

Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde

**TROILUS AND CRISEYDE**

by

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ONE OF THE THREE GREAT LOVE STORIES OF THE  
MIDDLE AGES

*A READER-FRIENDLY EDITION*

**Unabbreviated**

*Put into modern spelling*

by

MICHAEL MURPHY

**Book 1**

**A somewhat abbreviated version is also to be found at this site, together with Henryson's medieval sequel "The Testament of Cresseid."**

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*Select Vocabulary for this Poem*

*al', al be that*: although

*an*: if

*anon*: at once

*ay, aye*: always

*aventure*: chance, fate

*bet'* : better

*bren*: burn; *brent*: burnt

*cleped*: called, named

*dis-ease*: distress, unease, pain

*do him have*: cause him to have

*do me die*: cause me to die

*dread*: doubt. *out of dread, withouten dread*: without doubt; I assure you

*eke, eek*: also; *eke, eche* (vb):to add. increase

*ere*: before

*e'er*: ever

*eyen*: eyes

*gan, 'gan*: began; or merely sign of the past, almost like *-ed*;

*gonnen*: past t. plur.

*hatte*: (was) called

*hight*: named, called

*ilke*: same

*i-fere, ifere*: together;

*all i-fere*: everything

*i-wis, iwis*: indeed

*lest(e), list* : please, be pleasing to

*but if her lest*: unless it pleased her

*him lest, list*: it pleases him

*let*: hinder, hindrance, delay (n. & vb)

*leve, lief* : dear, loved

*like*: please; *it liketh me*: it pleases me

*This counsel likèd well to Troilus*: pleased T. very much,

*mete, mett*: dream, dreamed.

*mo'* : more

*ne, n'* : mark of negation =

modern —n't

*ne was, n'as* = was not, wasn't;

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*n'ill* = will not, won't; *n'ould* = wouldn't  
*n'ere*: were not ; *n'ot* = ne wot, does not know; *n'iste* = did not know

*paraunter*: perhaps, by chance  
*pardee*: lit. "by God" (a common oath): certainly  
*play* (v): joke, relax, entertain  
*plain*: complain, lament

*quod*: said

*rede, redd(e)*: n. & vb.: advise or advice, judge(ment);  
*best to redde*: best to do

*smart* (adj): sharp, bitter; (vb): to hurt  
*speed*, pt tense *sped*: succeed, prosper  
*starve*: die, not necessarily of hunger

*thee* (vb): succeed, prosper  
*thilke* = *the ilke*: the very, the same  
*think*: think, seem; *methinks*: it seems to me; *him thought*: it seemed to him  
*tho*: then  
*tho'*: those

*unnethe(s)*: scarcely, barely

*ween*,: think  
past t.: *wend*: thought

*wend*: go, as in "wend one's way"  
*wight*: person

*wiste*: knew,  
past t. of *wot*; neg.: *n'iste*  
*wood*: mad  
*wot*: know, pres. t. of *wiste*;  
neg.: *n'ot*;  
*wost* = 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sing. pres.

### **A note on these reader-friendly editions**

The editions of **Troilus and Criseyde** on this webpage are NOT translations. The complete version and the lightly abbreviated version present the original words of the poem in reader-friendly form, like our edition of the **Canterbury Tales** also on this website. That is, the words are Chaucer's original words, but the spelling and punctuation are modernized where possible, as with editions of Shakespeare or Milton. However, because Chaucer's language is two centuries older than theirs, a greater number of archaic or obsolete words need explanatory glosses and annotations. Glosses are provided in the margins, and annotations at the bottom of the page.

A dot over an -è- indicates that it was probably pronounced in Chaucer's poetic practice: bathèd, thingès (2 syllables each); similarly an -ï- with two dots: natiön (3 syllables).

The *Linguistic Introduction* to our **Canterbury Tales** provides a longer and more detailed explanation of our treatment of the Chaucer text and helpful suggestions on how the text may be read.

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### On Opening Old Texts to All Readers

Ic ðancige þam ælmyhtigum scyppende mid ealre heortan þæt he me synfullum þæs geuðe þæt ic ðas bec ... onwreah ðam ungelæredum. Ða gelæredan ne beðurfon þissena boca for ðan ðe him maeg heora agen lar genihtsumian.

I thank the almighty creator with all my heart that he has allowed me, a sinner, to open these books to the unlearned. Learned people have no need of these books because their own learning is enough.

#### **Aelfric, Oratio, Homilies II, c. 1000 a.d.**

How few there are who can read Chaucer so as to understand him perfectly. And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. 'Tis not for the use of some old Saxon friends that I have taken these pains with him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. ... Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their country-men of the same advantage, and hoard him up as misers do their grandam gold only to look on it themselves and hinder others from making use of it.

#### **John Dryden, Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern, 1700**

“Let a few plain rules be given for sounding the final -e of syllables and for expressing the termination of such words as ocean and nation etc as disyllables---or let the syllables to be sounded in such cases be marked by a competent metrist. This simple expedient would, with a very few trifling exceptions where the errors are inveterate, enable any reader to feel the perfect smoothness and harmony of Chaucer’s verse. As to understanding his language, if you read twenty pages with a good glossary, you surely can find no further difficulty, even as it is; but I should have no objection to see this done: strike out those words which are now obsolete, and I will venture to say that I will replace everyone one of them by words still in use out of Chaucer himself, or Gower his disciple. I don’t want this myself: I rather like to see the significant terms which Chaucer unsuccessfully offered as candidates for admission into our language; but surely so very slight a change of the text may well be pardoned, even by black-letterati, for the purpose of restoring so great a poet to his ancient and most deserved popularity.

#### **Coleridge, Table Talk, March 15, 1834**

## **General Introduction to *Troilus & Criseyde***

**The following introduction confines itself largely to features of medieval storytelling that may be unfamiliar to first readers, who may be expecting the conventions of modern narrative, especially of the modern novel, the successor to the medieval romance.**

**Troilus and Criseyde** is a medieval romance, that is, an extended narrative dealing with love and adventure. “Romance” originally meant a story in the vernacular, that is, a narrative that was not in formal Latin, the language for all serious discourse. Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian, the vernaculars derived from Latin, are still referred to as Romance languages, the vernaculars derived directly from the original language of the Romans — Latin. Hence also terms like Latin America.

So Romance originally meant a story told in one of these vernaculars mainly for entertainment, as distinct from history or theology or philosophy, which would have all been written in Latin. Many vernacular stories tended then as now to deal with love, hence *our* sense of the term romance, but then as now, stories of adventure went with stories of love. In a good medieval romance there would be a mixture of both. The famous tale of Tristan and Isolde is just such a romance; the different versions of the Lancelot and Guinevere story also. **Troilus & Criseyde** is a little different. It is a story of love that is not set in an indeterminate medieval period like these others, but during the Trojan War. The lovers are the king’s son, a bachelor, and the beautiful widowed daughter of a Trojan priest who has defected to the Greeks because he knows Troy will fall. The love affair is in the foreground; the war and other martial adventure very much in the background. Love rather than patriotic feeling animates the hero to valor on the battlefield, but there is not one scene in which a battle or single combat is described at any length, only passing reference to a martial achievement or occasionally the prizes of war, introduced neatly as part of the plot. Even the death of Hector, the great hero of Troy and one of the Nine

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Worthies of the medieval world, is passed over in a line or two, as if the poet were afraid of being diverted from his main narrative, the love story, by another subject dear to the middle ages, the story of Hector. The death of the hero Troilus gets precisely one line.

Medieval romances sometimes feature supernatural or preternatural characters or events: dragons and giants, grail visions, magic, sorcery, etc. These are present even in a sophisticated romance like **Tristan and Isolde**, though they do not occupy a lot of space: the hero earns the heroine by slaying a dragon and has his poisoned wound healed by the quasi-magic powers of Isolde's mother. In the Arthurian myth the hero proves his right to the kingship by drawing out a sword embedded in a stone, and Sir Bedivere surrenders that sword at the end to a mysterious arm clothed in white samite that rises from a lake.

Chaucer's poem avoids *aventures* of this sort. But in the area of narrative technique he is much like other medieval authors and unlike moderns in one respect : he is not much concerned with keeping us in the dark about the ending. He makes no effort to keep his audience in suspense but assumes that they are already familiar with the end of the story; we are reminded of it in the first and fourth stanzas of the first book; we are reminded of it again at the beginning of each of the next four books. The original audience presumably was interested not in suspense, since they already knew the tale, but in how **this** narrator would tell **this** familiar tale. We, too, may all know how the story of Tristan and Isolde ends, but there are and were various versions of the tale, even in medieval times, all of them interesting in their own way, but suspense about the outcome is not part of the interest in that story either. Those of us who have eagerly read the same book or seen the same play or movie more than once can appreciate that.

Still, we value **originality**, a demand that would seem as odd to medieval authors as their insistence on their own derivativeness seems to us. Chaucer asserts very clearly that he is NOT the original author of **Troilus and Criseyde**, that his tale is derived from some other "authority"

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For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,  
Or at the least how that she was unkind,  
Must henceforth be matter of my book  
As writen folk through which it is in mind: <sup>1</sup>  
Alas! that they should ever causè find  
To speak her harm; and if they on her lie,  
I-wis themselves should have the villainy.

*how C. forsook T.*

*Certainly ... the blame*  
(Bk IV, lines 15-21)

Chaucer's main source is Boccaccio's **Filostrato**, but while Boccaccio is the major source for his story, Chaucer's end product is a very different poem, truly as much his own as the plays of Shakespeare are **his**, all of which also had "sources". So the humble protest of lack of originality is partly a pose, a standard "modesty topos."

Nineteenth century critics had a tendency to refer to **Troilus and Criseyde** as the first novel in English, so accomplished and so moving is the psychological exploration of character, especially that of Criseyde. Much of the story, moreover, is conducted in dialogue. One can see why the critics made the comparison, but for one reason we have already mentioned and some others we shall mention, it is not a novel, and it is important that it not be read with novelistic criteria in mind, for that is to apply the inappropriate standards of modern fiction to a medieval genre.

Apart from a lack of concern about suspense, the structure of a medieval romance is likely to be a good deal more relaxed than in a well made novel, with loose ends and questions that remain unanswered to the dissatisfaction of a novel-reader who expects a more strict concern for cause and effect. Why, readers may wonder, does the love of Troilus and Criseyde have to be kept a **secret**? Neither of them is married, and so neither is offending a spouse or society's idea of marriage. The situation is quite different from that in the case of Lancelot and Guinevere or Tristan and Isolde. In both of these cases the male protagonists are in love with women who are married, and married to the king at

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<sup>1</sup> 3.4: "As those people write to whom we are indebted for the story." (*Writen* is the plural of write).

