
TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

by

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ONE OF THE THREE GREAT LOVE STORIES OF THE
MIDDLE AGES

A READER-FRIENDLY EDITION

put into modern spelling
and lightly abbreviated

An un-abbreviated version is also available on this webpage

by

MICHAEL MURPHY

Conal and Gavin Press

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 likéd 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;
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 = 2nd 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: natiïon (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.

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 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"

For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,

how C. forsook T.

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

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 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**

¹ 3.4: "As those people write to whom we are indebted for the story." (*Written* is the plural of write).

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 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*, 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 inexpert) 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 couráge." 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 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.

Book I

Proem

*An appeal to more fortunate lovers listening to or reading this sad love story of Prince Troilus, son of King Priam of Troy. 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, but, for this **sad** story, on Thesiphone, one of the Furies, agents of retribution.*

1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
 That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,²
 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. ³ *verses*
2. 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 the adversity

² 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 phrase "as I write" in l. 7 rather gives the game away. 1.2: MS.: "That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye."

³ 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.

Of other folk; and thinketh how that ye
 Have felt that Lovè durstè you displease, *made you suffer*
 Or you have won him with too great an ease.

3. And biddeth eke for them that be at ease, *pray also*
 That God them grant ay good persévérance, *ay = always*
 And send them might their lovers for to please *power*
 That it to Love be worship and pleasánce, *honor & pleasure*
 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;

4. And for to have of them compassïon
 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*

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

5. It is well wist how that the Greekès, strong *well known*
 In arms, with a thousand shippès went
 To Troywards, and the city long *Towards Troy*
 Assiegèden--nigh ten years ere they stent;¹ *besieged / nearly / ceased*
 And in diversè wise and one intent,
 The ravishing to wreaken of Eleyne *abduction of Helen to avenge*
 By Paris done, they wroughten all their pain. *took / trouble*

6. Now fell it so that in the town there was *Now, it happened*
 Dwelling a lord of great authority
 A great divine that clepèd was Calchas, *priest who was called*

¹ 5.3-7: "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."

That in sciéncé so expert was that he *in knowledge*
 Knew well that Troyè should destroyed be
 By answer of his god that hightè thus: *was called*
 Daun Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus. *Lord (god) Phoebus*

7. 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*
 Destroyèd be, yea, whoso would or n'ould. *like it or not*

8. For which, for to departen softely
 Took purpose full this forè-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, the champion of Troy, for protection against the anger of the citizens.

9. 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*

10. 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 penáncé;
 For of her life she was full sore in dread, *anguish*
 As she that n'isté what was best to redd,
 For both a widow was she and alone *knew not / to do*
and without...

Of any friend to whom she durst her moan. *dared confide*

11. Criseyde was this lady's name aright. *indeed*
 As to my doom, in all of Troy city *In my judgement*
 Was none so fair, for-passing every wight *surpassing everyone*
 So angel-like was her native beauty,
 That like a thing immortal seemèd she,
 As doth an heavenish perfect creäture
 That down were sent in scorning of natüre.

12. 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, *nearly*
 In widow's habit large of samite brown, *long dress of b. silk*
 On knees she fell before Hector a-down ¹
 With piteous voice, and tenderly weeping,
 His mercy bade, her-selfen éxcusing. *begged*

13. Now was this Hector piteous of natüre
 And saw that she was sorrowfully begone, *afflicted*
 And that she was so fair a creäture.
 Of his goodness he gladdened her anon *at once*
 And said: "Let your father's treason gon *go ...*
 Forth with mischance; and you yourself in joy *...To the devil*
 Dwelleth with us while you good list in Troy. *as long as you like*

14. And all the honour that men may do you have *may give you*
 As far forth as your father dwellèd here *As if*
 You shall have, and your body men shall save, *your person / respect*
 As far as I may aught enquire or hear."
 And she him thankèd with full humble cheer. *manner*
 And oftener would, if it had been his will,
 And took her leave, and home, and held her still. *and (went) home*

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

¹ 12.5: Hector, 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.

