It is well known how the valiant Greeks went armed

toward Troy in a thousand ships, besieged the city nearly
ten years, and wrought all their harm in diverse ways with
only one intention, to avenge the ravishment of Helen done
by Paris. Now it happened that there dwelt in the town a
lord of great authority, a great seer named Calchas, so
expert in wisdom through the replies of his god, Lord
Phoebus, or Delphic Apollo, that he knew in advance that
Troy must be destroyed. So when this Calchas knew by
reckoning and by answer of Apollo as well that the Greeks
should bring such a force as should overthrow the city, he
laid his plan to leave it quickly; for well he knew by
divination that Troy should be destroyed. For this reason
this prophetic sage fully intended to depart in secret, and
stole away stealthily to the Greeks’ host, and they in
courteous fashion received him worshipfully and humbly,
in hope that he had cunning to counsel them in every peril
which they had to fear. 84

A clamor rose through all the town, when this was first
perceived; and it was said everywhere that Calchas had fled
as a traitor and allied with the forces of Greece; and men
intended to be avenged on he who had thus falsely broken
his faith, and said that he and all his kin together were
worthy to be burned, skin and bone. 91

Now under these circumstances, Calchas had left his
daughter, in much trouble and entirely ignorant of her
father’s false and wicked deed, sorely in fear of her life, not
knowing what to do; for she was a widow and without a
friend to whom to share her troubles. Criseyde was this
lady’s name; to my belief, in all Troy was none so lovely,
for so surpassing and angelic was her beauty that she
seemed a thing immortal, a heavenly perfect creature sent
down in scorn of earthly nature. 105

This lady, who heard all day in her ear of her father’s
shame, falseness and treason, was very nearly out of her
mind for fear and sorrow, and in her flowing widow’s habit
of brown samite she fell on her knees before Hector, and
with piteous voice and tender weeping made her defense
and begged his grace. Now this Hector was merciful by
nature, and seeing how woebegone and beautiful she was,
of his kindness he cheered her and said, “Forget your
father’s treason—a plague on it! And you yourself, while
you wish, dwell here with us in joy; and all the honor shall
you have that men could do you if your father dwelt here
still and your body shall ever be protected, as far as my
knowledge may go.” She thanked him with humble
expression, and would have thanked him more if he had
allowed her; took her leave and kept herself quietly at
home, with such a household as was necessary for her
station. As long as she dwelt in that city she observed her
dignity, and was very well beloved and spoken of by young
and old. But whether she had children or not, I cannot learn
from my books, and so I pass that over. 133
Events fell between the Greeks and Trojans as they do in war; for one day they of Troy paid dearly, and another day they of Greece found the Trojans not a bit soft, and thus both in turn, up and down, Fortune whirled on her wheel. But to tell all this, and how the town came to destruction, is not in my purpose; it would be a long digression from my matter and would delay you too long. The events about Troy, how they happened, whoever can do so may read in Homer or in Dares or in Dictys¹. 147

Though the Greeks shut in the people of Troy and besieged their city all about, they still would not leave their old customs in devoutly honoring their gods. And in special honor they held a relic called the Palladium, which was their trust above all other things. And so it happened in the time of April, when the meadow is clothed with the new green of lusty Ver, the spring, and with sweet-smelling flowers white and red, in various ways the people of Troy made their old observances, as I read in the book, and held the feast of the Palladium, and many people went to the temple solemnly to hear the service of the relic; and especially went many lusty knights, and many beautiful ladies, and fair maiden high and low, very well arrayed, both for the season and the feast. 168

Among other people was Criseyde; in black widow’s habit, but nonetheless, just as the first of our letters is now an A, so stood she first, matchless in beauty. Her lovely looks gladdened all the people; never was there seen one more to be praised, nor under a black cloud so bright a star as was Criseyde; so said all people who beheld her in her black garments. And yet she stood alone behind others, low and still, in little space and near the door, ever bashful and gentle, simple of attire, yet confident in eye and manner. 182

Now Troilus, as he was accustomed, with his young knights, was going around and about in that broad temple always observing the ladies of the town; for no devotion had he to any, to lose sleep for her, but praised and censured whom he would, and as he walked about he watched keenly if any knight or squire of his retinue would sigh or let his eyes feed on any woman. Then he would smile and hold it folly, and say, “She sleeps sweetly, God knows, while you roll and turn! By God, I have heard tell of your lovers’ lives and your foolish devotion, and what labor you have to win love and what perplexity to keep it, and when your prey is lost, woe and dolor! You complete fools, silly and blind; not one can beware by others!” 203

And with that word he turned up his face as if to say, “Lo, is not this wisely said?” At which the God of Love began to look rough with anger, and planned to be avenged; and quickly he showed indeed that his bow was not broken, for suddenly he hit Troilus squarely. And still can he pluck as proud a peacock. O blind world, O blind intention! How often falls the event contrary to arrogance and foul presumption, for caught is the proud and caught is the humble! 214

This Troilus has climbed the stairs, and little does he know that he must come down. But ever do fools’ thoughts fail. When proud Bayard feels his corn, he skips out of the road, until the long lash hits him, and then he thinks, “though I prance ahead first in the procession, fat and newly clipped, I am still only a horse, and I must endure a horse’s lot and tug with my fellows.” So fared this fierce proud knight, though he was son to a noble king and judged nothing could stir his heart against his will; yet with one look his heart blazed up, so that he who just now was most lifted above Love with pride suddenly grew most subjected to Love. 231