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that. Therefore not only is adultery involved but adultery by and with a queen, which is not only sinful but treasonous for both parties. Hence, the case for secrecy is obvious. In **Troilus and Criseyde** this is not the case; there is only, first, the rather inadequate reason — a fact that we learn almost at once in Bk I: — that Troilus has prided himself on being a mocker of doting lovers, and is embarrassed by being suddenly stricken by love's arrow himself. This is a minor inconvenience surely. More seriously there is the discrepancy in social rank of the lovers, something alluded to by Boccaccio, but unmentioned by Chaucer. At one point Troilus's friend, Pandarus, stresses the need for absolute secrecy as if a legitimate mating were absolutely out of the question, though again this is never made explicit. There is, also, the possibility that because Criseyde is the daughter of a traitor and Troilus the son of the king that such a union would be shocking or impossible, but for some reason this objection is not made or even hinted at anywhere in the poem. And if it were valid, it would raise the question: Why does Pandarus, Criseyde's uncle, not share in the suspicion of being associated with the traitor? He is, after all, either the brother, or the brother-in-law of Calchas, Criseyde's traitor father, but there is never any word of him being in danger from the connection. In fact Pandarus remains a trusted counselor of the king's, and the best friend of Troilus.

Clearly for a medieval audience the questions were either irrelevant or the answers obvious. We can choose one answer to the secrecy puzzle, the discrepancy in rank, for example. Or we can assume that all the questions are not meant to be asked, like questions about the disguises adopted by characters in some of Shakespeare's plays which seem to us hopelessly inadequate if looked at in a realistic way.

Attentive modern readers notice such features as looseness of plot or too-convenient **coincidences** which would not be tolerated in a good novel. In a stratagem arranged by Pandarus to get the lovers to meet at his house, we have to accept that he can forecast accurately a terrific storm that will strike between the time Criseyde arrives for dinner and the time she would usually leave, so that she will be compelled to stay. Weather forecasting of that accuracy we still do not have. Again, Troilus HAPPENS to ride by just as Criseyde is being told of his

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love for her. This is standard romance coincidence. Better managed is the later scene where Pandarus *arranges* to have him ride by when he has just been plying Criseyde with more news of Troilus's love. Since medieval audiences often heard stories read aloud because of the scarcity of books, **hearers** probably did not even notice these blemishes. Or they readily accepted enough convention to disregard them.

When **Troilus** in Book I goes home attempting to conceal his shameful love-wound, he tries to alleviate the pain by composing a very Petrarchan song about the paradoxes of love, though throughout the narrative we never get the idea that he is a poet, even when we get a second Song of Troilus (*Cantus Troili*) in Book III. The character is a poet when the story seems to need it, and not otherwise. Much later, in the middle of his mental anguish over the impending departure of Criseyde, Troilus turns philosopher and thinks long and hard about Predestination like a medieval theologian, though his intellectual equipment has not previously been in evidence.

Other lyric poetry is inserted into this long narrative. Aubades, also known as albas or tagelieds, are lyric poems lamenting the arrival of dawn that interrupts the joy of secret lovers who have to part with the coming of day. There are a couple in **Troilus and Criseyde** in Book III, one by Criseyde and one by Troilus. They fit in a long narrative poem like **Troilus and Criseyde** only by convention and the skill of the poet. Realistic they are not, nor are they meant to be, any more than both examples of Troilus' songs, or Antigone's lovely song in Book II which is less about Antigone than an expression of *Criseyde's* feelings.

Troilus, a man at one moment expert enough with words to compose a Petrarchan song of woe, has to take unlikely lessons from Pandarus in the art of writing love letters. The most helpful advice Pandarus can give is : "Be-blot it with thy tears a little," advice easy for Troilus to follow, since he is copiously tearful.

This ready tearfulness in the hero is another feature of some romances that surprises our twentieth-century notion of a hero. But this affliction, called *hereos*,

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is commonplace in medieval romance; it is a malady of male lovers that drives some of them to fasting or moping, to bedfastness or even madness. Troilus never looks like going mad, but does take rather often to his bed of which we get the first glimpse in the poem-composing scene. By our standards, Troilus spends an inordinate amount of time in this bed, alone and palely loitering. (Our shorter edition of the story decreases somewhat the helpless aspect of Troilus's behavior). When he does rouse himself at the news that Criseyde is at least receiving his messages, he is transformed almost miraculously to a ferocious warrior, and his previous mocking manner towards lovers turns into extraordinary graciousness and courtesy, all the beneficent result of LOVE, — another romance convention.

Accepting conventions of the kind we have mentioned enables us to enjoy one of the greatest narrative poems in English, and one of the three great love stories of the Middle Ages. Even in our own time, anyone who goes to a movie or a play or who reads a novel accepts the somewhat different conventions of narrative in each of these forms of entertainment, beginning with a tacit agreement to suspend some disbelief.

One major reason for the original comparison of the poem to a novel is its exceptionally subtle development of the character of **Criseyde**. The stages of her slow yielding to Troilus's (rather inept) wooing are skillfully conveyed, as she is won over with genuine difficulty. She is not a two-timer from early on in the tale like Shakespeare's Cressida, a woman who knows only what is good for her and takes it. She is, to be sure, a little deliberately coy, but we are aware that she is very desirable, attracted by Troilus and his declarations of love, direct or through a go-between, but she is never really overwhelmed by passion, as he is at the very first sight of her. Nor is she imperious like Isolde or Guinevere, the two heroines of the other great medieval love stories. One would never have heard either of *them* described as "sliding of courage." Criseyde is fearful, partly because of her tricky position as the daughter of a traitor, but also because of an almost pathological concern for her good name. It is the fearfulness, of course, the "sliding of corage" that finally causes her to lie to Troilus and yield to

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Diomedes, the Greek.

This **Diomedes** has the smallest of the four major parts. He appears for the first time in Book IV, bold, handsome and sleek, captivating and brutally frank by turns, a practiced seducer, a hunter who adapts himself to the mindscape of the quarry of the moment, who quickly sees the weakness of his prey and seizes on it. He is called "Sudden Diomedes." The epithet is surprising and perfect.

**Pandarus** is a man of indeterminate age: Troilus's best friend but also Criseyde's uncle and a trusted ranking counselor of the king. In fact, he clearly enjoys arranging overelaborate stratagems to enable the coupling of his friends. He speaks more, it has been estimated, than any of the other characters in the story

He also provides the humor in the tale, especially desirable when Troilus needs to be reduced or raised to reality. Pandarus makes fun of himself too, though it is difficult to believe in the love life he mentions, or his failure in it. He can be rather crude, also: he thrusts Troilus's letter into Criseyde's bosom, though she does not resent it; and his behavior on the morning after the lovers' first night is particularly tasteless. When it is finally clear that Criseyde will not return, he is quickly and quite cynically resigned, and the comfort he offers to Troilus, whether he means it or not, is remarkably tactless and clumsy. Nevertheless, he is on the whole an engaging fellow, an odd mixture of jester, puppet master, minder of other people's business, empiricist and good friend.

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### Book I

The poem begins with an elaborate invocation, and an address to the audience, urging them to pray for lovers in distress.

The narrative proper starts with the ninth stanza.

The love story begins one day in the temple, where Troilus, the conceited mocker of other men's amorous weakness, is suddenly struck by Cupid whose instrument here is the ray of light from the young widow's eye, which pierces Troilus through **his** eye as surely as the more usual arrow through the heart. He does not know what has hit him, and Criseyde does not know that he has been hit.

**Book I**

## Proem

*The poet calls not on God or the Virgin Mary as many makers of English romances did, nor on the pagan muse as the classical poets did, nor on the god of Love but, because his is a sad story, on a Fury, Thesiphonè, the voice of all the Furies, who were agents of retribution.*

1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,  
 That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,<sup>1</sup>  
 In loving how his áventurès fell *fortunes*  
 From woe to weal, and after out of joy *sorrow to joy*  
 My purpose is, ere that I part from you.  
 Thesiphonè, thou help me to endite *write*  
 These woeful verses weeping as I write.<sup>2</sup>

*Invocation*

2. To thee clepe I, thou goddess of tormént, *I call*  
 Thou cruel Fury sorrowing ever in pain:  
 Help me that am the sorrowful instrument  
 That helpeth lovers (as I can) to 'plain. *complain*  
 For well sits it, the sooth for to sayn, *it's suitable, truly*  
 A woeful wight to have a dreary fere, *sad person ... sad companion*  
 And to a sorrowful tale a sorry cheer. *manner*

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<sup>1</sup> 1-5: "Before I part from you (the audience) my purpose is to tell the double sorrow of Troilus, son of Priam, King of Troy:- how his fortunes in love went from sorrow to joy and then out of joy." The poet cultivates the impression that he is addressing a listening audience, but his phrases "to endite" and "as I write" in ll. 6-7 rather give the game away.  
 1.2: MSS: "That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye."

<sup>2</sup> 6-7: We have taken a small liberty with this line which in the original reads "Thise woful vers that weepen as I write" which lacks the bivalency of Boccaccio's "mio verso lagrimoso", which puts the weeping in the verse *and* in the writer and reader.

3. For I, that god of Love's servants serve  
 Ne dare to Love for mine unlikeliness <sup>1</sup>  
 Prayen for speed, al should I therefore starve. *for success / die*  
 So far am I from his help in darkness.  
 But nathelees, if this may do gladness  
 To any lover, and his cause avail,  
 Have he my thanks, and mine be this travail. *the labor*

*An appeal to fortunate lovers*

4. But, you lovers, that bathen in gladness,  
 If any drop of pity in you be,  
 Remembereth you on passèd heaviness *Remember past sorrow*  
 That you have felt, and on th'adversity  
 Of other folk; and thinketh how that ye  
 Have felt that Lovè durstè you displeasè,  
 Or you have won him with too great an ease. <sup>2</sup> *made you suffer*

5. And pray for them that be in the case  
 Of Troilus, as you may after hear,  
 That Love them bring in heaven to soláce;  
 And eke for me pray to God so dear,  
 That I have might to show in some mannér *ability to*  
 Such pain and woe as Lovè's folk endure  
 In Troilus's unsely áventure. *unlucky*

6. And biddeth eke for them that be despaired *And pray also*  
 In love, that never will recovered be;  
 And eke for them that falsely been appaired *harmed*  
 Through wicked tonguès, be it he or she.  
 Thus biddeth God, for His benignity, *ask*

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<sup>1</sup> 3.1-3: "I, who serve the servants of Love, do not dare to pray to Love for success (*speed*) because of my unlikeliness, even if I should die (*starve*).

<sup>2</sup> 3 - 5: Here as elsewhere in the poem there is a lack of distinction between the Christian God and a god of Love, both to be prayed to; elsewhere in the poem love seems to be a natural human phenomenon (it). 4.3: *Remembereth* is the imperative plur. like *thinketh* and *prayeth* later.

So grant them soon out of this world to pace,  
That be despairèd out of Lovè's grace.

7. And biddeth eke for them that be at ease,  
That God them grant ay good persévérance,  
And send them might their lovers for to please  
That it to Love be worship and pleasáncé,  
For so I hope my soul best to advance,  
To pray for them that Lovè's servants be,  
And write their woe and live in charity;

*pray also*  
*ay = always*  
*power*  
*honor & pleasure*

8. And for to have of them compassion  
As though I were their ownè brother dear,  
Now hearken with a good intention,  
For now will I go straight to my mattér,  
In which you may the double sorrows hear  
Of Troilus in loving of Criseyde,  
And how that she forsook him ere she died.