15. But though that Greekès them of Troy in shut,
 And their city besieged all about,
 Their oldè usage wouldè they not let, *would not relinquish*
 As for to honour their gods full devout; *devoutly*
 But aldermost in honour, out of doubt, *foremost*
 They had a relic hight Palladion, *called*
 That was their trust aboven every one.
16. And so befell, when comen was the time
 Of April when clothèd was the mead
 With newè green (of lusty Ver the prime) *start of vigorous Spring*
 And sweetè smelling flowers white and red --
 In sundry wises showèd (as I read) *various ways celebrated*
 The folk of Troy their óbservances old,
 Palladionè's feastè for to hold.
17. 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.
18. 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 praisedè dear, *more highly*
 Nor under cloudè black so bright a star
19. 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
With full assurèd looking and mannér.¹

& quiet in manner

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

20. 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
Now here, now there, for no devotiõn
Had he to none to rieven him his rest,
But gan to praise and lacken whom him lest.²

*constantly
attachment
deprive him of*

21. 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*

22. 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;³
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*

¹ 19.7: It is a little difficult to reconcile the somewhat contradictory information about attitudes in stanzas 18 & 19. Criseyde is admired by the people and yet apprehensive; shy and yet self-assured. In stanza 27 below she is even "somedéal deynous", somewhat haughty. See also the note to II, stanza 54.

² 20.6-7: Troilus, who loses no sleep over love-sickness, began to praise or to fault whomever he wanted to.

³ 22.3-4: "And the trouble people have getting lovers and the problems in retaining them"

The god of Love will not be mocked, and promptly strikes

23. And with that word he gan cast up the brow
 Askances: "Lo, is not this wisely spoken?" *As if to say:*
 At which the god of Love gan looken rough
 Right for despite, and shope for to be wroken *prepared to be avenged*
 He kidd anon his bowè was not broken; *showed promptly*
 For suddenly he hit him at the full, *he = Love, him = Troilus*
 And yet as proud a peacock can he pull. *And still (today)*
24. Within the temple he went him forth playing, *jesting*
 This Troilus, of every wight about, *about everyone*
 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 piercèd, and so deep it went
 Till on Criseyde it smote, and there it stent. *rested*
25. And suddenly he waxed therewith astoned *became stunned*
 And gan her bet' behold in thrifty wise. *better / admiring way*
 "Oh, mercy God!" quod he, "Where hast thou woned?
 Thou art so fair and goodly to devise!" *lived/ thou = C. to see*
 Therewith his heart began to spread and rise,
 And soft he sighèd, lest men might him hear,
 And caught again his firstè playing cheer. *original joking manner*
26. She was not with the least of her statúre *size*
 But all her limbs so well answering *proportioned*
 Weren to womanhood, that creäture
 Was never lessè mannish in seeming; *appearance*
 And eke the purè wise of her moving *very manner*
 Showèd well that men might in her guess
 Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse. *rank / nobility*
27. To Troilus right wonder well withall

Gan for to like her moving and her cheer,¹ *bearing*
 Which somdeal deynous was, for she let fall *somewhat haughty*
 Her look a little aside in such mannér
 Askances: "What! May I not standen here?" *As if to say:*
 And after that, her looking gan she light, *her looks brightened*
 That never thought him seen so good a sight. *It seemed he'd never*

28. And, of her look, in him there gan to quick *spring up*
 So great desire and such affection,
 That in his heartè's bottom gan to stick
 Of her his fixed and deep impressiön;
 And though he erst had porèd up and down, *first sized (her) up*
 He was then glad his hornès in to shrink.
 Unnethè wist he how to look or wink.²

29. Lo, he that let himselfen so cunning, *who had thought himself*
 And scornèd them that Lovè's painès drye, *endure*
 Was full unaware that Love had his dwelling
 Within the subtle streamès of her eye,
 That suddenly him thought he felt to die, *(So) that*
 Right with her look, the spirit in his heart.
 Blessèd be Love, that folk can thus convert!³

30. 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,⁴ *openly showed nor said*
 But from afar (his manner for to hold), *(usual) manner*

¹ 27.1-2: "Her carriage (*moving*) and her manner (*cheer*) pleased Troilus very much (*right well*)."
to like = to be pleasing to.

² 28.7: "He hardly knew whether to look or close his eyes."

³ 29.7: "folk" is the grammatical object of the verb "convert": "Blessed be Love that can convert folk thus".

