (2.6.1-3).[1] In the Daughter's soliloquy, she details the complex machinations behind the plot which has been motivated by her passionate love for the eloquent prisoner of whom she observes, "Fairer spoken / Was never gentleman" (2.4.20-21). Furthermore, as she confesses of her primary motivation for releasing Palamon without her father, the Jailer's knowledge, "O, Love, / What a stout-hearted child thou art!" (2.6.8-9). At this pivotal moment in time, the Jailer's Daughter demonstrates the remarkable potency of language to illuminate key relationships between people. As Russ McDonald argues of this crucial type of speech, "Shakespeare's artful arrangement of moving words is the engine that generates immense emotional and theatrical power. The events depicted are often extremely moving, and usually it is the form of expression that augments the emotional effect."[2] For example, the Jailer's Daughter's striking repetition of the personal pronoun "I" in this stunning jailbreak speech underscores her strong female agency and commitment to securing Palamon's freedom: "*I* have ventured for him / And out *I* have brought him" (2.6.2-3). As Hélène Cixous reflects of the markedly gendered verbal power which the

Journal of the Wooden O. Vol 23, 72-89

ISSN: 1539-5758

Daughter displays, "Feminine strength is such that while running away with syntax, breaking the famous line (just a tiny little thread, so they say) … she goes to the impossible where she plays the other, for love, without dying of it."[3] Challenging her potential detractors, the Daughter rhetorically "runs away with syntax" by speaking from a place of deeply rooted authority—and of course, personal agency. If, as Jillian Cavanaugh argues, "Performativity is the power of language to effect change in the world: language does not simply describe the world but may instead (or also) function as a form of social action," the Jailer's Daughter's decisive words not only emphasize her shocking release of the prisoner, but also trigger the powerful affective responses of imagination and empathy within the audience—thus rendering its members complicit in her compelling ruse.[4]

Philosopher Eva-Maria Engelen defines "imagination" as a "representation" which is "more precisely a form of directed (thus guided) conceiving or creation of possibility," and additionally, this type of mentalism "is not limited to visual imagination, but includes the conceiving of a non-present situation, a non-present image or story, a melody or situation or even the conceiving of a proof."[5] For instance, when the Jailer's Daughter speculates about Palamon, "Say I ventured / To set him free?" (2.4.30-31), she envisions a "non-present situation" and loaded possibility taking place. Encouraging the audience to imagine this transformative event with her, the Daughter appeals for its collective empathy, which Engelen explains as, "a social feeling that consists in feelingly grasping or retracing the present, future or past emotional state of the other; thus empathy is also called a vicarious affect."[6] Stimulated to feel with, and not simply for, Palamon and the Jailer's Daughter the offstage audience experiences empathy as precisely this type of vicarious emotion.

The Daughter's question about the concept of Palamon's freedom illustrates how, as Slavoj Žižek argues, "Possibility itself, in its very opposition to actuality, possesses an actuality of its own."[7] Crucially, the term "possibility" suggests two diametrically opposed things: "Possibility designates something 'possible' in the sense of being able to actualize itself, as well as something 'merely possible' as opposed to being actual."[8] In other words, a possibility represents either a desire that becomes real or a

hypothetical one that does not. Moreover, as the Daughter's release of Palamon demonstrates, the difference between an actual and a mere possibility can frequently be determined by a compelling blend of empathy, personal strength, courage—and sometimes total force of will. Hearing the Daughter's passionate rationale for freeing Palamon—and imaginatively participating in his offstage liberation and its dramatic aftermath—audience members concur that she successfully *actualizes the possible* by making what was once a speculation, completely real. As the gripping dynamics between imagination, empathy, and action unfurl within William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's late play and "romance," *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, its main characters confront the key question: "What is possible?"

In order to accomplish her goal of transforming a possibility into an actuality, the Jailer's Daughter utilizes what I would call "performative empathy," which may be simply defined as the empathetic "call and response" that is successfully solicited and achieved between onstage actors and offstage audience during a performance, the reciprocal sharing of "fellow-feeling" between these individuals. For example, when the Jailer's Daughter announces her plan to free Palamon, she simultaneously establishes herself as being irrevocably changed by the scheme—and masterfully extends the "call and response" for performative empathy to the offstage audience. The Daughter's rousing hypothetical—"Say I ventured / To set him free?"—is also directed at "us." And what exactly do we think of her game-changing ruse?