*before*

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*During the siege of Troy, Calchas a priest, foreseeing the city's fall,  
has defected to the Greeks*

9. It is well wist how that the Greekès, strong  
In arms, with a thousand shippès went  
To Troywards, and the city long  
Assiegèden — nigh ten years ere they stent;<sup>1</sup>  
And in diversè wise and one intent,  
The ravishing to wreaken of Elaine  
By Paris done, they wroughten all their pain.

*well known*  
*Towards Troy*  
*besieged / nearly / ceased*  
*abduction of Helen to avenge*  
*took / trouble*

10. Now fell it so that in the town there was  
Dwelling a lord of great authority  
A great divine that clepèd was Calchas,  
That in sciéncé so expert was that he

*Now, it happened*  
*priest who was called*  
*in knowledge*

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<sup>1</sup> 9.3-7: "And they besieged the city for a long time -- for nearly ten years -- before they stopped (*stent*); and they took all this trouble (*wroughten all their pain*) in different ways but with one intention: to avenge (*wreaken*) the abduction (*ravishing*) of Helen by Paris."

Knew well that Troyè should destroyed be  
 By answer of his god that hightè thus:  
 Daun Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus. *was called  
 Lord (god) Phoebus*

11. So when this Calchas knew by calculing *calculation*  
 And eke by answer of this Ápollo, *also*  
 That Greekès shoulden such a people bring  
 Through which that Troyè mustè be for-do, *destroyed*  
 He cast anon out of the town to go. *planned quickly*  
 For well wist he by sort that Troyè should *knew by divination*  
 Destroyed be, yea, whoso would or n'ould. *like it or not*

12. For which, for to departen softely  
 Took purpose full this fore-knowing wise, *forseeing wise man*  
 And to the Greekès' host full privily *secretly*  
 He stole anon; and they in courteous wise *fashion*  
 Him diden bothè worship and service *gave him honor & service*  
 In trust that he hath cunning them to redd *knowledge to advise them*  
 In every peril which that is to dread.

*Calchas's daughter, a widow, is left behind. She appeals to Hector for protection  
 against the anger of the citizens.*

13. The noise uprose when it was first espied  
 Throughout the town, and generally was spoken,  
 That Calchas traitor fled was and abide *& living*  
 With them of Greece; and casten to be wroken *(they) wanted revenge*  
 On him that falsely had his faith so broken,  
 And said: 'He and all his kin at once  
 Be worthy for to burnen, fell and bones.' *skin & bones*

14. Now had this Calchas left in this mischance, *difficulty*  
 All únwist of his false and wicked deed, *unaware*  
 His daughter which that was in great penáncè; *anguish*  
 For of her life she was full sore in dread,  
 As she that n'isté what was best to redd, *knew not / to do*  
 For both a widow was she and alone *and without...*  
 Of any friend to whom she durst her moan. *dared confide*

15. Criseyde was this lady's name aright.  
 As to my doom, in all of Troy city  
 Was none so fair, for-passing every wight  
 So angel-like was her native beauty,  
 That like a thing immortal seemed she,  
 As doth a heavenish perfect creature  
 That down were sent in scorning of Nature.

*indeed*  
*In my judgement*  
*surpassing everyone*

16. This lady which that all day heard at ear  
 Her father's shame, his falseness and treason,  
 Well nigh out of her wit for sorrow and fear,  
 In widow's habit large of samite brown,  
 On knees she fell before Hector a-down <sup>1</sup>  
 With piteous voice, and tenderly weeping,  
 His mercy bade, her-selfen excusing.

*nearly*  
*long dress of b. silk*

*begged*

17. Now was this Hector piteous of nature  
 And saw that she was sorrowfully begone,  
 And that she was so fair a creature.  
 Of his goodness he gladdened her anon  
 And said: "Let your father's treason gon  
 Forth with mischance; and you yourself in joy  
 Dwell with us while you good list in Troy.

*afflicted*  
*at once*  
*go ...*  
*...To the devil*  
*as long as you like*

18. "And all th'honour that men may do you have  
 As far forth as your father dwellèd here  
 You shall have, and your body men shall save,  
 As far as I may aught enquire or hear."  
 And she him thankèd with full humble cheer.  
 And oftener would, if it had been his will,  
 And took her leave, and home, and held her still.

*may give you*  
*As if*  
*your person / respect*

*manner*

*and (went) home*

19. And in her house she abode with such meinee  
 As to her honour needè was to hold  
 And while she dwelling was in that city  
 Kept her estate, and both of young and old

*retinue*

---

<sup>1</sup> 16.5: Hector, another son of Priam, was the greatest of the Trojan heroes. As one of the Nine Worthies of the Middle Ages he took his place among warriors like Julius Caesar and Alexander.

Full well beloved, and well men of her told,  
 But whether that she children had or no,  
 I read it not; therefore I let it go.

*spoke of her*  
*read (in Boccaccio)*

20. The thingès fallen, as they do of war,  
 Betwixen them of Troy and Greekès oft:  
 For some days boughten they of Troy it dear,  
 And oft the Greekès founden nothing soft  
 The folk of Troy. And thus Fortúne aloft <sup>1</sup>  
 And under eft gan them to wheelen both  
 After their course, ay while that they were wroth.

*in war*  
*In their turn / angry*

21. But how this town came to destruction  
 Ne falleth not to purpose me to tell,  
 For it were here a long digression  
 From my mattér, and you too long to dwell.  
 But the Trojan gestès, as they fell,  
 In Homer or in Dares or in Dyte  
 Whoso that can may read them as they write. <sup>2</sup>

*Not my business to*  
*delay*  
*(accounts of) events*

*Criseyde and other Trojans go to the temple to honor Pallas*

22. But though that Greekès them of Troy in shut,  
 And their cité besieged all about,  
 Their oldè usage wouldè they not let,  
 As for t' honoúr their goddès full devout;  
 But aldermost in honour, out of doubt,  
 They had a relic hight Palladion,  
 That was their trust aboven every one.

*would not relinquish*  
*devoutly*  
*foremost*  
*called*

23. And so befell, when comen was the time  
 Of April when clothèd was the mead

*meadow*

---

<sup>1</sup> The first mention of the Wheel of Lady Fortune, who spins it at intervals, so that sometimes one is up (*aloft*), sometimes down (*under*).

<sup>2</sup> Chaucer makes it clear that his subject (*matter*) is not the Trojan War (a digression !). Those who want that story can, he says, find it in Homer, or in Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, Latin writers who came long after Homer, but were respected in the Middle Ages for their story of Troy.

With newè green (of lusty Ver the prime) *start of vigorous Spring*  
 And sweetè smelling flowers white and red --  
 In sundry wisè showèd (as I read) *various ways celebrated*  
 The folk of Troy their óbservances old,  
 Palladionè's feastè for to hold.

24. And to the temple in all their goodly wise  
 In general there wenten many a wight *person*  
 To hearken of Palladion the service: *To hear*  
 And namely so many a lusty knight,  
 So many a lady fresh, and maiden bright,  
 Full well arrayèd, bothè most and least, *well dressed, rich & poor*  
 Yea, bothè for the season and the feast.

25. Among these other folk was Cressida  
 In widow's habit black; but natheless, *dress*  
 Right as our firstè letter is now an `A,'  
 In beauty first so stood she makèless. *peerless*  
 Her goodly looking gladdened all the press. *good looks / crowd*  
 Was never seen thing to be praised dear, *more highly*  
 Nor under cloudè black so bright a star

26. As was Criseyde, as folk said everyone  
 That her behelden in her blackè weed; *dress*  
 And yet she stood full low and still alone  
 Behind the other folk in little brede *space*  
 And nigh the door, ay under shamè's dread, *always fearing a slight*  
 Simple of attire and debonair of cheer *& quiet in manner*  
 With full assurèd looking and mannér.

*Prince Troilus is also there to survey the talent, and to mock those in the throes of love.*

27. This Troilus as he was wont to guide  
 His youngè knightès, led them up and down  
 In thilkè largè temple on every side,  
 Beholding ay the ladies of the town *constantly*  
 Now here, now there, for no devotion *attachment*

Had he to none to rieven him his rest,  
But gan to praise and lacken whom him lest.<sup>1</sup>

*deprive him of  
to praise or fault*

28. And in his walk full fast he gan to wait  
If knight or squire in his company  
Gan for to sigh or let his eyen bait  
On any woman that he could espy;  
He wouldè smile and holden it folly  
And say him thus: "God wot, *she* sleepeth soft  
For love of thee, when *thou* turnest full oft.

*to watch  
eyes rest  
God knows  
you toss & turn*

29. "I have heard tell, pardee, of your living,  
You lovers, and your lewèd observánces,  
And such labóur as folk have in winning  
Of love, and, in the keeping which doutánces;<sup>2</sup>  
And when your prey is lost — woe and penánces !  
Oh very foolès, nice and blind be ye.  
There is not one can 'ware by other be."

*by God / way of life  
foolish behavior  
what difficulties  
total fools, silly & b.  
warned by the others*

*The god of Love will not be mocked*

30. And with that word he gan cast up the brow  
Askances: "Lo, is this not wisely spoken?"  
At which the god of Love gan looken rough  
Right for despite, and shope for to be wroken  
He kidd anon his bowè was not broken;  
For suddenly he hit him at the full,  
And yet as proud a peacock can he pull.

*As if to say:  
prepared to be avenged  
showed promptly  
he = Love, him = Troilus  
And still (today)*

31. O blindè world! O blind intention!  
How often falleth all th' effect contrair  
Of surquidry and foul presumption;  
For caught is proud, and caught is debonair.  
This Troilus is clomben on the stair,

*outcome is opposite  
Of arrogance  
has climbed*

<sup>1</sup> 27.6-7: Troilus, who loses no sleep over love-sickness, began to praise or to fault whomever he wanted to.

<sup>2</sup> 29.3-4: "And the trouble people have getting lovers and the difficulties (*doutances*) in retaining them"

And little weeneth that he must descend.  
But alday falleth thing that fools ne wend:

*every day; do not intend*

32. As proudè Bayard ginneth for to skip  
Out of the way (so pricketh him his corn),  
Till he the lash have of the longè whip  
Then thinketh he, 'Though I prance all befor,<sup>1</sup>  
First in the trace, full fat and newè shorn,  
Yet am I but a horse, and horse's law  
I must endure, and with my fellows draw.'

*B = a horse / begins  
(feels his oats so much)*

33. So fared it by this fierce and proudè knight,  
Though he a worthy kingè's sonnè were,  
And wendè nothing had had suchè might  
Against his will that should his heartè stir,  
Yet with a look his heartè waxed a-fire,  
That he that now was most in pride above  
Waxed suddenly most subject unto love.