Therefore, all you wise and proud and noble people, take example by this man not to scorn Love, who can so soon enslave to him the freedom of your hearts. For it always was and always will be that Love can bind all things, and no man can annul the law of Nature. This you all know, that men read of none that have had greater wit than they who have been most subdued by Love, and the strongest and highest of degree have been overcome by him: this always was so, and is, and people shall always see it. 245

And truly it fits well to be so; for the wisest of all have rejoiced in love, and they most in woe have been most comforted, and often love has appeased the cruel heart and made the noble nobler of reputation and caused them to fear vice and infamy. Now, since Love cannot well be withstood but can bind you as he will, and since he is so virtuous of nature, refuse not to be bound to him. The sapling is better that bends and twists than the one that breaks. Therefore, I advise you to follow him, as he knows well how to lead you. 259

But to leave other related things, I mean to continue my tale especially of this king’s son, both of his joy and of his cold cares, and of all his deeds in this affair. This Troilus was going forth about the temple in his sport, looking now on this lady, and now on that, whether she were of the town or of the countryside, and it happened by chance that his eye pierced through a crowd and alighted on Criseyde, and there it stopped. Suddenly bewildered, he began to behold her better and more carefully. “O God have mercy,” he thought, “where have you who are so fair and pleasing to see dwelt before now?” With this his heart began to swell, and he sighed, softly (lest men should hear him), and then he put on again his previous sportive appearance. 280

She was not among the smallest of her stature, but all her limbs answered so well to womanly perfection that never has a creature seemed less masculine. The very manner of her moving let a man guess her high estate and womanly nobility. Wondrously well Troilus began to like her

treats with woe as often as happiness the most cunning of servants, saying, "Lord! How joyously you lovers live! It his expression and speech, and always smiled at Love's arrow. Yet still he feigned joyousness, and brightened all when he had thus gone from the temple, he returned lest it should be known on any side. 322

load of mockery should fall on himself; but he hid his woe, very nearly confounded, he went softly out of the temple and began newly to consider the manner of her there wide awake, his spirit dreamed he saw her in the midst of the temple and began newly to consider the manner of her movements and her bearing, which was a little scornful, for she let her glance fall a little on one side as if to say, "what, may I not stand here?" And after that her face brightened a little, until it seemed as if he had never seen so good a sight. 294

There began to quicken in him so great a desire that the fixed impression of her began to fasten in his the foundation of his heart, and though before he had let his eye rove, he was inclined then to let his horns shrink in until he scarcely knew how to look. Lo! He who thought himself so wise and scorned those who suffer love's pains was fully unaware that Love dwelt within the subtle beams of her eyes, until with her look he seemed suddenly to feel the spirit die in his heart. Blessed be Love that can thus convert people! 308

Thus he stood to behold her in her black garb, and did not make a sign or said a word to tell his desire or why he stood in this way. To maintain his former appearance he sometimes cast his look on other things, and then once more on her, as long as the service lasted; and afterwards, very nearly confounded, he went softly out of the temple repenting that he had ever jested at Love's people, lest the load of mockery should fall on himself; but he hid his woe, lest it should be known on any side. 322

When he had thus gone from the temple, he returned straight to his palace, shot through with her look as with an arrow. Yet still he feigned joyousness, and brightened all his expression and speech, and always smiled at Love's servants, saying, "Lord! How joyously you lovers live! It treats with woe as often as happiness the most cunning of you who serve most attentively and well. Your wage is paid you; but how, God knows! Not well for well, but scorn for good service. In faith, your order is nobly ruled. All your rites may prove in vain, except for a few pitiful matters; and yet no faith demands such devotion as yours, you know full well. And that is not the worst, by my word: but if I told you the worst point, however truly I spoke, you would berate me. But consider this: whatever with the best intent you do or leave undone, your lady will often misconstrue and take it ill. If she, for any reason, should be angry, you will immediately have a scolding. Ah, happy is he that can be one of you!" 350

But for all this talk he held his peace when he could, as Love began so to lime his feathers that he was scarcely able to fool his retinue that he was oppressed by other cares. He did not know what to do for woe, and told his men go where they wished. When he was alone in his chamber, he sat down at the foot of his bed, first sighed and then groaned, and thought so constantly on her that, as he sat there wide awake, his spirit dreamed he saw her in the temple and began newly to consider the manner of her looking, and thus he began to make a mirror of his mind in which he saw her form entirely. 367

He found it in his heart to grant that it was a happy fortune to him to love such a one, and if he strove to serve her he might win her grace or at least be among her followers. And so he reflected that neither travail nor vexation, borne for so fine a lady, could be thrown away or shame him, even if it were known, but he should be honored and exalted by all lovers more than before. Thus he reasoned at the beginning of his love, all unaware of his woe to come. 378

And thus he took his purpose to follow love's trade, but at first to keep his work private and hide his desire from every living creature, unless he might be advanced by letting it be known some time, remembering that love too widely blown abroad yields bitter fruit, though the seed may be sweet. And he thought of much more: what to speak, what to hold in, and how to urge her to love him. 388