⁴ 30.3-4: "Neither by overt action (*cheere*) nor by word did he show his desire nor his reason for standing that way." 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 of his gaze to Criseyde.

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*

31. 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.

32. When he was from the temple thus departed
 He straight anon unto his palace turneth,
 Right with her look through-shotten and through-darted,
 Al feigneth he in lust that he sojourneth; ¹ *Although / joy / lives*
 And all his cheer and speech also he borneth *manner / burnishes*
 And ay of Love's servants every while *always / all time*
 Himself to wry, at them he gan to smile. *to cover up*

Alone, Troilus composes a song on the paradoxes of love

33. 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,² and gan it new avise. *think about it anew*

¹ 32.3-7: 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.

² 33.6-7: 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."

34. Thus gan he make a mirror of his mind
 In which he saw all wholly her figure,
 And that he well could in his heart find
 It was to him a right good aventure
 To love such one, and if he did his cure,
 To serven her, yet might he fall in grace
 Or else for one of her servants pass.
- fortune
 if he took care
 get in her favor
 become servant (in love)*
35. Thus took he purpose love's craft to sue
 And thought that he would worken privily,
 First to hiden his desire in mew
 From every wight y-born, all utterly
 But he might aught recovered be thereby,
 Remembering him that love too wide y-blow
 Yields bitter fruit, although sweetè seed be sow.
- to follow
 secretly
 in secret place
 from everyone, totally
 Unless he could be helped
 talked about*
36. 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*

CANTICUS TROILI¹

37. "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, a wonder thinketh me
 When every torment and adversity
 That comes from him may to me savoury think,
- wicked / it seems
 seem sweet*

¹ "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.¹ *ever*

38. And if that at my ownè lust I burn,
 From whencè comes my wailing and my 'plaint?
 If harm agree me, whereto 'plain I then?
 I n'ot ne why unwearly that I faint.
 O quickè death, O sweetè harm so quaint,
 How may of thee in me such quantity
 But if that I consent that it so be ?

*joy, desire
 complaint
 agrees with / complain
 I don't know
 living / strange
 How can there be
 Unless*

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

*indeed / tossed
 opposite directions*

40. 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;³
 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*

41. So muchè day by day, his ownè thought
 For lust to her gan quicken and increase,
 That every other charge he set at nought.

*desire / grow
 (So) that / duty*

¹ This stanza illustrates 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). In stanza 23 above and 40 below the stress is on love as a god.

² 39.7: "I die of heat when it is cold, of cold when it is hot."

³ 40.1-7: "The fire of Love did not deign to spare his (Troilus's) royal blood (God save me from that fire). And it did not 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."

<p>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.</p>	<p><i>Therefore / to alleviate exert himself he thought And always / burned</i></p>
--	--

Love increases his military prowess, but leaves him otherwise weak

<p>42. The showers sharpè fell of armès proof That Hector or his other brethren did, Ne made him only therefore oncè move,¹ And yet was he, where so men went or rid, Found one the best, and longest time abode Where peril was; and eke did such travail In armès that to think it was marvail.</p>	<p><i>fell = terrible marched or rode stayed</i></p>
--	--

<p>43. 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, But only, lo, for this conclusiõn To liken her the best for his renown; From day to day in armès so he sped That all the Greekès as the death him dread.</p>	<p><i>to rage to please h. / by his fame succeeded</i></p>
--	--

<p>44. 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.</p>	<p><i>mad / for constantly man dared he not</i></p>
---	---

<p>45. But when he had a spacè from his care Thus to himself full oft he gan to 'plain.</p>	<p><i>complain</i></p>
--	------------------------

¹ 42. 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. This stanza expresses the standard romance convention that love improves, among other things, a man's military prowess. See also below stanzas 97 and 98.

He said: "O fool, now art thou in the snare
 That whilom japedest at lover's pain. *once jested*
 Now art thou hent; now gnaw thine ownè chain. *caught*
 Thou wert ay wont each lover reprehend *always accustomed*
 Of thing from which thou canst thee not defend.