*And thought*

*caught fire*

*Grew suddenly*

34. Forthy, example taketh of this man,  
You wisè, proud and worthy folkès all  
To scornen Love, which that so soonè can  
The freedom of your heartès to him thrall.  
For e'er it was, and e'er it shall befall,  
That Love is he that allè thing may bind,  
For may no man for-do the law of Kind

*Therefore*

*(not) to scorn*

*enslave*

*e'er: ever, always*

*undo; of Nature*

35. That this be sooth hath provèd, and doth yet;  
For this, trow I, you knowen, all or some.  
Men readen not that folk have greater wit  
Than they that have been most with love y-nom,  
And strongest folk be therewith overcome  
The worthiest and greatest of degree;  
This was, and is, and yet men shall it see.

*is true h. been proved  
I imagine / one and all*

*overcome*

36. And truly well it sitteth to be so,

*it is right*

---

<sup>1</sup> 32. Bayard (i.e. any good horse), made proud with good feeding, decides to go his own way till he feels the whip and realizes that, though he is the lead horse in the traces, is well fed and well groomed (*newe shorn*), he is still just a horse.

For alderwisest have therewith been pleased; *wisest of all*  
 For they that have been aldermost in woe *most of all*  
 With love have been most comforted and eased.  
 And oft it has the cruel heart appeased,  
 And worthy folk made worthier of name *in reputation*  
 And causeth most to dreaden vice and shame.<sup>1</sup>

37. Now since it may not goodly be withstond, *withstood*  
 And is a thing so virtuous in kind, *strong (virtuous) in nature.*  
 Refuseth not to Love for to be bound,  
 Since as Himselven list He may you bind.  
 The yard is bet that bowen will and wind,<sup>2</sup>  
 Than that that bursts; and therefore I you rede *breaks; advise*  
 To follow him that so well can you lead.

38. But for to tellen forth in special  
 As of this kingè's son of which I told,  
 And letten other things collateral: *And leave / on the side*  
 Of him think I my talè for to hold,  
 Both of his joy and of his carès cold,  
 And all his work as touching this matter,  
 For I it gan, I will thereto refer.<sup>3</sup>

*The god of Love strikes*

39. Within the temple he went him forth playing, *jesting*  
 This Troilus, of every wight about, *about everyone there*  
 On this lady and now on that looking,  
 Whereso she were of town or of without, *Whether*  
 And upon case befell that through a rout *by chance / a crowd*  
 His eyè piercéd, and so deep it went  
 Till on Criseyde it smote, and there it stent. *rested*

40. And suddenly he waxed therewith astoned *became stunned*

<sup>1</sup> 36: Standard notion in medieval romance of the effects of love.

<sup>2</sup> 37.5-6: "The branch that will bend and twist is better than one that breaks."

<sup>3</sup> 38.7: "Because I began it, I will return to it."

And gan her bet' behold in thrifty wise.	<i>better / admiring way</i>
"Oh mercy, God!" quod he, "Where hast thou woned?	<i>lived</i>
Thou art so fair and goodly to devise!"	<i>to see</i>
Therewith his heart began to spread and rise, And soft he sighèd, lest men might him hear, And caught again his firstè playing cheer.	<i>original joking manner</i>
41. She was not with the least of her statùre	<i>size</i>
But all her limbs so well answering	<i>proportioned</i>
Weren to womanhood, that creäture	
Was never lessè mannish in seeming;	<i>in appearance</i>
And eke the purè wise of her moving	<i>very manner</i>
Showèd well that men might in her gess	
Honour, estate and womanly noblesse.	<i>rank / nobility</i>
42. To Troilus right wonder well withall	
Gan for to like her moving and her cheer, <sup>1</sup>	<i>bearing</i>
Which somdeal deynous was, for she let fall	<i>somewhat haughty</i>
Her look a little aside in such mannér	
Askances: "What! May I not standen here?"	<i>As if to say:</i>
And after that, her looking gan she light,	<i>her looks brightened(?)</i>
That never thought him seen so good a sight.	<i>It seemed he'd never</i>
43. And of her look in him there gan to quick	<i>spring up</i>
So great desire and such affection,	
That in his heartè's bottom gan to stick	
Of her his fixed and deep impression;	
And though he erst had porèd up and down,	<i>first sized (her) up</i>
He was then glad his hornès in to shrink.	
Unnethè wist he how to look or wink. <sup>2</sup>	
44. Lo, he that let himselfen so cunning,	<i>who had thought himself</i>
And scornèd them that Lovè's painès drye,	<i>endure</i>
Was full unaware that Love had his dwelling	

<sup>1</sup> 42.1-2: "Her carriage (*moving*) and her manner (*cheer*) were very pleasing to Troilus." *to like*  
= to be pleasing to.

<sup>2</sup> 43.7: "He hardly knew whether to look or close his eyes."

Within the subtle streamès of her eye,  
 That suddenly him thought he feltè die, (So) That  
 Right with her look, the spirit in his heart.  
 Blessèd be Love, that folk can thus convert! <sup>1</sup>

45. She, this in black, liking to Troilus *this (woman) / pleasing to*  
 Over all thing, he stood for to behold; *stopped*  
 Nor his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,  
 He neither cheerè made nor wordès told,<sup>2</sup> *openly showed nor said*  
 But from afar (his manner for to hold), *(usual) manner*  
 On other things his look sometimes he cast  
 And eft on her, while that the service last. *And sometimes*

*Sorely wounded by the god, Troilus tries to conceal his love pain by pretending  
 mockery still*

46. And after this, not fully all a-whaped, *dazed*  
 Out of the temple all easily he went, *quietly*  
 Repenting him that he had ever japed *jested*  
 Of folk's love, lest fully the descent  
 Of scorn fall on himself; but, what he meant, *he felt*  
 Lest it were wist on any manner side, *be known anywhere*  
 His woe he gan dissimulate and hide.

47. When he was from the temple thus departed  
 He straight anon unto his palace turneth,  
 Right with her look through-shotten and through-darted, *shot through*  
 Al feigneth he in lust that he sojourneth;<sup>3</sup> *Although / joy / lives*

---

<sup>1</sup> 44.5-6: "He felt the spirit of his heart die ..." 44.7: "folk" is the grammatical object of the verb "convert": "Blessed be Love that can convert folk thus".

<sup>2</sup> 45.3-4: "Neither by overt action (*cheere*) nor by word did he show his desire nor his reason for standing that way." 45.4-7: That is, he tried to keep up his usual (haughty) manner by pretending to look at various things from a distance to cover up the constant return

<sup>3</sup> 47.3-7: The meaning is that, smitten as he is with her looks, he still pretends that he is amused by lovers; he goes on pretending that he is totally cheerful, and by his manner and speech mocks the "servants of love" so as to cover up (*to wry*) his actual love-struck feelings.

And all his cheer and speech also he borneth  
 And ay of Love's servants every while  
 Himself to wry, at them he gan to smile.

*manner / burnishes  
 always / all time  
 to cover up*

48. And saidè: “Lord! so you live all in lest,  
 You lovers; for the cunningest of you,  
 That serveth most attentively and best,  
 Him tides as often harm thereof as prow:  
 Your hire is quit again, yea, God wot how!  
 Not well for well, but scorn for good service;  
 In faith, your order is rulèd in good wise!

*in joy  
 (To) him comes ... as help  
 You are paid / G. knows  
 (religious) order*

49. “ In un-certain be all your observánces,  
 But it a fewè silly pointès be;  
 Ne nothing asketh so great attendánces  
 As does your law, and that know allè you.  
 But that is not the worst, as mote I thee;  
 But, told I you the worstè point, I ’lieve,  
 Al said I sooth, you woulden at me grieve.

*Except for  
 if I told you ... I believe  
 Although I tell the truth*

50. “But take this: what you lovers oft eschew,  
 Or elsè do of good intention,<sup>1</sup>  
 Full oft thy lady will it misconstrue  
 And deem it harm in her opinïon;  
 And yet if she for other encheson  
 Be wroth, then shalt thou have a groan anon.  
 Lord! well is him that may be of you one.”

*Take t. for a fact  
 reason  
 angry  
 Good for him !*

51. But for all this, when that he saw his time,  
 He held his peace, no other bote he gained.  
 For love began his feathers so to lime,  
 That well unnethe unto his folk he feigned  
 That other busy needès him distrained.  
 For woe was him, that what to do he n’ist,  
 But bade his folk to go wherè that them list.

*help  
 to stick  
 was barely (able to) pretend  
 occupied  
 didn’t know  
 where they liked*

<sup>1</sup> 50.1-3: Your lady will put a bad construction on (*misconstrue*) whatever well-meaning things you lovers do or do not do (*eschew*). 50.7 :*Well is him* is sarcastic.

*Alone, Troilus composes a song on the paradoxes of love.*

52. And when that he in chamber was alone,  
 He down upon his bed's foot him set,  
 And first he gan to sigh, and eft to groan *and then*  
 And thought ay on her so withouten let, *constantly without ceasing*  
 That as he sat awake, his spirit mett *dreamed*  
 That he her saw at temple, and all the wise *ways(?)*  
 Right of her look,<sup>1</sup> and gan it new advise. *think about it anew*
53. Thus gan he make a mirror of his mind  
 In which he saw all wholly her figure,  
 And that he well could in his heartè find  
 It was to him a right good aventure *fortune*  
 To love such one, and if he did his cure, *if he took care*  
 To serven her, yet might he fall in grace *get in her favor*  
 Or else for one of her servants pass. *become servant (in love)*
54. Imagining that [no] travail nor grame *labor or pain*  
 Ne mightè for so goodly one be lorn *lost*  
 As she;<sup>2</sup> nor he for his desire no shame, *no shame (would feel)*  
 Al were it wist, but in price and up-born *If it were known*  
 Of allè lovers well morè than befor;  
 Thus argumented he in his beginning, *By all*  
 Full unavisèd of his woe coming. *unaware*
55. Thus took he purpose lovè's craft to sue *to follow*  
 And thought that he would worken privily, *secretly*  
 First to hiden his desire in mew *in secret place*  
 From every wight y-born, all utterly *from everyone, totally*  
 But he might aught recovered be thereby, *Unless he could be helped*  
 Remembering him that love too wide y-blow *talked about*

---

<sup>1</sup> 52.6-7: The precise meaning of the phrase *all the wise right of her look* is a little uncertain, but it clearly has to do with Criseyde's appearance. Perhaps he saw in his mind's eye "just exactly the way she looked."

<sup>2</sup> 54: "Imagining that no labor or pain endured for one so good as she would be lost; nor would he feel any shame because of his desire, if it became known, but he would be held in esteem by lovers and regarded more highly than before."

Yields bitter fruit, although sweet seed be sow.

56. And overall this yet muchè more he thought  
 What for to speak and what to holden in  
 And what to arten her to love he sought  
 And on a song anonright to begin,  
 And gan loud on his sorrow for to win,  
 For with good hope he fully gan assent  
 Criseyde for to love and not repent:

*to urge  
 immediately  
 fight against*

57. And of his song not only the sentéce,  
 As writ mine author callèd Lollius,<sup>1</sup>  
 But plainly, save our tonguè's difference,  
 I dare well say, in all that Troilus  
 Said in his song, lo! every word right thus  
 As I shall say; and whoso list it hear,  
 Lo, next this verse, he may it finden here.