So he at that point began to compose a song, and to triumph over his sorrow, and with good hope he fully assented to love Criseyde and not repent. I will give every word of his song, except for the difference of our tongues, not only the substance, as my author Lollius² does; and whoever will hear it may find it in these next verses. 399

If Love it’s not, O God, what feel I so?
If Love it is, what sort of thing is he?
If Love be good, from where then comes my woe?
If he be ill, wondrous it seems to me
That every torment and adversity
That comes from him I can so joyous think;
For more I thirst, the more from him I drink. 406

If it is in my own delight I burn,
From where then comes my wailing and complaint?
Rejoicing, why to tears do I return?
I know not, nor, unwear, why I faint.
Oh living death, oh sweet harm strange and quaint!
How can this harm and death so rage in me,
Unless I do consent that it so be? 413

And if I do consent, I wrongfully
Bewail my case; thus rolled and shaken sore
All rudderless within a boat am I
Amid the sea and out of sight of shore,
Between two winds contrary evermore.
Alas, what is this wondrous malady?
For heat of cold, for cold of heat, I die. 420

To the god of Love he said with devout voice, "Lord, now yours is my spirit, as it ought to be. I thank you, Lord, who has brought me to this. Whether she is a woman or a goddess that you make me serve, truly I do not know, but as her man I will ever live and die. You stand mightily in her eyes as in a place fit for your power. For all this, Lord, if

² Lollius. Various attempts have been made to identify this source, perhaps as Boccaccio and/or Petrarch, but none successful. Most see his mention of Lollius as a strategy to shift any blame from his own narration.
my service or I may please you, be gracious to me; for my royal estate here I resign into her hand and humbly become her man, and she, my dear lady." 434

The fire of love (may God save me from it!) agreed not to spare his royal blood, his might or his prowess, but held him as his servant lowly in distress, and burned him so ever anew in various ways that sixty times a day he grew pale. Day by day so grew his delight in thinking of her that he thought nothing of every other concern, and very often, thinking to ease his heat, he would strive to see her pleasing face. But always the nearer he was, the more he burned; the nearer the fire, the hotter, as all of this company knows. 450

But far or near, by night or day, for wisdom or folly, I promise you, his heart, which was the eye of his mind, was always on her, who was more beautiful to see than ever was Helen or Polyxena. Not an hour of the day passed that he did not say to himself a thousand times, “Lovely one whom I labor to serve as best I can, now I wish to God, Criseyde, you would pity me before I die. Alas, dear heart, my health and cheer and life are lost unless you pity me.” 462

All other fears had fled from him, both of the siege and for his own safety, and no other desires bred in him but tender yearnings to that one object, that she should have compassion on him and he might be her man for life; lo, in this stood his life and his cure from death! 469

The terrible storms of arms of Hector or his other brothers did not move him at all, and yet wherever men went he was found among the best and remained the longest where there was peril, and did such feats of arms that it was a marvel to think of; until as he thus won renown in arms all the Greeks dreaded him like death. Yet all this was not for hatred to the Greeks, nor yet for the defense of the town, but only that his fame might please her more. From this time love bereft him of his sleep and made his food his foe, and his pains so increased that, if one observed him well, they showed in his face. Lest men should divine that the fire of love burned him, he pretended he had another sickness and said he had a fever and he fared badly. 491

How it was I cannot say, whether his lady did not understand all this, or pretended she did not, one of the two; but at all events I find in the book that she seemed not to be concerned for him nor for his pain or what was in his mind. This Troilus felt such woe woe that he was very nearly mad, for his dread was ever this: that she so loved some other man and that she would never notice him, for which he seemed to feel his heart bleed. 502

Nor did he dare tell a word of his woe, even to win all the world. When he felt a little lightening of his grief, very often he would lament thus with himself: “O fool, now you are in the snare, you who used to mock at love’s tortures, now you are caught; you may gnaw your own chains. You were accustomed to reproach lovers for a thing from which you cannot defend yourself. If this should become known, what will every lover say of you except always to laugh you to scorn behind your back, and say, ‘There he goes, that wise man that held us lovers in such low esteem! Now, thank God, he goes in the dance of those whom Love wishes to promote but little.’ But ah, woeful Troilus, since you are ordained to love, I wish to God that you had come upon one who might know all your woe, even if she had no pity; but your lady is as cold in love toward you as frost beneath a winter moon, and you melt away like snow in fire. I wish to God I were already arrived in the port of death, to which my sorrow will bring me; Lord, it would be a comfort to me! Then I should be finished with languishing in fear. For if my hidden sorrow should be talked about widely, I shall be mocked a thousand times as much as any fool on whose folly men make rhymes. But now God help me, and you too, sweet, by whom Love has caught me, yes, never man so fast. Mercy, dear heart! Save me from death, for more than my life I will love you to the end. Cheer me with some friendly look, though you may never promise anything else.” 539

These words he spoke, and many others as well, and ever in his complaint called on her name, until he nearly drowned in salt tears; but all was for nothing, as she did not hear his lament, and when he thought about the folly of such doings, his woe multiplied a thousand-fold. 546

