Connections: "The Knight's Tale" and "The Miller's Tale."

Tragic, Idealized Courtly Love among Nobility

**Genre:** Medieval Epic or Epic Romance

**Setting:** Grandeur of the Classical World (occupied only by noblemen)

**Elderly Authority Figure:** Duke Theseus (tries and fails to control Emilye's sexual future)

**Divine Plans and Predestination:** The Greek gods intervene in human affairs with omens, miracles, and disasters. The universe is ordered and fate is inescapable.

**Love at First Sight:** Palamon and Arcite fall in love with Emilye from afar when they are war-prisoners. They spend dangerous years trying to be near her--all sighs and tears.

**Conventions of Courtly Lover:** Emilye is blond, gray-eyed, demure, and of aristocratic mien--always proper, appropriate, and helpless.

**Fierce Combat:** Two suitors face off with sword and shield to engage in lengthy ritualized combat with hundreds of knights in an orderly tournament arena. Men die and are injured.

**Tragic Ending:** Community gathers to hear solemn sermon on predestination, mourns the death of Sir Arcite and his broken body.

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Comic, Slapstick Affair among Bourgeoisie

**Genre:** Fabliau

**Setting:** Oxford village (occupied by bourgeois students and landlords)

**Elderly Authority Figure:** John the Carpenter (tries to hold Alisoun "narwe in a cage," as the text says)

**Mockery of Divinity and Predestination:** The "prophecies" of another flood merely a scam to get sex. The universe works by random chaos and trickery.

**Love at First Sight:** Nicholas sees Alisoun, propositions her, and grabs her by the "queynt." She instantly gives in to his lecherous advances--all gropings and sex in tubs.

**Inversions of Courtly Lover:** Alisoun is dark-haired, slender as a weasel, earthy, vivacious, fun-loving, and mischievous.

**Slapstick Combat:** Two suitors face off with "thonder dent" farts and poke the enemy in the rear with hot iron implements.

**Comic Ending:** Community gathers to laugh at John and make fun of the situation.