Significantly, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Shakespeare powerfully foregrounds the human body as an embodied affective tool easily triggering the imaginative and empathetic faculties of audiences onstage and off. In order to stimulate the striking reciprocal conduit of shared feeling generated between onstage and offstage interlocutors, the playwright cannily showcases the astonishing *corpus humanum* as a foundational instrument for generating performative empathy. As a result, the audience observes skilled actors who are not only capable of stimulating our emotions—of reaching out to us and making us feel things—but also of encouraging us to conceive of our own bodies as flexible instruments for taking dynamic action in the world. Unquestionably, Shakespeare's emphasis on the phenomenological

upshot of dramatic performance—upon the physical body, bodily affect, feeling, and sensation as reliable signifiers of our common and shared humanity—luminously characterizes the last thing he wrote.

My paper argues that Shakespeare establishes the deeply human/e Jailer's Daughter as the play's chief empathizer with the well-spoken Palamon. By feeling with, and not simply for, this transiently downtrodden individual—including bearing empathetic witness to Palamon's (and his kinsman, Arcite's) pain, struggles, and eventual triumphs—the Jailer's Daughter dauntlessly engages with the cathartic violence of change in word and deed, thus profoundly impacting all those who come unto her sphere of influence. The Daughter's bold liberation of Palamon changes his life (and her own) forever—thus illustrating how, in the Derridean sense, a performative, "produces or transforms a situation, it effects," cathartically.[9] Furthermore, the Jailer's Daughter successfully solicits the offstage audience's engagement with the onstage performance in order to concretize the changes that she has wrought. To this end, I want to explore how the Daughter's performative empathy "works" onstage, especially by means of her four hypnotic soliloquies.

After formulating a plan, the Daughter proceeds to take direct action. Bidding her father, the Jailer, farewell, for the second time, obsessing about his potentially being a prisoner who could have "endured cold iron" (2.6.10), and besides observing that since all of the other inmates have already been freed, he might as well lock himself up in the jail and stay there—as she crossly quips, "Shortly you may keep yourself" (2.6.39)—the Jailer's Daughter states of Palamon: "Now to him" (2.6.39). The Daughter's observation about the Jailer having "endured cold iron" (2.6.10) has a two-fold implication. She either means that her father should basically have self-imprisoned at this point, that he more deserved jail himself, or that he is so fearful that he would have chosen to lock himself up in one of the jail cells and stayed there, rather than trying to set Palamon free.

However, before turning to the Jailer's Daughter's unforeseen release of Palamon, I want to briefly touch upon an earlier summa demonstration of "fellow-feeling" heralding the Daughter's passionate empathy with the prisoner. The opening scene

showcases Duke Theseus, Queen Hippolyta, and the noble kinswoman Emilia's protracted interaction with three queens. Arguably, Theseus represents the late romance's first example of an empathetic sovereign whose compassion for the gathered women effectively sets the tone for the rest of the play. This begins with the Queens, Hippolyta, and Emilia all begging Theseus to go to war against King Creon so that they might finally bury their three kings whose bodies still lie reeking on the battlefield. While the queens' emphatic demand that the royals hear and respect them may be delivered coarsely, their expressed sentiment is real, so people compassionately listen to what they have to say. Finally, it's the women's grief-stricken words and melodramatic actions (including assuming the supplicant position) which ultimately rouse the Duke's empathy for their long-standing plight. As Theseus exhorts the groveling women, "Pray, stand up. / I am entreating of my self to do / That which you kneel to have me" (1.1.205-207). They make him beg himself! However, at the same time—and especially given what happens after his acquiescence to the stranger women's plea (including the jailing of Arcite and Palamon)—*it seems obvious that the three queens should not have asked Theseus to help them*.

Once Theseus has committed to assisting the three queens to bury those whom he agrees "were good kings when living" (1.1.147), the Duke readies the great cracking engine of the state for impending war—a formidable task of which, Agamemnon-like, he has some modest experience. As he promises the crying sovereigns, "I will give you comfort, / To give your dead lords graves—the which to do, / Must make some work with Creon" (1.1.148-149). Readying himself for battle, Theseus next romantically expresses to Hippolyta, "Since that our theme is haste, / I stamp this kiss upon thy current lip; / Sweet, keep it as my token. Set you forward, / For I will see you gone" (1.1.215-218). Theseus's words to the queen can be taken in two ways. The phrase "For I will see you gone" suggests that the Duke will remain onstage to speak with his close friend, Pirithous, after the women exit. But coupled with the admiring injunction, "Set you forward," the phrase could also represent a rallying battle cry recalling his wife's past exploits as she fearlessly rides into battle on horseback. Additionally, I wish to suggest that the audience should perceive a slight parallel between Hippolyta and the Jailer's Daughter—what could be characterized

as the shared "freedom-fighter" ethos by which they live their lives. Both women take transformative action in the world to accomplish their goals by leading the Amazonians into battle and setting Palamon free. Thus, we might say that these two strong women are spiritual helpmeets and—in an ideal universe—would probably be very good friends. I think this could also still possibly be. For, as the Jailer's Daughter thinks while turning the lock in Palamon's jail cell as her father continues to sleep, who has not heard of the famous exploits of Queen Hippolyta?