46. "What will now every lover say of thee
 If this be wist, but e'er in thine abséncé *known / ever*
 Laughen in scorn and say: `Lo, there goes he
 That is the man of so great sapiéncé *wisdom*
 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." *whom L. does not want to help*

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

Enter his friend and confidant, Pandarus the joker and fixer

48. Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
 A friend of his that callèd was Pandaré
 Came in once unaware, and heard him groan,
 And saw his friend in such distress and care. *trouble*
 "Alas!" quod he, "who causeth all this fare?
 Oh mercy God, what unhap may this mean? *misfortune*
 Have now, thus soon, the Greekès made you lean? *gaunt (with fear)*

4. Or hast thou some remorse of conscience
 And art now fall in some devotiön
 And wailest for thy sin and thine offence,
 And hast, for fearè, caught contritiön?

God save them that besieged have our town,
 And so can lay our jollity on press, *make us pack up our merriment*
 And bring our lusty folk to holiness."

50. These wordès said he for the nonès all, *for the occasion*
 That with such thing he might him angry make,
 And with an anger do his sorrow fall *reduce his sorrow*
 As for the time, and his couráge awake.
 But well he wist as far as tonguès spake¹ *But he knew*
 There n'as a man of greater hardiness *was not / courage*
 Than he, ne more desired worthiness. *he = Troilus / honor*

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

52. "But if thou ween I be thus sick for dread, *think*
 It is not so, and therefore scornè nought. *don't mock*
 There is another thing I take of heed
 Well more than aught the Greekès have y-wrought,²
 Which cause is of my death for sorrow and thought.
 But though that I now tell it thee ne lest, *don't wish to tell you*
 Be thou not wroth. I hide it for the best." *angry*

53. 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.

¹ 49.5-6: He knew that everybody agreed (*as far as tongues spoke*) that Troilus was a man of the greatest courage and honor.

² 51.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."

Wost thou not well that it am I, Pandaré? *Know you*

54. "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*

55. 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*

56. "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.¹
 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.

57. "Sufficeth this, my fullè friend Pandaré,
 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*

¹ 55.1-4: "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."

And let me starve, unknown, of my distress." *let me die*

58. "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." ¹
"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?

59. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandáre,
"Though I be nice; it happeth often so *unsuccessful*
That one that excess doth full evil fare" ² *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 couldé looken wide;³ *see all around*
A fool may eke a wise man often guide. *also*

60. "Right so fare I, unhappily for me.
I love one best and that me smarteth sore.
And yet, paraunter, can I redden thee *perhaps / can advise*
And not myself; reproveth me no more.
I have no cause, I wot well, for to soar
As does a hawk that listeth for to play, *wants to*
But to thy help yet somewhat can I say.

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

¹ 57.3-4: "Perhaps you are longing for someone with whom I can be of help."

² 58.2-4: "It often happens that one who fares badly because of excess ... " It is not clear what "excess" Pandarus is referring to.

³ 58.5-6: "I have seen a blind man walk safely where a man who could see all round him fell down."

Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

as you please

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

62. "Therefore, as friend fully in me assure,
And tell me plat what is thine encheson
And final cause of woe that you endure:
For, doubteth nothing, mine intention
Is not to you of reprehension
To speak as now, for no wight may bereave
A man to love till that him list to leave.

*confide
plainly / reason*

*rebuke
nobody can prevent
till he wants to*

63. "If God will, thou art not aghast of me
Lest I would of thy lady thee beguile?
Thou wost thyself whom that I love pardee,
As I best can, gone sithen a long while.
And since thou wost I do it for no wile,
And since that I am he thou trustest most,
Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wost."

*afraid
steal from you
know / by God
a long time now
you know / no trick*

thou knowest

64. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said,
But long he lay as still as he dead were.
And after this with sighing he abrayd,
And to Pandarus' voice he lent his ear.
And up his eyen cast he, that in fear
Was Pandarus lest that in frenzy
He shouldè fall or elsè soonè die,

came to

*eyes / (so) that
a fit*

65. 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
But in his mind of that no melody
May sinken him to gladden, for that he
So dull is of his bestiality."

touch

66. And with that Pandarus 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.¹ *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*
67. 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 huntten fast.
 All this gan Troilus in his hearté cast. *consider*
68. But natheless, when he had heard him cry
 "Awake", he gan to sighen wonder sore
 And said: "Friend, though that I stillé 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 proverbès may me naught avail."
69. "Now know I that there reason in thee failleth.
 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*
 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."
70. "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 shouldest never speed." *succeed*

¹ 65.3-4: "It was his intention never to tell anyone (the name of the woman) for whom he was behaving in this manner."