*meaning*

*wants to hear*

CANTICUS TROILI<sup>2</sup>

58. "If no love is, O God, what feel I so?  
 And if love is, what thing and which is he?  
 If love be good, from whencè comes my woe?  
 If it be wick'd, a wonder thinketh me  
 When every torment and adversity  
 That comes from him may to me savoury think,

*wicked / it seems*

*seem sweet*

---

<sup>1</sup> 57.2: Lollius is the mysterious author Chaucer professes to be following for his story. No such author is known, and is either an invention or a misunderstanding by Chaucer. Medieval writers often went out of their way to show that they were NOT original; that they were merely re-telling a story made famous by someone earlier, an "authority".

<sup>2</sup> "Troilus's Song" is a version of Petrarch's sonnet 132 enumerating the paradoxical feelings induced by being in love; this was a literary convention going back to the classics. Troilus's talent as a songwriter, as brief as it is sudden, is not meant to be taken too seriously.

For ay thirst I the more that I it drink.<sup>1</sup> *ever*

59. "And if that at my ownè lust I burn, *joy, desire*  
 From whencè comes my wailing and my 'plaint? *complaint*  
 If harm agree me, whereto 'plain I then? *agrees with / complain*  
 I n'ot ne why unweary that I faint. *I don't know*  
 O quickè death, O sweetè harm so quaint, *living / so strange*  
 How may of thee in me such quantity *How can there be*  
 But if that I consent that it so be ? *Unless*

60. "And if that I consent, I wrongfully,  
 Complain, iwis; thus possèd to and fro, *indeed / tossed*  
 All steerless within a boat am I  
 Amid the sea betwixen windès two  
 That in contráry standen evermo'. *opposite directions*  
 Alas! What is this wonder malady?  
 For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die."<sup>2</sup>

61. And to the god of Lovè thus said he  
 With piteous voice: "O lord, now yourès is  
 My spirit, which that oughtè yourès be.  
 You thank I, lord, that have me brought to this;  
 But whether goddess or woman, y-wis, *indeed*  
 She be, I n'ot, which that you do me serve,"<sup>3</sup> *I don't know*  
 But as her man I will ay live and starve. *live & die*

62. "You standen in her eyen mightily,<sup>4</sup>  
 As in a place unto your virtue digne  
 Wherefore, Lord, if my service or I  
 May likè you, so be to me benign; *may please you*

<sup>1</sup> 58: This stanza illustrates again the unconcern in the poem about a precise distinction between the idea of love as a powerful god (he, him), and love as a natural human phenomenon ( it ).

<sup>2</sup> 60.7: "I die of heat when it is cold, of cold when it is hot."

<sup>3</sup> 61.5-6: "But whether the one you make me serve (*do me serve*) is woman or goddess I do not know (*I n'ot*)

<sup>4</sup> This seems to mean that Love has his home in Criseyde's eyes, a place worthy of him.

For mine estate royál I here resign  
 Into her hand, and with full humble cheer  
 Become her man, as to my lady dear.”

63. In him ne deignéð sparen blood royál  
 The fire of Love, wherefrom God me bless,  
 Nor him forbore in no degree, for all  
 His virtue or his excellent prowess;<sup>1</sup>  
 But held him as his thrall low in distress  
 And burned him so in sundry ways ay new,  
 That sixty times a day he lost his hue.

*did not spare him  
 achievement  
 his (Love's) slave  
 always different  
 color*

64. So muchè day by day, his ownè thought  
 For lust to her gan quicken and increase,  
 That every other charge he set at nought.  
 Forthy, full oft, his hot fire to cease,  
 To see her goodly look he gan to press;  
 For thereby to be easèd well he wend,  
 And ay the nearer was, the more he brend.

*desire / grow  
 (So) that / duty  
 Therefore / to alleviate  
 exert himself  
 he thought  
 And always / burned*

65. For ay the nearre the fire, the hotter is;  
 This, trow I, knoweth all this company.  
 But were he far or near, I dare say this,  
 By night or day, for wisdom or folly,  
 His heartè, which that is his breastè's eye,  
 Was ay on her, that fairer was to seen  
 Than ever was Elaine or Polixene.

*nearer  
 I imagine  
  
 always  
 Helen or Polyxena*

66. Eke of the day there passèd not an hour  
 That to himself a thousand times he said:  
 “Good, goodly, whom serve I and labóur  
 As best I can, now would to God, Criseyde,  
 You woulden on me rue ere that I died.  
 My dearè heart, alas, my heal and hue  
 And life is lost, but you will on me rue.

*Eke = And  
  
 would take pity  
 health & color  
 unless you take pity*

---

<sup>1</sup> 63.1-7: "The fire of Love did not deign to spare his (Troilus's) royal blood (God save me from that fire). Nor did it spare him because of his courage and his excellent achievements, but kept him in deep distress like a slave, and burned him in so many new and different ways, that he lost color sixty times a day."

67. All other dreadès weren from him fled  
 Both of the siege and his salvation  
 N' in his desire no other fawnès bred *no young fancies (?)*  
 But arguments to this conclusiön:  
 That she on him would have compassiön,  
 And he to be her man while he may dure *may live*  
 Lo, here his life, and from his death his cure.

*Love increases his military prowess, but leaves him otherwise weak*

68. The showers sharpè fell of armès proof *fell = terrible*  
 That Hector or his other brethren did,  
 Ne made him only therefore oncè move,<sup>1</sup>  
 And yet was he, where so men went or rid, *marched or rode*  
 Found one the best, and longest time abode *stayed*  
 Where peril was; and eke did such travail  
 In armès that to think it was marvail.

69. But for no hate he to the Greekès had  
 Nor also for the rescue of the town  
 Ne made him there in armès for to mad, *to rage*  
 But only, lo, for this conclusiön  
 To liken her the best for his renown; *to please h. / by his fame*  
 From day to day in armès so he sped *succeeded*  
 That all the Greekès as the death him dread.<sup>2</sup>

70. And from this forth then reft him love his sleep,  
 And made his meat his foe; and eke his sorrow  
 'Gan multiply, that whoso tookè keep,  
 It showed in his hue both eve and morrow, *love robbed him of  
 he lost his appetite  
 whoever took notice  
 color / a.m. & p.m.*

<sup>1</sup> 68. 1-3: "The sharp, terrible attacks made by (or upon) Hector and his brothers did not move him once (or moved him only once)." *armes proof* means either that the attacks were proof of the valor in arms of Hector and his brothers, or that the arms with which they were attacked were "arms of proof", i.e. tested and hard.

<sup>2</sup> 69.7: This stanza again expresses the standard romance convention that love improves, among other things, a man's military prowess. See also below stanzas 154-5.

Therefore a title he 'gan him for to borrow,  
Of other sickness, lest men of him wend  
That the hot fire of love him sorè brend;

*a pretense  
lest they think  
painfully burned*

71. And said he had a fever and fared amiss  
And how it was, certáin I cannot say,  
If that his lady understood not this,  
Or feignèd her she n'ist, one of the tway,  
But well rede I, that by no manner way  
Ne seemèd it as if she on him raught,  
Or of his pain, nor whatsoe'er he thought.

*felt sick  
pretended she didn't know / two  
I read or I know  
cared about*

72 . But then fell to this Troilus such woe  
That he was well nigh wood, for ay his dread  
Was this, that she some wight had lovèd so  
That ne'er of him she would have taken heed;  
For which him thought he felt his heart to bleed.  
Nor of his woe ne durst he not begin  
To tellen it, for all the world to win.

*mad / for constantly  
man  
dared he not*

73. But when he had a spacè from his care  
Thus to himself full oft he gan to 'plain.  
He said: "O fool, now art thou in the snare  
That whilom japedest at lover's pain.  
Now art thou hent; now gnaw thine ownè chain.  
Thou wert ay wont each lover reprehend  
Of thing from which thou canst thee not defend.

*complain  
once jested  
caught  
always accustomed*

74. "What will now every lover say of thee  
If this be wist, but e'er in thine absénce  
Laughen in scorn and say: `Lo, there goes he  
That is the man of so great sapience  
That held us lovers least in reverence;  
Now thanked be God he may go in the dance  
Of them that Love list feebly to advance.'

*known, but ever  
wisdom  
whom L. does not want to help*

75. "But O, thou woeful Troilus , God would  
(Since thou must loven through thy destiny)  
That thou beset were on such one that should

*would to God  
fixated on*

Know all thy woe, al' lackèd her pity.  
 But all so cold in love towardès thee  
 Thy lady is, as frost in winter moon,  
 And thou fordone, as snow in fire is soon.<sup>1</sup>

*even if she*

76. "God would I were arrivèd in the port  
 Of death, to which my sorrow will me lead !  
 Ah, Lord, it were to me a great comfórt  
 Then were I quit of languishing in dread.  
 For be my hidden sorrow y-blow abroad  
 I shall bejapèd be a thousand time  
 More than that fool of whose folly men rhyme.

*For if / spread about  
 made fun of*

77. " But now help, God, and you, [my] sweet, for whom  
 I 'plain; y-caught, yea, never wight so fast:  
 O mercy, my dear heart, and help me from  
 The death; for I, while that my life may last  
 More than my life will love you to my last;  
 And with some friendly look gladeth me, sweet,  
 Though never morè thing you me behete. "

*never man so firmly*

*gladden me  
 promise me*

78. These wordès and full many another too.  
 He spoke, and callèd e'er in his complaint  
 Her name, for to tellen her his woe  
 Till nigh that he in salty tears him drent.  
 All was for nought; she heardè not his 'plaint,  
 And when that he bethought on that folly,  
 A thousand-fold his woe gan multiply.

*called constantly*

*Till nearly / drowned  
 complaint  
 thought about*

*Enter his friend and confidant, Pandarus the joker and fixer.*

79. Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,  
 A friend of his that callèd was Pandáre  
 Came in once unaware, and heard him groan,  
 And saw his friend in such distress and care.  
 "Alas!" quod he, "who causeth all this fare?"

*trouble*

---

<sup>1</sup> The self pity of Troilus, who has not even spoken to Criseyde, is already in full bloom.

Oh mercy God, what unhap may this mean?  
Have now, thus soon, the Greekès made you lean?

*misfortune  
gaunt (with fear)*

80. "Or hast thou some remorse of conscience  
And art now fall in some devotion  
And wailest for thy sin and thine offence,  
And hast, for fearè, caught contrition?  
God save them that besiegèd have our town,  
And so can lay our jollity on press,  
And bring our lusty folk to holiness."

*make us pack up our merriment*

81. These wordès said he for the nonès all,  
That with such thing he might him angry make,  
And with an anger do his sorrow fall  
As for the time, and his couráge awake.  
But well he wist as far as tonguès spake<sup>1</sup>  
There n'as a man of greater hardiness  
Than he, ne more desirèd worthiness.