Once, while he was thus bewailing his situation alone in his chamber, a friend of his who was named Pandarus came in unaware of Troilus’ condition, and heard him sigh and saw his distress. “Alas!” he said, “who is the cause of all this commotion! Merciful God, what evil has happened? Have the Greeks made you grow lean as soon as this? Or have you some remorse of conscience and are fallen into some devotion and bewail your sins, and are frightened into attrition? What an honor to the besiegers of our town, that they can pack away the jollity of our lusty people and bring them to holiness!” These words he said to anger him, so that anger might drive out his sorrow for the time and arouse his spirit, for he knew well that to the ends of the earth there was not a man of greater hardihood nor more desirous of honor. 567

“What chance,” said Troilus, “has guided you to see me languishing here, rejected by every creature? But for the love of God, hear my request and go away, for in faith the sight of my dying will pain you, and I must die; therefore, go away. But if you fancy that I am thus sick out of fear, do not mock me, for it is not so. It is another thing, far more than the Greeks have done, that makes me grieve and pine to death. Be not angered though I tell it not right now; I hide it for the best.” 581

This Pandarus, nearly melting for sorrow and pity, said often, “Alas, what may this be? Now, friend,” he said, “if ever love or faith has been between you and me, be not so cruel as to hide so great a care from your friend. Don’t you
know that it is I, Pandarus? If I can do you no comfort, at least I can share your pain with you, as it is a friend’s right to deal with pain and pleasure. I have loved you all my life through wrong and right, and ever shall through true or false report. Then hide not your woe from me, but tell it quickly.” 595

Then this sorrowful Troilus began to sigh and said to him, “May God grant that it be best to tell it to you; for since you wish it so, I will tell it, though my heart may burst. Well I know you can give me no ease, but lest you deem that I do not trust you, listen, friend, for this is how it stands. Love, against which the toughest defense avails least, so sorely assails me with despair that my heart is driving straight upon the rocks. Desire assails me with such fire that I would rather be slain than be king of Greece and Troy together. Let this that I have said suffice, my faithful friend Pandarus, for now you know my woe, which I have told to no other. For the love of God, hide well my cold care, for much harm might follow if it were known. But you may live in gladness, and leave me to die in my distress, without any regard.” 616

“Why have you thus unkindly hidden this from me so long, fool that you are?” said Pandarus. “Perhaps you may long after such a one that my judgment may help us.” 620

“That,” said Troilus, “would be a wondrous thing, you who could never guide yourself well in love. How the devil can you bring me to bliss?” 623

“Yes, Troilus, now listen,” said Pandarus; “though I may be foolish, yet it often happens that one who through excess has come to grief by good counsel may keep his friend from it. I have seen a blind man walk safely, while one who could see far fell. A fool can often guide a wise man. A whetstone is no carving-instrument, yet it sharpens one. And what you know of my mistakes—forget it, and let it be a lesson in my school, for so will your wit be well employed. 636

“All things are understood through their contraries. For how could the sweet ever have been known by one who had never tasted the bitter? No man may be truly glad, I believe, that was never in distress. Set white next to black and shame next to honor, and each shows forth more, as all men know. Then since so much may be learned from contraries, I, who have so often fared grievously in love, ought to know how to counsel you in your dismay. Nor should you be ill-pleased though I desire to bear with you your heavy load—it will hurt the less. Well I know that it fares with me as a shepherdess named Oenone wrote to your brother Paris in a lament; you saw the letter she wrote, no doubt?” 656

“No, not yet, surely,” said Troilus. 657

“Now listen,” said Pandarus, “it was like this. 658

“‘Phoebus, who first invented the art of medicine, knew remedies of herbs for every man’s hurt; yet for himself his cunning was entirely barren, for love toward the daughter of King Admetus had so bound him in a snare that all his craft could not remedy his sorrow. 665

“So do I fare, alack for me! I love one best, and win nothing but sorrow. Yet perhaps I can counsel you, though not myself; reprove me no more. I have no cause to sorrow like a hawk that wishes to play, yet I can tell something for your help. And of one thing you may be quite certain, that I shall never betray you, even if I were to die upon the rack; nor, by my word, do I care to dissuade you from your love, even if I knew it would be for your brother’s wife, Helen. Be she what she may, and love her as you wish! 679

“Therefore trust me fully as your friend, and tell me plainly your affair and final cause of woe. Fear not at all that my intent now is to reprove you, for no creature may stop a man from loving, until he wishes to leave that love. And know well that each is an error, to mistrust all and to confide in all, but to take the middle road is wisdom; for to trust some one will test and prove his fidelity, and therefore I would gladly correct your wrong opinion, and make you trust some creature and tell him your woe. Therefore tell me, if you wish. 693

“The wise man says, ‘Woe to him that is alone, for if he should fall he has none to help him rise.’ Since you have a friend, tell him everything. For the most hopeful way to win love, in truth, as wise men will tell you, is not to wallow and weep like Queen Niobe, whose tears can yet be seen in marble. Leave your dreary weeping and let us lighten your woe with other talk, so that your woeful hours may seem shorter. Delight not to search woe for more woe, like these fools in misfortune who add to their sorrows by other sorrow and care not to seek a cure. People say, ‘it is a consolation for a miserable person to keep another person in his pain.’ This we ought to grant, for both you and I complain of love. So full of sorrow am I that no more misfortune can perch on me, because there is no room for it. God grant you not to afraid of me, lest I beguile you of your lady! You know well whom I love as best I can, long time past. And since you know I speak without any guile, and since I am the one you trust most, tell me something. You know all my woe.” 721