"Wost thou that well?" "Yea, that is out of dread," *Do you know? / certain*
 Quod Troilus, "for all that e'er you can, *whatever you do*
 She will to no such wretch as I be won."

71. "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? ¹ *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.'

72. "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.²
 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.

73. "What! Should he therefore fallen in despair
 Or be recreant for his ownè teen, *give in to 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."

74. And of that word took heedè Troilus,
 And thought anon what folly he was in
 And how that sooth to him said Pándarus *truth*

¹ 70: "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."

² 71.2-7: "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 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."

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, *blame*
 For of his woe, God wot, she knew full lite. *G. knows / little*

75. 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 to me thy woe
 And have my truth: but thou find it so *my word / unless you*
 I be thy boote ere that it be full long, *that I cure you before long*
 To pieces do me draw and sithen hang." *have me drawn & hanged*

76. "Yea, so thou sayst," quod Troilus then. "Alas!
 But God wot, it is not the rather so. *that does not make it 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 *or walk*
 May of her cruel wheel the harm withstand,
 For as she list she plays with free and bond." ¹ *she pleases / & slave*

77. Quod Pandarus: "Then blamest thou Fortúne
 For thou art wroth? Yea, now at erst I see. *upset / at last*
 Wost thou not well that Fortune is commúne *Know you not / common*
 To every manner wight in some degree? *e. kind of person*
 And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee, *by God*
 That as her joyès musten overgone *fade*
 So must her sorrows passen, everyone.

78. "For if her wheel stints anything to turn, *ceases at all*
 Then ceases she Fortúna for to be.
 Now since the wheel by no way may sojourn, *pause*
 What wost thou if her mutability *How do you know*

¹ 75-77: 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.

Right as thyselfen list will do by thee,¹ *Just as you wish*
 Or that she be not far from thy helping?
 Paraunter thou hast causè for to sing. *Perhaps*

79. "And therefore wost thou what I thee beseech? *do you know?*
 Let be thy woe and turning to the ground.
 For whoso list have helping of his leech, *whover wants / doctor*
 To him behoveth first unwry his wound. *he must first uncover*
 To Cerberus in Hell ay be I bound, *let me be tied*
 Were it for my sister all thy sorrow,
 By my will she should all be thine tomorrow.

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

Finally Pandarus shakes the answer out of Troilus

81. 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! *the source*
 Then is my sweetè foe callèd -- Criseyde."
 And well nigh with that word for fear he died. *nearly*

82. And when that Pandare heard her namè neven, *named*
 Lord! he was glad, and saidè: "Friend so dear,
 Now fare aright, for Jovè's name in heaven,
 Love hath beset thee right. Be of good cheer, *Love has blessed you*
 For of good name and wisdom and mannér
 She hath enough, and eke of gentleness. *of good breeding*

¹ 77.4-5: "How do you know whether her changeableness may not do for you just what you want?"

If she be fair, thou wost thyself, I guess. *beautiful / you know*

83. "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. *her other virtues*
 And forthy see that thou, in special,
 Requirè naught that is against her name, *And therefore*
 For virtue stretcheth not itself to shame. *nothing / reputation*

84. "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.¹ *But I'm glad*
 And wost thou why? For thou wert wont to chase *you have settled*
 At Love in scorn, and for despite him call *I dared swear*
 `Saint Idiot, lord of these foolès all.' *to thee / happened*
know you? / used to sneer

85. "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' ; *I myself am a lover*
 Thus say with all thine heart in good intent."
 Quod Troilus: "Ah, lord, I me consent,
 And pray to thee my japès thou forgive, *mockeries*
 And I shall nevermore, while that I live."²

86. "Thou say'st well," quod Pandáre, "and now I hope
 That thou the goddè's wrath hast all appeased.
 And sithen thou hast weepen many a drop *since*
 And said such things wherewith thy god is pleased,
 Now wouldè never god but thou were eased,
 And think well, she of whom rist all thy woe *for whom arises*

¹ 83:3-4: "On my word, I would have sworn that such good fortune in love would never have happened to you."