Notably, Shakespeare structures *The Two Noble Kinsmen* around the Jailer's Daughter's stunningly empathetic liberation of Palamon which, as she observes, is soon to become the stuff of prison lore. Post-jailbreak, Palamon remains dramatically shackled in the woods by a cedar and a flowing stream where the Jailer's Daughter has temporarily left him while returning to the jail in order to secure "necessaries" (2.6.32), including food-stuffs, for the former captive. Markedly, during the multiple nighttime forest scenes where the Daughter's Ophelia-esque descent into madness—or in early modern parlance, "wode"—aligns with the natural woodsy environment—so we might say she goes "wode" in the dark "woods"—her empathetic sharing of Palamon's woe doesn't in the least prevent her from seeking him out. Quite the reverse, because of course, the Daughter still needs to file off the kinsman's iron leg shackles, feed him provisions, and hopefully receive a long-awaited kiss as recompense for her pains. And after all she has done for him—it had better be a good kiss.

For, as the "greensick," or sexually frustrated, Daughter obsesses, Palamon hasn't yet thanked or so much as kissed her as recompense for her pains; frustratingly for her, there wasn't ever a solid gesture of exchange compacting the freedom she has wrought. Still pining for a kiss, the Daughter vows to await the growth of Palamon's more reciprocal feelings, perhaps stirred by her enduring love for the kinsman: "Yet I hope, / When he considers more, this love of mine / Will take more root within him" (2.6.26-28). Like a tiny seed which first sprouts into a young sapling and may finally grow into a mighty cedar tree, the Daughter prays that her personal passion will inspire the former captive's similar sentiments over time. Naturally, all that is required of Palamon—the sole recipient of the Daughter's boundless devotion—is at some point

in the future, the sensual sealing of their deal with a romantic kiss. The Jailer's Daughter's eager anticipation of a grateful kiss from Palamon is heightened by the fact that soon people will be scouring the countryside for the kinsman, and as she imaginatively gloats to the audience, "I am then / *Kissing* the man they look for" (2.6.36-37, italics mine). Crucially, since the Jailer's Daughter and Palamon have already shared romantic intimacies, their past history explains why she longs for yet another kiss from the kinsman. As she enthusiastically confides to the audience, "Once, he kissed me. / I loved my lips the better ten days after: / Would he would do so every day!" (2.4.25-27).

However, the Jailer's Daughter's first soliloquy opens with her present-day lament over what she perceives as the current impossibility of the match—which will only ever become an actual possibility if she can successfully help Palamon to escape from prison. Remarking on the vast socio-economic gap between herself and the noble kinsman, the Jailer's Daughter naïvely wonders to the audience: "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" (2.4.1-4). The opening lines of the Daughter's soliloquy rapidly engage audience members in her predicament.

As Michael Wagoner observes, "Her question immediately creates a connection with her audience…She invites the audience to craft answers through asking a question, which is to say that she invites the audience to create her own interiority."[10] Via the conduit of "performative empathy," and by asking key questions, the Jailer's Daughter requires that audience members participate in her characterological self-generation as it's purposefully defined by her love for Palamon. Realistically citing completely different social classes as the main reason why she believes Palamon will never "affect," or love her, the Daughter surmises to her sea of empathetic interlocutors that marriage is out of the question—and acknowledges that having sexual relations outside of that commitment is truly foolish: "To be his whore is witless" (2.4.5). In addition to being glossed as "to like or love," the word "affect" can also mean "having an impact," and since the rest of the Jailer's Daughter's speech illustrates the palpable affect which Palamon has upon her, she uses this word both ironically and sincerely. As

the Daughter explains the trajectory whereby she found herself falling in love with Palamon: "First, I saw him;" / … "Next, I pitied him—" /…"Then, I loved him" (2.4.7, 11, 14). Markedly, Palamon (like Arcite) is repeatedly spoken of by the Daughter as being "a young handsome man" (2.4.14) and so, as the story often goes, her eyes were first ensnared by his comely appearance. Furthermore, and from the moment she sees him, the Jailer's Daughter can instantly tell him apart from the other prisoner, who is actually described as slightly better looking. In response to her father's perhaps knowing misrecognition of the prisoner who peers out of the jail cell window—"That's Arcite looks out" (2.1.50)—the Daughter immediately clarifies: "No, sir, no, that's Palamon. Arcite is the lower of the twain" (2.2.51-52). So it seems she already recognizes Palamon as that "tall young man" (4.1.82). And eventually, of course, she falls in love with him.