Yet for all this Troilus did not speak a word, but for a long while lay still as if he were dead; then he started up with a sigh and lent his ear to Pandarus’ voice, and rolled up his eyes until Pandarus feared that he might fall into a frenzy or die at that moment. 728

“Awake,” cried Pandarus sharply; “what, are you slumbering in a lethargy, or are you like an ass at the sound of a lute, that hears when men ply the strings but no melody can sink into his mind to gladden him, because he is so dull in his beastly nature?” 735
With that Pandarus stopped his talking, but Troilus as yet answered not a word, for it was not his intent to tell any man for whose love he fared so ill. For it is said by wise men in their treatises, ‘a man often makes the rod with which he is beaten,’ especially in telling one’s counsel in affairs of love that ought to be secret. It will come out soon enough by itself unless it is well guarded. And sometimes it is a skill to seem to flee that which in truth one eagerly hunts. All this Troilus turned over in his heart.

But nevertheless, when he heard him cry “Awake!” he began to sigh sorely and said, “Friend, though I lie still I am not deaf. Now peace, and no more shouting. I have heard your words and your lore, but allow me to bewail my ill fortune, for your proverbs cannot help me, and you do not know any other cure for me; and I wish not to be cured, I wish to die. What do I know of the queen Niobe? Set aside your old examples, I beg.”

“Yes,” said Pandarus, “therefore I say fools delight to bewail their woe and care not to seek remedy. Now I know that your reason fails you. But tell me, if I knew who she might be for whom you have all this misadventure, would you dare that I told her your woe in her ear, since you dare not yourself; and besought her to have some pity on you?”

“Why, no,” he said, “by my faith!”

“What!” said Pandarus, “even though I did it as earnestly as if I thought my own life lay at stake?”

“No, brother, surely,” said Troilus.

“And why? Because you should never succeed.”

“Know you that well?”

“Yes, that is beyond a doubt,” said Troilus; “for all that ever you can do she will not be won for such a wretch as I.”

“Alas, how can this be,” said Pandarus, “that you are so causeless in despair? What, is not your lady still alive? God bless you! How do you know that you can have grace? Such trouble is not always beyond hope! Why, make not your cure so impossible, for things to come are often uncertain! I grant that you endure as sharp a woe as Tityus in hell, whose stomach the birds called vultures tear forever, as we read in books.

“But I cannot endure that you remain in so unreasonable a thought as that there is no cure for your woe. With your coward heart and anger and foolish willfulness, your despair will not even permit you to tell of your pain, or so much as help yourself by giving a reason, but you lie as one indifferent to the entire world. What woman could love such a wretch? If you die in this way and she would know not why, what can she judge but that you have yielded up your breath through fear because the Greeks besiege us? Lord, many thanks you will win in this way! ‘The wretch is dead,’ she will say, and the entire town as well, ‘may the Devil have his bones!’”

“You may weep here alone and cry and kneel twenty winters. Give a woman love that she knows nothing of, and she will give you a reward that you shall not feel. Unknown is unkissed, unsought is lost. What, many men have paid dearly for love that his lady has known of; yes, for twenty winters, and never yet has he kissed his lady’s mouth. Why should he fall into despair for this, or be a recreant, or slay himself although his lady is beautiful? No, no, he shall always be fresh and gay for the service of his dear heart’s queen, and think that only to serve her is a reward a thousand-fold more than he merits.”

And Troilus took heed of that word, and soon thought of his folly and how Pandarus spoke the truth, that in slaying himself he could gain nothing, but only do an unmanly act and a sin, if his lady knew nothing of the cause; for little of his woe she knew, God knows! With that thought he sighed and said, “Alas, what is best for me to do?”

To this Pandarus answered, “So please you, it is best that you tell me all your troubles; and by my word, unless you find that I can be your remedy before many days, you may have me torn in pieces and afterwards hanged!”

“Yes, so you may say,” said Troilus, “but that makes it not true, God knows. It is very hard to help a man when Fortune is his foe. All who live and breathe cannot withstand the harm created by her cruel wheel, for she plays with every creature, serf or noble, as she pleases.”

Pandarus said, “You are angry, and so blame Fortune; now I am beginning to understand. Do you not know that every type of creature is subjected to Fortune in some degree? And yet you have this comfort, that as her joys must pass, so must her sorrows; for if her wheel ceased one moment to turn, immediately she should cease to be Fortune. Now how do you know, since her wheel may not delay, that her mutability will not in your case do as you desire, or she may not be about to help you? Perhaps you have cause for singing! Do you know, then, what I counsel you?”