² 84: 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.

Hereafter may thy comfort be also.

87. "And wost thou why I am the less afeared
Of this mattère with my niece to treat?¹
For this have I heard said of wise y-lered
'Was never man nor woman yet begot
That was unapt to suffer lovè's heat
Celestial, or elsè love of kind.'²
Forthy some grace I hope in her to find.

*do you know?
to take up this matter
from learned wise men
begotten*

*Divine or human
Therefore*

88. "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

89. "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

90. When Troilus had heard Pandàre assented
To be his help in loving of Criseyde,
Waxed of his woe, as who says, untormented,³
But hotter waxed his love, and thus he said
With sober cheer although his heartè played:
"Now blissful Venus, help ere that I starve.
Of thee, Pandàre, I may some thank deserve.

*hotter grew
quiet way / was merry
before I die*

¹ 86.2: Chaucer or Pandarus drops the news of this crucial relationship very casually.

² 86.4-6: "No man ever born has been incapable of love, either human or divine."

³ 89.3: "Became, shall we say, 'untormented' by woe."

91. "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."¹ *her uncle*
92. 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?²
 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*
93. "But hearken, Pándare, one word.³ 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*
 That she of me aught elsè understood
 But what that mightè sounen unto good." *be honorably intended*
94. Then laughed this Pandare, and anon answered:
 "And I thy borrow? Fie! no wight does but so;
 I rougtè not though that she stood and heard *I don't care*

¹ 90.6-7: *for the manner / Of thee ...* : The meaning of this difficult phrase may be that because of her relationship to Pandarus she will be embarrassed and so will not listen to love overtures from him on Troilus's behalf.

² 91.4: "Why interfere with what you are not concerned with? [since you have handed the matter over to me]." *Thou'st not* = "thou hast not".

³ 92: 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.

How that thou sayst; ¹ 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*

95. "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 special," *God reward*
 Quod Troilus, "that thou me recommend
 To her that to the death me may command."

96. This Pandare then, desirous for to serve
 His fullè friend, then said in this mannér: *dear*
 "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 mattèr
 And how he best might her beseech of grace,
 And find a timè thereto, and a place.

The marvelous effects of hopefulness in love

97. But Troilus lay then no longer down
 But up anon upon his steedè bay, ² *promptly / warhorse*
 And in the field he playèd the lion. *battlefield*
 Woe was that Greek that with him met that day.
 And in the town his manner thenceforth ay *always*
 So goodly was, and got him so in grace *favor*
 That each him loved that lookèd in his face.

¹ 93.1-4: 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 (83.6-7) and similar concerns later. *And I your borrow* occurs again in Pandarus's mouth at II.17.1 where it seems to mean "I assure you."

² 96.2: "*he mounted*" is understood after *bay*. Stanzas 97 and 98 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 III, st. 186.

98. For he became the friendliest wight	<i>person</i>
The gentilest and eke the mostè free,	<i>most generous</i>
The thriftiest and one the bestè knight ¹	<i>worthiest</i>
That in his timè was, or mightè be.	
Dead were his japès and his cruelty,	<i>jibes</i>
His highè port and his mannér estrange,	<i>haughty & scornful manner</i>
And each of them gan for a virtue change. ²	<i>each of these (faults)</i>
99. Now let us stint of Troilus a stound	<i>stop (talking) / a while</i>
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,	<i>acts</i>
And is somedeal of aching of his wound	<i>somewhat</i>
Y-lisséd well but healéd no deal more.	<i>Much relieved but not healed</i>
And as an easy patient, the lore	<i>the instructions</i>
Abides of him that goes about his cure, ³	
And thus he dryeth forth his áventure.	<i>endures his fortune</i>

Here ends Book I

¹ 97.2-3: *gentilest* means something more than modern "gentlest" and closer to "most noble"; *one the beste* generally means the very best, rather than "one of the best".

² 97.7: "And began to exchange each of them (i.e. those faults) for a virtue."

³ 98.5-6: "Like a good patient, he pays attention to the instructions (*lore*) of him (i.e. the physician) who is trying to cure him."