The Jailer's Daughter's striking pity for Palamon and Arcite is highlighted in her opening lines where, as she enters "carrying rushes," she compassionately observes to her father of the two noble kinsmen, "These strewings are for their chamber. 'Tis pity they are in prison and 'twere pity they should be out. I do think they have patience to make any adversity ashamed" (2.1.21-24). Significantly, the Daughter's pity for these unfortunate captives is based not only upon her probable belief that the men were wrongly imprisoned, but also the fact that she cannot realistically be with Palamon (in any sense of the word) while he remains in penitentiary. Ironically, and as the audience soon learns, Arcite and Palamon have been jailed by Duke Theseus in order to receive healing ministrations after their defeat in battle. Arguably, the kinsmen's presence within jail is the result of their being taken as prisoners of war—not because they have committed any obvious wrong, other than fighting on the side of Creon. Logically therefore, the offstage audience's early cognizance that the two men are unluckily beaten soldiers only increases its collective capacity to empathize with Palamon and Arcite, unfortunates in war if not—as we shall soon see—in love. For once the Daughter has set her sights on Palamon—and pitied his lamentable plight—she strongly desires to free the captive kinsman. As the Jailer's Daughter exclaims, "I will do it!" (2.4.32) adding, "And this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me" (2.4.33).

Crucially, the word "pity" suggests that the individual who pities another human being is currently in a superior position, and frequently that there is a sincere desire to alleviate—and sometimes to stay with—the other person's suffering. As the Daughter compassionately observes of their mutual sorrow, "He grieves much— / And me as much to see his misery" (2.4.27-28). In other words, the empathetic Jailer's Daughter feels Palamon's pain as if it's her own. Certainly, the Daughter experiences her love for the kinsman as the most vital part of her existence. Wondering to the audience, "What should I do to make him know I love him?" (2.4.29), since as she admits, "For I would fain enjoy him" (2.4.30), the Daughter next boldly contends, "Say I ventured / To set him free?" (2.4.30-31). Vigorously disowning all other impediments, including blood-ties, and embracing the lure of possibility in order to actualize the possible—since as Žižek observes, "Possibility already possesses a certain actuality *in its very capacity of possibility*."—the Jailer's Daughter resolutely exclaims: "Thus much for law or kindred! / I will do it!" (2.4.32-33).[11]—emphatically pounding her broom on the ground. Yet another compelling alternative performance choice would be the Jailer's Daughter spreading invisible rushes in the kinsmen's cell while declaring, "I will do it." Manifesting Judith Butler's compelling observation that, "The deed is everything" during this riveting preliminary speech, the Daughter establishes herself as a very brave woman whose personal identity is shaped by her chosen position as the instrument of Palamon's liberation.[12] Crucially, part of the significant shock value of the Daughter's plot is that there is literally *no* preamble of any kind to her stunning revelation in 2.6 that she has, in fact, done the deed—and, for better or worse, the noble kinsman is free.

In the jailbreak speech where the Daughter announces Palamon's release, she passionately explains how her all-encompassing love for the former prisoner has overridden any other concerns about the risky social action which she has undertaken for his sake: "I love him beyond love and beyond reason, / Or wit, or safety; I have made him know it" (2.6.11-12). Perhaps imagining the supposed heedlessness which caused Palamon to be imprisoned in the first place, the Daughter speaks of herself as actually being far more overtaken by a desire for freedom than the kinsman

in her confession: "I care not, I am desperate" (2.6.13). Via her selfless love for Palamon, the Jailer's Daughter demonstrates an unnerving side-effect of empathy—the affective phenomenon of what philosopher Fritz Breithaupt calls "self-loss" which, "can be described as a possible effect of simulating, adapting, or otherwise engaging with the perceived perspective, state, or identity of another and thereby losing, ignoring, or forgetting one's own perspective, interests or state."[13] In other words, one of the big risks of feeling too much for another person—of over-empathizing with him or her—is no less than the totalizing loss of self. To this end, the Daughter concludes her revolutionary manifesto with the moving profession of her desire to be of service to Palamon: "Let him do / What he will with me, so he use me kindly—" (2.6.28-29). By making this extraordinarily giving statement, the Daughter rhetorically transfers the agency she claimed by defying those who sought to keep the noble Palamon in chains from herself to the eloquent escapee, whom she wants, as she strikingly puts it, "to use her." In fact, and with supreme good-heartedness, the Jailer's Daughter states: "For use me so he shall" (2.6.30). She says she wants him to "use" her. Because she really loves Palamon, the gentle Jailer's Daughter gives his life back to him.