“Let go of your woe and downcast looks, for he who will have healing must first reveal his wound unto his physician. Even if your grief were for my own sister, may I be tied forever to Cerberus in hell unless she would be yours tomorrow, if she were mine to give. Look up, I say, and tell me now who she is, so that I may go about your business. If I know her at all, I shall hope to succeed the sooner. As you love me, tell me if I do.”
Now began Troilus’ vein to bleed, for he was hit. “Aha! Here begins some sport,” said Pandarus, when he saw him grow all red for shame; and with that word he began to shake him. “Thief, you shall tell her name.” 870

Troilus began to tremble as though men were leading him to hell. “Alas!” he said, “my sweet foe, the wellspring of my grief, is named Criseyde!” And with that word he nearly died for fear. 875

When Pandarus heard her name, Lord, he was glad. “Dear friend,” he said, “this goes well! In Jove’s name, Love has placed you well. Be of good spirit! For good name, discretion and fair demeanor, she has plenty of them, and of gentle blood as well. You know yourself if she is good-looking, I dare say! A more bounteous person I never saw for one of her station, nor a gladder, nor of speech friendlier, nor one who had more of Heaven’s grace for doing well, or had less need to seek what to do; and as for honor, to crown it all, as far as her might may go, a king’s heart seems compared to hers a wretch’s. 889

“And therefore try to be of good comfort, for certainly in a noble and well-regulated temper the first point is this, that a man should have peace with himself. In truth you ought to have, for there is nothing but good in loving well a worthy object. You ought not to call it chance, but the grace of God. And also gladden yourself by thinking that since your lady has all virtues, she must have some pity among them; but see also that you seek nothing that is against her fair reputation, for virtue does not stretch itself as far as shame. 903

“But so glad I am that I have lived to see your love bestowed so well, for by my word I dare have sworn that never so fair a grace in love would have come your way. You were accustomed to harass Love in scorn and call him ‘Saint Idiot, lord of all fools.’ How often have you prattled and said that Love’s servants, for folly, were truly God’s apes, and some would take to their solitary beds, and munch their meat groaning, and another had the white fever, and some would take to their solitary beds, and munch their meat groaning, and another had the white fever, and another had the white fever, and another had the white fever, and you would pray to God that he might never recover! And some of them, for the cold in bed, would put over them more than they needed, so you would often say; and some would often lie and tell how they had kept awake when in truth they had slept sweetly. Thus they strove to rise, yet were underneath at last; so you would say in your jesting; and that for the more part these lovers will be ever speaking, and that a sure safeguard against failing is to try everywhere. 928

“Now I can poke fun at you as much as I wish; but I will go to the stake on it that you were none of these last ones! Now beat your breast and say to your god, ‘Grant me your grace, Lord, for now I am in love, and I repent if I ever spoke ill.’ Thus you must say with all your heart.” 935

“Ah, Lord!” said Troilus, “I consent, and pray that you forgive my gibes, and I will do so no more while I live.” 938

“Well said,” said Pandarus, “and now I hope you have appeased the god’s wrath; and since you have wept many drops and spoken to your god’s pleasure, I wish to God you might be relieved! Trust well that he from whom all your woe arises may hereafter be our comfort also. The same ground that bears wicked weeds bears also these wholesome herbs, and next to the foul nettle, rough and thick, grows, sweet and smooth and soft, the rose; next to the valley is the hill on high, next to the dark night the glad morning, next to the end of grief is joy. Hold your bridle loosely and let things go their natural course, or all our labor is thrown away. He hurries well who can wait well. 956

Be diligent, faithful and discreet, be merry, liberal and persevering in your service, and all will be well. But one who is distributed into every place, as wise scholars write, is entirely nowhere. Is it any wonder such a person would not succeed? And wouldn’t you know how some love fares, as if one should plant a tree or herb in some way and pull it up as quickly in the morning! No wonder that it never thrives. Since the god of love has bestowed you in a place equal to your own worth, stand firm; you have sailed into a good port. Have good hope at all points, in spite of the heaviness of your spirits; for, unless over-haste or your low spirit spoil our work, I hope to make a good end of this. 973

“Do you know you why? I am the less afraid to treat of this matter with my niece because I have heard from old scholars that there was never man or woman begotten yet that was not ready to suffer love’s heat, either celestial or natural. Therefore I hope to find grace for you. As to her, with her beauty and youth, it fits her not yet, though she could and would, to be celestial; but it very well fits her to love and cherish a worthy knight. If she would not do it, I hold it for a vice. 987

“Therefore, I am now and ever ready to strive to do you this service; hereafter I hope to have the thanks of both of you for it, for you both are prudent and can so keep counsel that no one shall be the wiser, and so we all three may be gladdened. By my word, now I have formed a good opinion of you in my wit! Since Love, of his goodness, has converted you from your sin, you shall be the best pillar of all his faith, I believe, and most able to injure his foes. See as an example now these great scholars that err most deadly against the faith, and are converted from their wicked deeds, through the grace of God that draws them to Him: then they are the most God-fearing of people, and strongest in faith, and can withstand error better than others. 1008

When Troilus had heard Pandarus consent to help him in winning Criseyde’s love, his woe left tormenting him, and hotter grew his love; and then he said, with sober face...
(though his heart danced), “Now may blessed Venus so help that before I die I may deserve some thanks of you, Pandarus! But, dear friend, how shall my woe be less until this is finished? And tell me this, what will you say of me and my pain? Most of all I fear lest she be angered or will not hear or believe it.” 1022