*for the occasion  
reduce his sorrow  
But he knew  
was not / courage  
he = Troilus / honor*

82. "What case," quod Troilus, "what áventure  
Has guided thee to see my languishing  
That am refused of every creäture?  
But for the love of God, at my praying  
Go hence away, for certès my dying  
Will thee dis-ease, and I must needès die.  
Therefore go 'way; there is no more to say.

*chance / accident  
of = by  
certainly  
distress*

83. "But if thou ween I be thus sick for dread,  
It is not so, and therefore scornè nought.  
There is another thing I take of heed  
Well more than aught the Greekès have y-wrought,<sup>2</sup>  
Which cause is of my death for sorrow and thought.  
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,  
Be thou not wroth. I hide it for the best."

*if you think  
don't mock  
don't wish to tell you  
angry*

---

<sup>1</sup> 81.5-6: He knew (*wist*) that everybody agreed (*as far as tongues spoke*) that Troilus was a man of the greatest courage and honor.

<sup>2</sup> 83.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."

84. This Pándare that nigh melts for woe and ruth *nearly melts / pity*  
 Full often said: "Alas! What may this be?  
 Now friend," quod he, "if ever love or truth  
 Hath been or is betwixen thee and me, *between*  
 Ne do thou never such a cruelty  
 To hidè from thy friend so great a care.  
 Wost thou not well that it am I, Pandáre? *Know you not*

85. "I will parten with thee all thy pain *share*  
 If it be so I do thee no comfórt,  
 As it is friend's right, sooth for to sayn, *truth*  
 To interparten woe as glad desport. *To share woe as well as joy*  
 I have and shall, for true or false report,  
 In wrong and right, y-loved thee all my life;  
 Hide not thy woe from me, but tell it blive." *at once*

*Troilus confesses his problem to Pandarus who is not too fortunate in love himself*

86. Then gan this sorrowful Troilus to sigh  
 And said him thus: "God leave it be my best *God grant*  
 To tell it thee, for since it may thee like, *since it pleases you*  
 Yet will I tell it though my heartè burst;  
 And well wot I thou mayst me do no rest. *well I know*  
 But lest thou deem I trustè not to thee, *you think*  
 Now hearken, friend, for thus it stands with me. *Now, listen*

87. "Love, (against the which whoso defendeth *whoever*  
 Himselfen most, him alderleast availeth) *least of all*  
 With disespair so sorrowful me offendeth *despair*  
 That straight unto the death my heartè saileth.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thereto, desire so burning me assaileth,  
 That to be slain it were a greater joy  
 To me than king of Greece to be or Troy.

88. "Sufficeth this, my fullè friend Pandáre,

---

<sup>1</sup> 87.1-4: "Love (against which he who tries to defend himself, does least well) has so overwhelmed me with despair that my heart is sailing straight to death."

What I have said, for now wost thou my woe, *now you know*  
 And for the love of God, my coldè care  
 So hide it well, I tell it ne'er to mo' ; *more (than you)*  
 For harmès mighten follow more than two *more than two = many*  
 If it were wist; but be thou in gladness. *known*  
 And let me starve, unknown, of my distress." *let me die*

89. "How hast thou thus unkindely and long  
 Hid this from me, thou fool?" quod Pándarus;  
 "Paraunter, thou might after such one long *Perhaps*  
 That my advice anon may helpen us." <sup>1</sup>  
 "This were a wonder thing," quod Troilus;  
 "Thou never could'st in love thyselfen wiss;  
 How devil mayst thou bringen *me* to bliss?" *succeed*  
*How the devil?*

90. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandáre,  
 "Though I be nice; it happeth often so *unsuccessful*  
 That one that excess doth full evil fare <sup>2</sup> *causes to do badly*  
 By good counsel can keep his friend therefro.  
 I have myself eke seen a blind man go  
 There as he fell that couldè looken wide;<sup>3</sup> *see all around*  
 A fool may eke a wise man often guide. *also*

91. "A whetstone is no carving instrument,  
 And yet it maketh sharpè carving tools ;  
 And where thou wost that I have aught miswent *anywhere erred*  
 Eschew thou that, for such thing to thee school is.<sup>4</sup> *Avoid / a lesson to you*  
 Thus often wisè men been ware by fools, *are warned*  
 If thou do so, thy wit is well bewared. *advised*  
 By his contraire is everything declared. *its contrary*

---

<sup>1</sup> 89.3-4: "Perhaps you are longing for someone with whom I can be of help."

<sup>2</sup> 90.2-4: "It often happens that one who fares badly because of excess ... " It is not clear what "excess" Pandarus is referring to.

<sup>3</sup> 90.5-6: "I have seen a blind man walk safely where a man who could see all round him fell down."

<sup>4</sup> 91.3-4: "And where you know me to have gone wrong, avoid that; it should be a lesson to you."

92. "For how might ever sweetness have been know  
To him that never tasted bitterness?  
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trow,  
That never was in sorrow or some distress. *fully happy, I guess*  
Eke white by black, by shame eke worthiness,  
Each set by other, more for other seemeth, *because of the other*  
As men may see; and so the wise deemeth. *wise man*
93. "Since thus of two contraries is a lore,  
I, that have in love so oft assayed *lesson*  
Grievances, oughte can, and well the more, *experienced*  
Counsel thee of that thou art amayed. *to be able, all the m.*  
Eke thee ne oughte not been evil apayed, *(To) Advise / dismayed*  
Though I desire with thee for to bear *ill pleased*  
Thy heavy charge; it shall thee lesse dere. *hurt*
94. "I wot well that it fareth thus by me  
As to thy brother Paris an herdess, *shepherdess*  
Which that y-clepéd was Oenone,  
Wrote in a cómplaint of her heaviness.  
You saw the letter that she wrote, I guess."  
"Nay never yet, y-wis," quod Troilus. *indeed*  
"Now," quod Pandare, "hearken; it was thus:
95. " 'Phoebus, that first found art of medicine,'  
Quod she, 'and could, in every wightè's care,  
Remede and rede by herbes he knew fine;  
Yet to himself his cunning was full bare;  
For love had him so bounden in a snare,  
All for the daughter of the King Admete,  
That all his craft ne could his sorrow beat '1 *invented the art*  
*knew in every case*  
*r. and cure / knew well*  
*worthless*
96. "Right so fare I, unhappily for me.  
I love one best and that me smarteth sore. *pains me*  
And yet, paraunter, can I redden thee *perhaps I can advise*  
And not myself. Reproveth me no more.  
I have no cause, I wot well, for to soar *I know well*

---

<sup>1</sup> 95: The point is that even the inventor of medicine could not cure himself of love sickness.

As does a hawk that listeth for to play,  
But to thy help yet somewhat can I say. *wants to*

97. "And of one thing right siker mayst thou be  
That certain, for to dien in the pain,  
That I shall never more discover thee. *quite sure*  
Nor, by my truth, I keep not to restrain *die under torture*  
Thee from thy love, though that it were Elaine *give you away*  
That is thy brother's wife, if I it wist. *I care not*  
Be what she be, and love her as thee list. *Helen of Troy*  
*knew*  
*as you please*

*Pandarus tries a mixture of pleading and derision to elicit the name of Troilus's beloved.*

98. "Therefore, as friend fully in me assure,  
And tell me plat what is thine encheson *confide*  
And final cause of woe that you endure: *plainly / reason*  
For, doubteth nothing, mine intention  
Is not to you of reprehension *rebuke*  
To speak as now, for no wight may bereave *nobody can prevent*  
A man to love till that him list to leave. *till he wants to*

99. "And witeth well, that bothè two been vices— *And know*  
Mistrusten all or elsè all believe,— *To mistrust*  
But well I wot, the mean of it no vice is, *I know, t. middle course*  
For for to trusten some wight is a proof *someone*  
Of truth, and forthy would I fain remove. *therefore w. I gladly*  
Thy wrong conceit, and do thee some wight trist *w. idea & make you trust*  
Thy woe to tell; and tell me, if thee list. *if you please*

100. "The wisè saith, 'Woe him that is alone,  
For, an he fall, he has no help to rise.'  
And since thou hast a fellow, tell thy moan. *Wise man*  
For this is not, certáin, the nextè wise *if he falls*  
To winnen love, as teachen us the wise, *a friend / your complaint*  
To wallow and weep as Niobè the queen, *the best way*  
Whose tearès yet in marble been y-seen.

101. "Let be thy weeping and thy dreariness,

And let us lessen woe with other speech:  
 So may thy woeful timè seemè less;  
 Delightè not in woe thy woe to seek,  
 As do these foolès that their sorrows eke *increase*  
 With sorrow, when they have misáventure,  
 And listè not to seek them other cure. *And don't try to*

102. "Men say, 'To wretched is consolatiõ  
 To have another fellow in his pain.'  
 That oughtè well be our opinion,  
 For, bothe thou and I, of love we 'plain. *complain*  
 So full of sorrow am I, sooth to sayn, *truth to tell*  
 That certainly no more hardè grace *bad fortune*  
 May sit on me. For-why? There is no space.

103. "If God will, thou art not aghast of me *afraid*  
 Lest I would of thy lady thee beguile? *steal from you*  
 Thou wost thyself whom that I love pardee, *know / by God*  
 As I best can, gone sithen a long while. *a long time now*  
 And since thou wost I do it for no wile, *you know / no trick*  
 And since that I am he thou trustest most,  
 Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wost." *thou knowest*

104. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said,  
 But long he lay as still as he dead were.  
 And after this with sighing he abrayed, *came to*  
 And to Pandárus' voice he lent his ear.  
 And up his eyen cast he, that in fear *eyes / (so) that*  
 Was Pándarus lest that in frenzy *a fit*  
 He shouldè fall or elsè soonè die,

105. And cried: "Awake!" full wonderly and sharp.  
 "What! Slumberest thou as in a lethargy?  
 Or art thou like an ass unto the harp,  
 That heareth sound when men the stringès ply *touch*  
 But in his mind of that no melody  
 May sinken him to gladden, for that he  
 So dull is of his bestiality."

106. And with that Pándare of his wordès stent, *ceased*

But Troilus yet him no word answered,  
 For why to tellen was not his intent *Because*  
 Never to no man, for whom that so he fared.<sup>1</sup> *behaved*  
 For it is said: 'Man maketh oft a yard *stick*  
 With which the maker is himself y-beat *beaten*  
 In sundry manner,' as these wise men treat. *write*

107. And namely in his counsel telling *especially / in confidence*  
 What toucheth love that ought to be secree *secret*  
 For of itself it would enough outspring *become known*  
 But if that it the better governed be; *unless it is well conducted*  
 Eke sometimes it is craft to seem to flee *it is wise*  
 From things which in effect men huntun fast.  
 All this gan Troilus in his heartè cast. *consider*

108. But natheless, when he had heard him cry  
 "Awake", he gan to sighen wonder sore  
 And said: "Friend, though that I stillè lie  
 I am not deaf; now peace, and cry no more,  
 For I have heard thy wordès and thy lore; *advice*  
 But suffer me my mischief to bewail, *my trouble*  
 For thy provèrbès may me naught avail.