Having freed the former captive, who must run for his life while his hands are still chained, the Jailer's Daughter arrives onstage, distractedly exclaiming about her inability to find the young man in the forest. During this time—where the Daughter's panicked speech precipitates her eventual distemper—she experiences the phantasmagoric dark woods as a stunning performative version of what Žižek resonantly characterizes as the "place 'between the two deaths,' a place of sublime beauty as well as terrifying monsters."[14] It is also, "the site of *das Ding*, of the real-traumatic kernel in the midst of symbolic order."[15] The traumatic kernel that the Daughter must now confront is Palamon's absence from her life. Presuming that the kinsman has already been gobbled up by hungry wolves—as she laments, "He's torn to pieces; they howled many together / And then they fed on him. So much for that." (3.2.18-19)—the Jailer's Daughter asks herself, "How stand I then?" / … "So, which way now?" (3.2.20, 32). The Daughter's questioning rhetoric signaling her desire to establish where she is in space and to maintain emotional control, and also sanity, while perambulating

through yet another eerily reversed world—where the screech-owl is substituted for the crowing cock—effectively heralds her tragic descent into madness. While Fletcher was known for writing potent "mad scenes," scholars generally accept that Shakespeare probably scripted the Daughter's final soliloquy in which, at this point in time, she is very sick.

Entering the nocturnal stage to express her debased condition, the Jailer's Daughter laments, "I am very cold and all the stars are out too, / The little stars and all, that look like aglets" (3.4.1-2). Comparing the stars in the sky to the ornate spangles on a great lady's dress, the Daughter begins to hallucinate by aligning the striking image of the entire cosmos with an item of jewel-bedazzled clothing. The Jailer's Daughter's madness transpires, at least partially, because of her profound physical exhaustion and grief over losing Palamon. Mourning the absent kinsman, "Alas, no, he's in heaven" (3.4.4) and repetitiously asking, "Where am I now?" (3.4.4), the Daughter expresses her progressive distancing from reality in a stunning narrative presaging her impending insanity. An Athenian countryman or "rustic" will diagnose her as a "madwoman" (3.5.73) in the following scene—yet she will stimulate performative empathy by dancing with the Bavian and his friends.

I would argue that it's precisely the Daughter's emotional instability—and performative verbalization of a series of emotive images stimulating the audience's empathy with her plight—which lends her second nighttime speech its striking import. Although standing in the middle of the forest, Daughter instead imagines herself standing on the seashore, gazing out at its vast oceanic depths—and tragically unable to forestall an impending shipwreck. Panicking, she observes, "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!" (3.4.5-7). Believing that she is witnessing a ship crashing against a large, submerged rock, the Daughter exhorts the vessel's phantasmagoric mariners to, "Run her before the wind, you'll lose all else. / Up with a course or two and tack about, boys!" (3.4.9-10).

In this speech, the Jailer's Daughter also expresses her hope of finding a stimulating amphibian companion with whom she might converse: "Would I could find a fine frog; he would tell

me / News from all parts o'th' world" (3.4.12-13). Although the Daughter could mean that she wants to consume the reptile as food, the contemplative frog's comforting presence—in the midst of her aquatic fantasia—more likely alludes to her evocative hallucination of being near the water. Continuing in the same vein, the Daughter next proposes, "Then would I make / A carrack of a cockle shell and sail / By east and north-east to the king of pygmies, / For he tells fortunes rarely" (3.4.13-16). Whimsically wishing to set sail in a small seashell to the Land of the Pygmies to have her fortune told, the Jailer's Daughter also subtly bespeaks her longing for a release from all worries and cares, a sentiment further explaining her desire to chat with a fine frog who, seated peacefully on his lily pad, shares many interesting stories with her about how the world goes. And in doing so, the frog rhetorically—and also solicitously—generates a safe and protected space where the frog prince might one day proffer a kiss to the woebegone princess.