“You have a very great worry,” Pandarus said, “lest the man should fall out of the moon! Lord, but I hate your foolish Prattling! Why, attend to your own part of it! For God’s love, I bid you one favor, and that is to let me alone; you will fare better! 1028

“Why, friend,” said Troilus, “now do as you wish! But listen to one word, Pandarus; I would not like that you should suspect in me any such wantonness as that I would desire of my lady anything that tends to evil or baseness. For, believe me, I would rather die than she should fancy of me anything but what might tend to virtue.” 1036

Then Pandarus laughed and answered at that moment, “And I your security? Fie, every lover speaks thus! I wish that she had been standing by and had heard how you spoke! But farewell; I will go. Adieu, and be glad. God grant success to both of us! Give me this labor and this business, and of may the sweetness of my success be yours.” 1043

Then Troilus fell on his knees and caught Pandarus tightly in his arms. “Now fie on all the Greeks!” he said. “Sooner or later, God will help us, and, if my life will hold out, before God some of them shall ache. And yet I am very sorry that this boast has escaped me. Now, Pandarus, I can say no more; but you are wise, you know, you have the power, you are my all. All my life and death I lay in your hand! Help me now! 1053

“Yes, by my word,” said Pandarus. 1054

“God reward you, friend! And this especially,” said Troilus; “keep me in her mind who may command me to the death.” 1057

This Pandarus, so zealous to aid his dear friend, said, “Farewell, and be assured I will deserve your thanks; and that you shall see, and here I pledge my word.” And so he went his way, thinking how he might best beseech her for grace, and how he might find a time for that. For a person who has a house to build runs not to begin the work with hasty hand, but will wait a while and send out his heart’s line to measure how to begin upon his plan. All this thought Pandarus in his heart, and laid out his work prudently before he began it. 1071

But as for Troilus, no longer did he lay flat; quickly up on his bay steed to play the lion in the field, until woe was the Greek who met him that day! And in the town from that point on so goodly was his manner, and gained him so much favor, that everyone that looked on his face loved him. For he became the friendliest creature, the gentlest and the most generous as well, the most prudent, and in a word one of the best knights that lived. Dead was his cruel mocking, his proud deportment and distant manner, and each fault he exchanged for a virtue. And so let us leave Troilus for a season, who fares like a man sorely hurt, who is somewhat relieved of the aching of his wound, but is healed none the more for that and awaits, as a compliant patient, the instruction of him who seeks his cure. So thus he endures in anticipation of his opportunity. 1092

Here Ends The First Book.

(Book II)

O wind, O wind, the weather begins to clear, and carry our sail out of these black waves. For in this sea my boat labors so that my brain scarce can guide it. This sea I call the tempestuous despair that Troilus had been in, but now begin the first day of hope. O lady, my Clio, be my Muse and my aid from this point on to rhyme well this book until I have done it! I need here no other art but yours. 10

And so I excuse myself to every lover; for I compose this out of no strained sentiment of my own, but move it out of Latin into my own tongue. And so for all this work I desire neither thanks nor censure, but I pray you meekly not to blame me if any word might be lame, for just as my author said, I say the same. And though I speak of love without due feeling, it is no wonder, for it is nothing new; a blind man cannot judge colors well. 21

You know too that in a thousand years there is a change in the forms of speech, and words which then were valuable seem to us now wondrously trivial and strange; yet they spoke them so, and they prospered as well in love then as men do now. And in various ages and various lands, there have been various customs to win love. 28

And therefore if it should happen that any lover in this place would like to hear how the story describes Troilus’ coming into his lady’s favor, and thinks, “I would not procure love in that way,” or wonders at his speech or his doings, I do not know how it may be, but to me it is no wonder. Every person who goes to Rome does not go by the same road or the same means. In some lands all the sport would be spoiled if men in love acted as men do here, as, for instance, in public conduct or appearance, in formal visiting, or in speaking their speeches. Therefore people say each country has its own laws. And even in this place there

3 Clio. The Muse of History.
4 Author. His source.
are scarcely three who have spoken and acted quite alike in love; this way may please one man, and that may please another. 44

Yet there is nothing that may not have been said by one or another, just as one may choose to engrave in a tree, and another in a stone wall, as it may happen. But since I have begun, I will go on and follow my author as well as I can. 49

Here Ends The Prologue To The Second Book.

Here Begins The Second Book.

In May, the mother of glad months, when fresh flowers that winter killed come to life again, blue and white and red, and balmy breaths float over every meadow, when Phoebus\(^5\) from the white Bull\(^6\) lavishes his bright beams, it so happens, as I shall sing, on the third day of May, that Pandarus too, for all his wise speech, felt his share of love’s sharp arrows that, should he ever preach about love, often made his hue entirely green. 60

That day a reverse in love happened to him, for which he went to bed in woe and tossed and turned continually before day. When morning came the swallow Procne\(^7\) began to make her lament with a sorrowful song about how she came to be metamorphosed; and all the time Pandarus lay in bed half in a slumber until she made her chattering so near to him, telling how Tereus carried her sister away, so that with the noise he awoke, and called out and prepared to rise. He remembered his errand and his undertaking for Troilus; he knew that the moon was in a propitious place for his enterprise, and he made his plan and took his way immediately to his niece’s palace nearby. May Janus, god of entrance, guide him! 77

