

Philosophy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Admetus was a fool. He could never face the truth. At times he became delusional. Do you agree with this? “ Alcestis is a spirited, puzzling, profound, and seriously lighthearted tragic comedy of human existence” (Arrowsmith 3)

Beautifully summarized what Alcestis by Eurpides is all about, a “ universalizing” (Arrowsmith 4) drama. However the character Admetus is a puzzling question; was he a fool or not? I don’t agree with the statement that Admitus was a fool, he did what any man would have done. The greatest fear any soul on this earth has is the fear of death, mortality is the biggest reality of any person. Everything is uncertain but death. Under such dark omen that is always hanging in the air, would it surprise anyone if a person accepts the gift of immortality?

“ Men are defined...by death; only in the presence of death does life reveal itself” (Arrowsmith 11)

It is every man’s desire to live longer and healthier. Admetus accepted the offer of immortality thinking that by the time he is to leave the mortal world for the underworld, one of his old parents would happily sacrifice their life for their son. It was not a fool’s decision, it is only rational to think that way.

The mistake he made was not getting anything in a contract with his parents. If it was his time to die, he must have had some form of legal paper showing that he has a substitute to offer in his place. He could have also made a deal with any person, who would be happy to die at a certainty time in future for a pot of gold.

Despite the fact Ametus might seem like a fool to many, I would call him an impulsive being, not a fool. Plus he always has a way to get out of situations. No one is perfect in the world, Admetus’s foolishness (or impulsiveness)

would have landed him in trouble many times, but he always had someone there to protect him – fools don't have such powerful friends!

Apollo is like a friend to Admetus, he does treat his friends well and in the end Apollo gets him out of trouble whenever he's in one. When it was the time to win the heart of the beautiful Alcestis, Pelias's daughter, the king of Lolcus, Apollo helped him yoke the lion and the bear to a chariot and then Admetus drove the chariot to show it to Pelias – fools can't be that lucky. Admetus was impulsive and stubborn and that is why he refused to make a sacrifice to Artemis. This upset the goddess and she put snakes in the bridal chamber as a punishment. To Admetus's aid, Apollo came forward again, he talked sense into him and told him that it's better to make the sacrifice to the goddess. Admetus took heed to Apollo's advice and made the sacrifice – fools don't listen to reason, Admetus is no fool.

Toward the end when it's the time of death Fates have agreed to spare Admetus if he offers someone else. When Admetus asks his parents they refuse and then he is left alone, to his aid, his wife Alcestis comes and offers herself and Admetus accepts.

This is the only moment I feel Admetus acted like a fool, he let go of a wife who was offering her life to her husband's soul. Adnetus acted cold heartedly here and as time proved later on he did act like a fool as he repents what he had done.

"...an audience which would have regarded Alcestis's sacrifice as both plausible and natural." (Arrowsmith 14-15)

Thanatos, the god of death takes away Alcestis leaving Admetus behind, when he is alone he recognizes his mistake. He looks at life and he hates it, he doesn't want to live forever anymore. But again Heracles comes to

Admetus's rescue and after Heracles deals with Thanatos, Alcestis returns to mortal earth – fools don't make brave choices.

Source

Euripides, and William Arrowsmith. *Alcestis*. New York: Oxford UP, 1974.

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