In the following act, the Jailer confirms what he perceives as the Daughter's increasingly disorganized behavior to the Wooer and the First and Second Friend. As the Jailer observes of his distracted progeny, "I asked her questions, and she answered me / So far from what she was, so childishly, / So sillily, as if she were a fool, / An innocent, and I was very angry" (4.1.38-41). And the Wooer concurs with the Jailer: "'Tis too true: she is mad" (4.1.45). For recently, the young man has secretly sighted the Daughter moping alone by a lake, "thick set with reeds and sedges" (4.1.54). Having peeped at her "through a small glade cut by the fisherman" (4.1.64), and confirming to the stone-faced Jailer that, "I saw it was your daughter" (4.1.64), the Wooer quotes the Daughter's melodic lamentation: "She sung much, but no sense; only I heard her / Repeat this often: 'Palamon is gone, / Is gone to th'wood to gather mulberries'" (4.1.66-68). A compelling example of what Marjorie Garber calls an "unscene," which is defined by, "narrating events that have taken place offstage and out of our sight," the Wooer's elegiac description of the Daughter's madness encourages us to empathize with her sorrow by imagining the mnemonic unscene.[16] In his narration, the Wooer stimulates the audience's empathy by imaginatively presenting what Engelen would characterize as a "non-present image or story," even including a melody about Palamon collecting wild berries in the forest. As it turns out, when

the Daughter catches the Wooer spying on her, she instantly tries to drown herself in the lake, but is rescued from that sad fate because he wades into the water and "set her safe to land" (4.1.96). Fleeing the Wooer for the city, the Daughter is soon intercepted by several men, one of whom is her brother, and brought back to the jail and her father. Continuing her warbling back in prison, the Jailer's Daughter angrily sings, "May you never more enjoy the light" (4.1.104) and sharply inquires of those present, "Is not this a fine song?" (4.1.104)—to which her brother patronizingly agrees, "Oh, a very fine one" (4.1.105). Frustrated by the men's rejoinders—and falsely imagining her droll sibling as a tailor—the Daughter switches topics and, putting her hands on her hips, asks, "Where's my wedding gown?" (4.1.109), and then hauntingly croons: "O fair, o sweet (etc.) …" (4.1.114).

In response to the First Friend's agreement with her positive assessment of Palamon—"Yes, he's a fine man" (4.1.120)—the Daughter muses, "Oh, is he so?" (4.1.121) and next jealously observes, "You have a sister. /…But she shall never have him—tell her so— / For a trick that I know" (4.1.121-123). Of course, the "trick" itself is probably either a surprise clandestine engagement to the Jailer's Daughter herself or a crafty early modern bed trick where she proposes to substitute her body for that of the sister's. Wildly hypothesizing about Palamon's possible betrayal of her bed—and also in order to block the mean sister from him—the Jailer's Daughter frantically speculates to the Friend, "There is at least two hundred now with child by him" (4.1.128), yet soon reduces that absurdly large number by conceding, "There must be four" (4.1.129). Aware of the ignoble kinsman's philandering—and thus promptly stating that Palamon has already produced hundreds of children with other women—the suspicious Daughter explains to the company present, "Yet I keep close for all this, / Close as a cockle" (4.1.129-130). To be sure, being used or tricked by men obsesses the Daughter's mind.

The Jailer's Daughter's focus on the kinsman means that she must still take every "broken piece of matter" (4.3.6) and immediately relate all of these spoken utterances to his name. As the Jailer frets, the Daughter "fits it to every question" (4.3.8). She uses Palamon's name in every single sentence she utters. Perhaps reminiscing about her childhood, which remains intertwined with

her romantic memory of Palamon, the Jailer's Daughter nostalgically explains to the Doctor: "Sometime we go to barley-break, we of the blessed" (4.3.29-30). "Barley-break" is a rustic game played by young couples who hold hands while running across a wide field while a third couple stands in the center among the barley and the rye trying to catch them as they pass by. The joyful game represents not only a subtle metaphor for sexual coupling, but also probably alludes to the Daughter's happy childhood memory of playing with friends in a green field. By contrast to this bucolic image of those who frolic happily in the fields of the blessed, the Daughter observes of those who live in "that other place" of sin, damnation, and eternal hell fire—and so must endure, "such burning, frying, boiling, hissing, howling, chattering, cursing" (4.3.31-32)—that, "Lords and courtiers that have got maids with child…shall stand in fire up to the navel and in ice up to the heart" (4.3.40-42). To be clear, these people are in Hell. Of course, the striking image of these sufferers also bespeaks the Daughter's internal howl of rage because she is starting to realize that she may never receive so much as a "thank you" kiss from vanished Palamon. The complex affective mood surrounding her illuminates how, as Megan Snell observes, "Audience responses to the Jailer's Daughter in performance epitomize the mixed reactions that tragicomedy can produce, as her heartbroken sadness can also cause enjoyment."[17] Yet, we also empathize with the Daughter, who involves us in her end-goal of freeing, finding, and ever-dwelling with Palamon.