109. "Nor other curè can'st thou none for me: *you know no other c.*  
 Eke, I will not be curèd, I will die.  
 What know I of the Queenè Niobe?  
 Let be thine old examples, I thee pray."  
 "No," quod Pandarus, "therefore I say.  
 Such is delight of foolès to bewEEP  
 Their woe, but seeken botè they ne keepe. *seek remedy t. don' try*

110. "Now know I that there reason in thee faileth.  
 But tell me: if I wistè what she were *if I knew who*  
 For whom that thee all this misaunter aileth, *this distress ails you*  
 Durst thou that I told her in her ear *Would you prefer if I told*

---

<sup>1</sup> 106.3-4: "It was his intention never to tell anyone [the name of the woman] for whom he was behaving in this manner."

Thy woe (since thou dar'st not thyself for fear)  
 And her besought on thee to have some ruth?" *pity*  
 "Why, nay," quod he, "by God and by my truth."

111. "What? Not as busily," quod Pándarus *Not (if I worked) as hard*  
 As though my own life lay upon this need?"  
 "No, certès, brother," quod this Troilus. *certainly*  
 "And why?" "For thou should'st never speed." *succeed*  
 "Wost thou that well?" "Yea, that is out of dread," *Do you know that? / is certain*  
 Quod Troilus, "for all that e'er you can, *whatever you do*  
 She will to no such wretch as I be won."

112. Quod Pandarus: "Alas! what may this be,  
 That thou despairèd art thus causèless? *without cause*  
 What? liveth not thy lady? *Ben' citee* *Bless you!*  
 How wost thou so that thou art gracèless? *How do you know you're out of favor*  
 Such evil is not always bootèless *past cure*  
 Why, put not impossìble thus thy cure,  
 Since thing to come is oft in áventure. *up to chance*

113. "I grantè well that thou endurest woe  
 As sharp as doth he, Tityrus, in Hell,  
 Whose stomach fowlès tearen evermo' *birds ...*  
 That hightè vultures, as [the] bookès tell. *... called vultures*  
 But I may not endure that thou dwell *I can't stand*  
 In so unskilful an opiniõn, *unenlightened*  
 That of thy woe is no curaciõn. *cure*

114. "But oncè n'ilt thou -- for thy coward heart, *not once will you*  
 And for thine ire and foolish wilfulness, *anger*  
 For wan-trust -- tellen of thy sorrows smart?; *lack of trust / painful s.*  
 Ne to thine ownè help do busyness, *make the effort*  
 As much as speak a reason more or less,  
 But lie as he that list of nothing recche? *cares about nothing*  
 What woman couldè lovè such a wretch?

115. "What may she deemen other of thy death *think*  
 (If thou thus die and she n'ot why it is), *does not know*  
 But that for fear is yelden up thy breath

For Greekès have besieged us iwis? <sup>1</sup>

*Just because Greeks*

Lord, what a thank then shalt thou have of this!

This will she say, and all the town at once:

'The wretch is dead. The devil have his bones.'

116. "Thou mayst alone here weep and cry and kneel,

But, love a woman that she wot it not!

*knows it not*

And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel,

*requite*

Unknown, unkissed, and lost that is unsought.<sup>2</sup>

What! Many a man has love full dear y-bought

Twenty winters that his lady wist,

*knew it*

And never yet his lady's mouth he kissed.

117. "What! Should he therefore fallen in despair

Or be recréant for his ownè teen,

*cowardly in grief*

Or slay himself al be his lady fair?

*even if his lady*

Nay, nay, but e'er in one be fresh and green

*but constantly be eager*

To serve and love his dearè heartè's queen,

And think it is a guerdon her to serve

*privilege*

A thousandfold more than he can deserve."

118. And of that word took heedè Troilus,

And thought anon what folly he was in

And how that sooth to him said Pándarus

*truth*

That for to slay himself might he not win,

*profit*

But bothè do unmanhood and a sin

And of his death his lady not to wite,

*to blame*

For of his woe, God wot, she knew full lite.

*G. knows / little*

---

<sup>1</sup> 115 : "What else is she to think of your death, if you die without telling her, but that you died out of fear of the Greeks who have besieged us? And the thanks you will get from her and all the town is: The coward is dead; to hell with him."

<sup>2</sup> 116.2-7: "But if you love a woman who does not know it [because you have not told her], she will return your love in a way you cannot feel [i.e. not at all]. The woman who does not know that you love her, who remains unkissed and unpursued, is lost [as a lover]. Many a man has loved a lady who has known about his love, for 20 years, and has remained unrewarded even by a kiss from her mouth."

119. And with that thought he gan full sorely sigh  
 And said: "Alas! What is me best to do?"  
 To whom Pandárus answered: "If thee like,  
 The best is that thou tell me all thy woe  
 And have my truth: but thou it findè so  
 I be thy boote ere that it be full long,  
 To pieces do me draw and sithen hang."

*my word / unless you  
 your relief before long  
 have me drawn & hanged*

120. "Yea, so thou sayst," quod Troilus then. "Alas!  
 But God wot, it is not the rather so.  
 Full hard were it to helpen in this case  
 For well find I that Fortune is my foe,  
 Nor all the men that riden can or go  
 May of her cruel wheel the harm withstand,  
 For as she list she plays with free and bond."<sup>1</sup>

*that does not make it so*

*or walk*

*she pleases / & slave*

121. Quod Pandarus: "Then blamest thou Fortune  
 For thou art wroth? Yea, now at erst I see.  
 Wost thou not well that Fortune is commúne  
 To every manner wight in some degree?  
 And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee,  
 That as her joyès musten overgone  
 So must her sorrows passen, everyone.

*upset / at last  
 Know you not / common  
 e. kind of person  
 by God  
 fade*

122. "For if her wheel stints anything to turn,  
 Then ceases she Fortúna for to be.  
 Now since the wheel by no way may sojourn,  
 What wost thou if her mutability  
 Right as thyselfen list will do by thee,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or that she be not far from thy helping?  
 Paraunter thou hast causè for to sing.

*ceases at all*

*may pause  
 How do you know  
 Just as you wish*

*Perhaps*

123. "And therefore wost thou what I thee beseech?"

*do you know?*

---

<sup>1</sup> 120.4-7: One of the standard ways of portraying Fortune was as a woman, sometimes with a blindfold, who spun a wheel at her whim. On the wheel were people who went to the top or were thrown down as it turned.

<sup>2</sup> 122.4-5: "How do you know whether her changeableness may not do for you just what you want?"

Let be thy woe and turning to the ground.  
 For whoso list have helping of his leech,  
 To him behoveth first unwry his wound.  
 To Cerberus in Hell ay be I bound,  
 Were it for my sister all thy sorrow,  
 By my will she should all be thine tomorrow.

*whoever wants / doctor  
 he must first uncover  
 let me be tied*

124. "Look up, I say, and tell us what she is  
 Anon, that I may go about thy need.  
 Know I her aught? For my love tell me this.  
 Then would I hopen rather for to speed."  
 Then gan the vein of Troilus to bleed  
 For he was hit, and waxed all red for shame.  
 "Aha!" quod Pándare. "Here beginneth game"

*At once  
 for love of me  
 to succeed quicker  
 and blushed*

*Finally Pandarus shakes the answer out of Troilus*

125. And with that word he gan him for to shake  
 And said: "Thief, thou shalt her namè tell."  
 But then gan silly Troilus to quake  
 As though men should have led him into Hell  
 And said: "Alas! of all my woe the well !  
 Then is my sweetè foe callèd -- Criseyde."  
 And well nigh with that word for fear he died.

*the source  
 nearly*

126. And when that Pandare heard her namè neven,  
 Lord! he was glad, and saidè: "Friend so dear,  
 Now fare aright, for Jovè's name in heaven,  
 Love has beset thee right. Be of good cheer,  
 For of good name and wisdom and mannér  
 She has enough, and eke of gentleness.  
 If she be fair, thou wost thyself, I guess.

*named  
 Love has blessed you  
 of good breeding*

127. "Ne never saw I a more bounteous  
 Of her estate, nor gladder, nor of speech  
 A friendlier, nor none more gracïous  
 For to do well, nor less had need to seek

*Of her rank? of her goods?*

What for to do, and all this bet to eke  
 In honour, to as far as she may stretch:  
 A king's heart seemeth by hers a wretch

*all the better to increase*

128. "And forthy look of good comfórt thou be  
 For certainly the firste point is this  
 Of noble courage, and well ordainee <sup>1</sup>  
 A man t'have peacè with himself i-wis ;  
 So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is  
 To loven well and in a worthy place ;  
 Thee oughtè not to clepe it hap, but grace.

*And therefore  
 the first p. ... of n. courage is  
 & rightly understood*

*not call it luck*

129. "And also think, and therewith gladden thee,  
 That since thy lady virtuous is all,  
 So follows it that there is some pity  
 Amongst all these others in general.  
 And forthy see that thou, in special,  
 Requirit naught that is against her name,  
 For virtue stretcheth not itself to shame.

*her other virtues  
 And therefore  
 nothing / reputation*

130. "But well is me that ever I was born,  
 That thou beset art in so good a place;  
 For by my truth in love I durst have sworn  
 Thee never should have tid thus fair a grace.<sup>2</sup>  
 And wost thou why? For thou wert wont to chase  
 At Love in scorn, and for despite him call  
 'Saint Idiot, lord of these foolès all.'

*But I'm glad  
 you have settled  
 I dared swear  
 to thee / happened  
 know you? / used to sneer*

131. "How often hast thou made thy nicè japes  
 And said that Lovès servants, every one  
 Of nicèty be very Godès apes  
 And somè wouldè munch their meat alone  
 Lying abed, and make them for to groan,  
 And some, thou saidest, had a blanchè fever

*silly jokes  
 From silliness  
 eat meals alone  
 pale with lovesickness*

<sup>1</sup> "The first point of noble courage, rightly understood (or well ordered), is for a man to have peace with himself indeed"

<sup>2</sup> 130:3-4: "On my word, I would have sworn that such good fortune in love would never have happened to you."

And praydest God he shouldè ne'er recover;

132. "And some of them took on them for the cold  
More than enough -- so saidest thou full oft;  
And some have feigned often time, and told  
How that they waken when they sleepen soft,  
And thus they would have brought themselves aloft,  
And natheless were under at the last:  
Thus saidest thou, and japedest full fast.

*against fever chills  
enough (clothes)*

*lay awake*

133. "Yet saidest thou that for the more part  
These lovers woulden speak in general,  
And thoughten that it was a siker art  
For failing, for t'assayen over all:  
Now may I jape of thee if that I shall;  
But natheless although that I shouldè die,  
Thou now art none of those I durstè say.