In order to distract the mad Jailer's Daughter from her grief—and to soundly turn the mocking conception of playing a bed trick on the Friend's sister against her—the Doctor devises a cunning ruse whereby the Wooer will impersonate the missing kinsman in order to seduce the Daughter, and even get to introduce himself to her as "Palamon." Additionally, the men's scheme shortly emerges as a protective fiction for the Daughter since she can only accept a new paramour if she misrecognizes him as Palamon—who means so much to her past and whose absent presence continues to shape her present experience. As Linda Charnes observes of the past's haunting influence upon the present and the future, "Only rarely do we 'process' or complete a relationship to the past in a way that lets us say to ourselves, confidently, 'that was then, and this is now.'"[18]

Refocusing the Jailer's Daughter's attention on Palamon to a second "Palamon" by replacing one man with another, the Doctor, the Jailer, and the Wooer utilize patriarchal rhetoric in order to instantiate their reality over hers. The language of the three men is markedly plainspoken; their blunt speech indicates their strenuous efforts towards a lasting cure. For example, the Wooer vows to regularly make love to the Jailer's Daughter because as the Doctor insists, "There the cure lies mainly" (5.2.8). And he also pleads with the Wooer, "If she entreat again, do anything. / Lie with her if she asks you" (5.2.17), to which the Jailer exclaims, "Whoa there, Doctor!" (5.2.18). Yet the Doctor still insists: "Yes, in the way of cure" (5.2.19). Ignoring the men's mockery, the human Daughter—who may knowingly acquiesce to the controlling "necessary fiction" before her—eventually throws up her hands and confirms to the at least physically available Wooer that obviously at this point, "We'll sleep together" (5.2.109). Arguably, the Daughter accepts her prescribed role in the situation since she has accomplished her sole purpose—and the only thing that really matters in the end. As the Jailer's Daughter wearily, triumphantly observes to the Doctor, "Now he's at liberty" (5.2.96). For in the case of the noble kinsman, whom the Daughter never really forgets—and who may still return to her someday, the audience will always remember how she deploys this same kind of deep passion to change his life.

One reason why the Jailer's Daughter may accept her new bedfellow's proposition is because the Wooer and Palamon may be the same person. In New York and Ashland productions of the play, the actor playing Palamon doubled as the Wooer. As Lois Potter explains of the duplicitous sort-of kind bed-trick, "The Wooer in Palamon's clothes looked surprisingly like Palamon. Indeed, at Ashland…the Wooer's 'Do you not know me'? (5.2.82) showed both his reluctance to lie to her and her sense that perhaps he had been Palamon, or Palamon had been the Wooer all along."[19] Perceiving "The Wooer's" question, the Daughter may recognize romantic Palamon as being incognito—and standing in front of her, which explains why she propositions him! This is one and the same man. And this is also an epic scene from fantasy—where Palamon comes back in the end.

Of course, the Jailer's Daughter once harnesses tremendous personal strength in order to release the prisoner—or as the entire Ashland cast would have it—to find him again someday. Putting all of her energy into one chosen desire, the Jailer's Daughter accomplishes that same desire—of setting Palamon free—by focusing on one specific, sublime object. It is her one wish and she achieves it! Movingly, the brave Jailer's Daughter's unforgettable challenge to all opposing forces bespeaks her commitment to Palamon's protection: "Let all the dukes and all the devils roar!" Arguably, Palamon and the Jailer's Daughter are spiritual helpmeets: he holds the key to her heart—and fortuitously enough for him—she the one to the clink. Binding herself to this one crucial task, the Jailer's Daughter powerfully demonstrates her endless love for the noble kinsman. Of course, the Daughter's devotion to Palamon illustrates how the play's title, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* could refer to a variety of partners, including the playwrights themselves—and also the Jailer's Daughter and her Palamon.

Relevantly, then, the last word on the Daughter belongs to Palamon. In the following scene, hearing of the Jailer's Daughter's recovery from illness and upcoming marriage, Palamon says he is glad to hear that news and generously offers his coin purse to the Jailer as a monetary contribution to the Daughter's dowry—and perhaps that wedding gown: "Commend me to her and, to piece her portion, / Tender her this" (5.4.31-32). Similarly, his assembled knights also throw their purses, exclaiming, "Commend us to her" (5.4.35). Palamon's munificent donation of financial largesse is characteristic of the kinsman, who demonstrates his awareness of how the Jailer's Daughter's great deed has changed his life. It is a gift from a real prince.

To be sure, and as we might expect, throughout the play both of the kinsmen are repeatedly established as being noble and/or good. Furthermore, since Palamon and Arcite are also equivalent regarding their personal virtue, the playwrights introduce the element of randomness into the mix of things in order to determine who will wed the lovely Emilia. Paradoxically, the noble kinsman who meets his doom is actually the victor of the pyramidal test of strength: the doomed Arcite who is paralyzed and soon dies from being crushed under the weight of his mighty black stallion. Magnificently, and just moments before his tragic death, the stage

directions indicate that the physically beautiful Arcite comes onstage aloft, "carried in a chair," which is brought crashing down onstage as if to represent a stark punishment from the gods.

In a similarly distressing—yet perhaps still salvageable—vein, the faithful love which the Jailer's Daughter feels for Palamon is never entirely reciprocated for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the last thing Arcite ever does is to bequeath Emilia to his comrade-in-arms. However, we have borne witness to—and thus empathize with—the Jailer's Daughter's deep love for, and empathy with another person as real in both scope and significance. Inevitably for the nostalgic Jailer's Daughter, the past seeps into and infiltrates the present—thus enabling a series of transformative choices—including, above all, her liberation of Palamon. To this end, I argue that one of Shakespeare's final conjuring acts is to proffer us with the breathtaking experience of what is known in Biblical terms as "The Fortunate Fall" into love—or at the very least, lust. And that could also possibly be a waystation to true love.

The striking imagery of The Fall permeates *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. In addition to Arcite and his horse's traumatic fall backwards, other far more fortunate falls take place: the single rose from Emilia's tree, the two kinsmen's mutual experience of love at first sight when they spy Emilia wandering in the garden below the prison—and of course, the passionate Jailer's Daughter's falling in love with Palamon. Ironically, the Daughter frees Palamon in order to keep him tightly bound to her forever. Or as this overwhelming sentiment of mortal love for another human creature is expressed in Benjamin Britten's song about Eve's famous temptation of Adam, her proffering of the apple to him, and the First Man's tragic, inexorable—yet irrefutably fortunate—consumption of the juicy fruit from the Tree of Knowledge:

> Adam lay ybounden
> Bounden in a bond
> Four thousand winter
> Thought he not too long
> And all was for an apple
> An apple that he took
> As clerkes finden written in their book
> Nay had the apple taken been
> The apple taken been

Nay had never our lady
A been heaven's queen
Blessed be the time
That apple taken was
Therefore we moun singen
Deo gracias, deo gracias!

Notes

1. All Shakespeare quotations are from William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Lois Potter, rev. ed. (1997; repr., London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015) and cited in the text by act, scene, and line.

2. Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 190.

3. Hélène Cixous, from "Sorties" (1986) in *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, 2d ed., eds. Antony Easthope and Kate McGowan (1992; repr., Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 166.

4. Jillian R. Cavanaugh, "Performativity," *Oxford Bibliographies*, www.oxfordbibliographies.com.

5. Eva-Maria Engelen, "Empathy and Imagination," conference paper, Universität Konstanz, 2.

6. Engelen, "Empathy and Imagination," 3.

7. Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 157.

8. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 157.

9. Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (1977; repr., Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 13.

10. Michael Wagoner, "The Dramaturgical Space of Solo Scenes in Fletcher and Shakespeare, Or a Study of the Jailer's Daughter," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35. 1 (2017): 108.

11. Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, 158.

12. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990; repr., New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 34.

13. Fritz Breithaupt, "The Blocking of Empathy, Narrative Empathy, and a Three-Person Model of Empathy," *Emotion Review* XX.X (2011): 2.

14. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989; repr., London and New York: Verso, 2008), 150.

15. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 150.

16. Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 903.

17. Megan Snell, "Chaucer's Jailer's Daughter: Character and Source in The Two Noble Kinsmen," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 69.1 (Spring 2018): 49.

18. Linda Charnes, "Shakespeare, and Belief, in the Future," in *Presentist Shakespeares*, eds. Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 66.

19. Lois Potter, introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen* by William Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 59-60.