*sure way  
Against failure, to try all over  
mock you*

*I dare*

134. "Now beat thy breast, and say to God of Love:  
'Thy grace, O lord! For now I me repent  
If I mis-spoke, for now myself, I love';  
Thus say with all thine heart in good intent."  
Quod Troilus: "Ah, lord, I me consent,  
And pray to thee my japès thou forgive,  
And I shall nevermore, while that I live."<sup>1</sup>

*I myself am a lover*

*mockeries*

135. "Thou say'st well," quod Pandaré, "and now I hope  
That thou the goddè's wrath hast all appeased.  
And sithen thou hast weepen many a drop  
And said such things wherewith thy god is pleased,  
Now wouldè never god but thou were eased,<sup>2</sup>  
And think well, she of whom rist all thy woe  
Hereafter may thy comfort be also.

*since*

*for whom arises*

---

<sup>1</sup> 134: This stanza and part of the next one contain a parody of Catholic sacramental confession with Pandarus the "priest" giving instructions on contrition to the "penitent" Troilus, who obediently complies and prays to the god for forgiveness.

<sup>2</sup> 135.5: "May god want nothing except to see you relieved"

136. “For thilkè ground that bears the weedès wick  
 Bears eke those wholesome herbès, as full oft  
 Next the foul nettle rough and thick  
 The rosè waxeth sweet and smooth and soft,  
 And next the valley is the hill aloft,  
 And next the darkè night the gladdè morrow  
 And also joy is next the fine of sorrow. *nasty*  
*grows*  
*the end*
137. “Now lookè that attemper be thy bridle,  
 And for the best, ay suffer to the tide,  
 Or elsè all our labour is on idle:  
 He hastens well who wisely can abide.  
 Be diligent and true and ay well hide.  
 Be lusty, free, perséver in thy service  
 And all is well, if thou work in this wise. *Be moderate*  
*wait for the time*  
*in vain*  
*can wait*  
*always*
138. “But he that parted is in every place  
 Is nowhere whole, as writen clerkès wise;  
 What wonder is though such one have no grace?  
 Eke wost thou how it fares of some service?  
 As plant a tree or herb in sundry wise  
 And on the morrow pull it up as blive,  
 No wonder is though it may never thrive. *no luck*  
*some courtships*  
*as quickly*
139. “And since that God of Love has thee bestowed  
 In placè digne unto thy worthiness,  
 Stand fastè, for to good port hast thou rowed,  
 And of thyself, for any heaviness  
 Hope always well, for but if dreariness  
 Or over-hastè, both our labour shend,  
 I hope of this to maken a good end. *befitting your worth*  
*in spite of*  
*but if = unless*  
*ruin*
140. "And wost thou why I am the less afeared  
 Of this mattèrè with my niece to treat? <sup>1</sup>  
 For this have I heard said of wise y-lered  
 `Was never man nor woman yet begot *do you know?*  
*to take up this matter*  
*from learned wise men*  
*begotten*

---

<sup>1</sup> 140.2: Chaucer or Pandarus drops the news of this crucial relationship very casually. Perhaps this is why Troilus was so reluctant to name her.

That was unapt to suffer lovè's heat  
 Celestial, or elsè love of kind.<sup>1</sup>  
 Forthy some grace I hope in her to find.

*Divine or human  
 Therefore*

141. "And for to speak of her in special:  
 Her beauty to bethinken and her youth  
 It sits her not to be celestial  
 As yet, though that her listè both and couth.  
 But truly, it sits her well right nouth  
 A worthy knight to loven and to cherish  
 And but she do, I hold it for a vice.

*to consider  
 It's not time for her  
 even if she wanted & could  
 now  
 And unless*

142. "Wherefore I am and will be ready ay  
 To painè me to do you this service,  
 For both of you to pleasen thus hope I  
 Hereafterward; for you be bothè wise  
 And can in counsel keep in such a wise  
 That no man shall the wiser of it be,  
 And so we may be gladdened allè three.

*always  
 To take pains  
 keep a secret so that*

143. "And by my truth, I have right now of thee  
 A good conceit in my wit, as I guess;  
 And what it is I will now that thou see.  
 I thinkè, since that Love, of his goddness  
 Has thee converted out of wickedness,  
 That thou shalt be the bestè post, I 'lieve,  
 Of all his law, and most his foes to grieve.

*a good opinion in m. mind  
 best support, I believe*

144. "Example why? See how these wisè clerks  
 That erren aldermost against a law  
 And be converted from their wicked works  
 Through grace of God, that list them to Him draw.  
 Then are they folk that have most God in awe  
 And strongest faithèd be, I understand,  
 And can an error alderbest withstand."

*scholars  
 offend most  
 who chooses  
 refute best of all*

145. When Troilus had heard Pandáre assented

---

<sup>1</sup> 140.4-6: "No man ever born has been incapable of love, either human or divine (**celestial**)."

To be his help in loving of Criseyde,  
 Waxed of his woe, as who says, untormented,<sup>1</sup>  
 But hotter waxed his love, and thus he said *hotter grew*  
 With sober cheer although his heartè played: *quiet way / was merry*  
 "Now blissful Venus, help ere that I starve. *before I die*  
 Of thee, Pandáre, I may some thank deserve.

146. "But dearè friend, how shall my woe be less  
 Till this be done? And good, eke tell me this *And, good (friend)*  
 How wilt thou say of me and my distress  
 Lest she be wroth? -- This dread I most, iwis -- *angry / indeed*  
 Or will not hear or trowen how it is. *Or (if she) / not believe*  
 All this dread I, and eke for the mannér  
 Of thee, her eem, she will no such thing hear."<sup>2</sup> *her uncle*

147. Quod Pandarus: "Thou hast a full great care  
 Lest that the churl may fall out of the moon! *man*  
 Why, Lord! I hate of thee thy nicè fare! *silly behavior*  
 Why intermit of what thou'st not to do?"<sup>3</sup>  
 For God's love I biddè thee a boon: *ask a favor*  
 So let me alone and it shall be the best."  
 "Why, friend," quod he "now do right as thee lest. *as you please*

148. "But hearken, Pándare, one word."<sup>4</sup> For I n'ould *I don't want*  
 That thou in me wendest so great folly, *imagine*  
 That to my lady I desiren should  
 What toucheth harm or any villainy  
 For dreadèless me werè lever die *certainly I'd rather die*

<sup>1</sup> 145.3: "Became, shall we say, 'untormented' by woe."

<sup>2</sup> 146.6-7: *for the manner / Of thee ...* : The meaning of this difficult phrase may be that because of her relationship to Pandarus she will be embarrassed (or incredulous) and so will not listen to love overtures from him on Troilus's behalf.

<sup>3</sup> 147.4: "Why interfere with what you are not concerned with? [since you have handed the matter over to me]." *Thou'st not* = "thou hast not".

<sup>4</sup> 148.2: Troilus does not want Pandarus to think that he, Troilus, is so insensitive that he wants anything wrong or unbecoming from Criseyde, asserting that he would rather die than have her think his intentions dishonorable.

That she of me aught elsè understood  
But what that mightè sounen unto good."

*be honorably intended*

149. Then laughed this Pandare, and anon answered:

"And I thy borrow? <sup>1</sup> Fie! no wight does but so;

I roughtè not though that she stood and heard

*I don't care*

How that thou sayst; but farewell I will go.

Adieu! Be glad! God speed us bothè two.

*May God favor*

Give me this labour and this busyness

And of my speed be thine all the sweetness."

*of my success*

*Troilus is pathetically grateful for Pandarus's advice and help*

150. Then Troilus gan down on knees to fall

And Pandar in his arms he hentè fast

And said: "Now fie on Greekès all !

Yet, pardee, God shall help us at the last;

And dreadèless, if that my life may last,

And God toforn, lo, some of them shall smart

*I swear to God*

And yet m'athinks that this avaunt m' astart.<sup>2</sup>

151. "Now, Pandarus, I can no morè say

But thou wise, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all!

*knowest*

My life, my death whole in thine hand I lay.

Help now." Quod he: "Yes, by my truth, I shall."

*"he" = P.*

"God yield thee, friend, and thus in speçial,"

*God reward*

Quod Troilus, "that thou me recommend

To her that to the death me may command."

152. This Pandare then, desirous for to serve

His fullè friend, then said in this mannér:

*dear*

---

<sup>1</sup> 149.1-4: The lines seems to mean: "Pandarus laughed and answered: 'With me as your surety! (chaperone?). Oh, nobody says anything else. I wouldn't mind if she stood here and heard what you say.'"

This seems sardonic in Pandarus, but if so, it is at odds with his concern expressed earlier that Troilus should not do anything to dishonor Criseyde (129.6-7) and similar concerns later. *And I your borrow* occurs again in Pandarus's mouth at II.20.1, where it seems to mean "I assure you." Perhaps it IS serious here though lightly expressed.

<sup>2</sup> "And yet I am sorry (*me athinks*) that this boast (*avaunt*) escaped me (*m'astart*).

"Farewell, and think I will thy thanks deserve.  
 Have here my truth, and that thou shalt well hear."  
 And went his way, thinking on this mattér  
 And how he best might her beseech of grace,  
 And find a timè thereto, and a place.

153. For every wight that has a house to found  
 Ne runneth not the work for to begin  
 With rakel hand, but he will bide a stound  
 And send his heart's line out from within  
 Alderfirst his purpose for to win.  
 All this Pandárus in his heartè thought  
 And cast his work full wisely ere he wrought.

*rash / wait a time  
 plumbline ?  
 First of all / to gauge*

*planned / before going to work*

*The marvelous effects of hopefulness in love*

154. But Troilus lay then no longer down  
 But up anon upon his steedè bay,<sup>1</sup>  
 And in the field he playèd the lion.  
 Woe was that Greek that with him met that day.  
 And in the town his manner thenceforth ay  
 So goodly was, and got him so in grace  
 That each him loved that lookèd in his face.

*promptly / warhorse  
 battlefield*

*always  
 favor*

155. For he became the friendlièstè wight  
 The gentilest<sup>2</sup> and eke the mostè free,  
 The thriftiest and one the bestè knight  
 That in his timè was, or mightè be.  
 Dead were his japès and his cruelty,  
 His highè port and his mannér estrange,

*person  
 most generous  
 worthiest*

*jibes  
 haughty & scornful manner*

---

<sup>1</sup> 154.2: "*he mounted*" is understood after *bay* or after *up*. Stanzas 154-5 expand on the medieval romance convention mentioned earlier that falling in love improved a man's military prowess and his social grace. See again later in book III.

<sup>2</sup> 155.2-3: *gentilest* means something more than modern "gentlest" and closer to "most noble".

And each of them gan for a virtue change.<sup>1</sup>

*each of these (faults)*

156. Now let us stint of Troilus a stound  
 That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,  
 And is somedeal of aching of his wound  
 Y-lisséd well, but healéd no deal more.  
 And as an easy patient, the lore  
 Abides of him that goes about his cure,<sup>2</sup>  
 And thus he dryeth forth his áventure.

*stop (talking) / a while*  
*acts*  
*somewhat*  
*Much relieved but not healed*  
*the instructions*  
*accepts his fortune*

Here ends Book I

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<sup>1</sup> 155.7: "And began to exchange each of them (i.e. those faults) for a virtue."

<sup>2</sup> 156.5-6: "Like a good patient, he pays attention to the instructions (*lore*) of him (i.e. the physician) who is trying to cure him."