When he had arrived there he said to her servants, “Where is my lady?” They told him, and he entered and found her sitting with two other ladies in a paved parlor; the three of them were listening to a maiden read them the romance of the siege of Thebes\(^8\). 84

“Madame, God save you,” said Pandarus, “with your book and all your company!” 86

“Ah, uncle, welcome now heartily,” she said, and up she rose and took him quickly by the hand, and said, “Last night I dreamed about you three times—may it turn to good!” And with that word she set him down on a bench. 91

“Yes, niece, you shall prosper more for it all this year, God willing,” said Pandarus. “But I am sorry I have interrupted your listening to the book that you honor so. For God’s love, what does it say? Tell us now, is it about love? Let me learn some good from you.” 97

“Uncle,” she said, “your mistress is not here,” at which they all began to laugh; and then she said, “This romance that we are reading is about Thebes; and we have heard how King Laius died through Oedipus his son, and all those deeds; and we stopped here at these red letters, where the book tells how the bishop Amphiarías\(^9\) fell through the ground to hell.” 105

“I know about all that,” said Pandarus, “and the entire siege of Thebes and all the woe, for there is a poem written about it in twelve books. But leave all this alone, and tell me how you are. Take off your wimple and show your face bare; put away your book, rise up, and let us dance and do some honor to May.” 112

“Ah”, God forbid!” she said; “are you mad? Is that a life for a widow? You make me fearful of you, for you talk so wildly that you must be raving. It would fit me better to pray forever in a cave and read holy saints’ lives. Let maidens dance, and young married people.” 119

“And yet,” said Pandarus, “I could tell you something to make you dance.” 121

“Now, uncle dear, tell it for God’s love; is the siege over? I am so afraid of the Greeks that I could die for it.” 124

“No, no,” he said, “it is something better than five such bits of news.” 126

“Yes? Holy God,” she said, “what thing is it then? What could be better than five such? Ah, no, surely! For this entire world I cannot fancy what it should be. Some mockery, I believe! Unless you tell me yourself my wit is too thin to guess it. God help me so, I do not know what you mean.” 133

“But I pledge you my word, you never will know, from me” she said.135

“And why so, dear uncle? Why so?” 136

“By God,” he said, “I will tell you that now. It is because, if you knew it, there would be no prouder woman alive in

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\(^5\) Phoebus. The Sun.
\(^6\) White Bull. The zodiacal sign of Taurus.
\(^7\) Procne. Tereus, the husband of Procne, rapes her sister Philomela, who then with her sister avenges the crime by feeding Procne’s own son to him. As he attempts to kill both of them, Procne is turned into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale, and Tereus into a hoopoe. Ovid’s Metamorphoses. 6. 424-674.
\(^8\) Thebes. Probably a form of Statius’ Thebiad. Chaucer would likely have known the medieval French version, the Roman de Thebes.
\(^9\) Amphiarías. A soothsayer who was betrayed by his wife and foretold his own death, in this case he foretold the woes that would come from the siege.
the whole town of Troy, as I hope to be saved, I jest not.” 140

Then she began to wonder a thousand-fold more than ever, and cast down her eyes, for never since she was born did she desire to know a thing so much. But at last with a sigh she said, “Now, my dear uncle, I will not displease you, nor trouble you with asking.” So with many lively words and friendly tales and merry behavior they talked about this and that, and went far into many rare matters, merry or deep, as friends do when they have gathered together. At one point she came to ask him how Hector was doing, the bulwark of the town and scourge of the Greeks. 154

“Very well, I thank God,” answered Pandarus, “except that he has a little wound on his arm; and so does his lusty brother Troilus. He is a wise and worthy second Hector, full of all virtues, fidelity and nobility, prudence, honor, generosity and valor.” 161

“In good faith, uncle,” she said, “I am glad to hear that they are doing well. God save them both! Truly it is a great joy to see a king’s son doing well in arms, and to be of good traits as well. For great power and moral virtue are seldom seen in one person on this earth.” 168

“In good faith, that is the truth,” answered Pandarus. “But by my word the king has two sons, Hector and Troilus, who are as void of vices as any men under the sun. Their mightiness is so widely known. There is no need to tell anything of Hector; in all this world there is no better knight than he who is the source of all worthiness. And he has yet more virtue than strength, and many wise and worthy people know that. And the same praise can I give Troilus. So may God help me, I know not such another pair!” 182

“By God, that is true of Hector,” she said, “and of Troilus I can well believe the same; for men tell that he does so valiantly in arms day by day, and bears himself so gently here at home to every person, that he has all praise of those by whom it would be most dear to me to be praised.” 191

“You say well the truth,” said Pandarus, “for whoever had been with him yesterday might have wondered at Troilus. For there has never flown so thick a swarm of bees as the Greeks that fled from him. Throughout the field in every man’s ear was no cry but ‘There is Troilus!’ Here, there, he hunted them so hard there was nothing but Greek blood and Troilus! This one he hurt, that one he overthrew, and so it was wherever he went. He was their death and our shield and life. That day, so long as he grasped his bloody sword, none dared to stand against him. And add to all this, he is the friendliest man of great position that ever I saw in my life, to such as he thinks likely to deserve honor.” And with that word Pandarus took his leave: “I will go now.” 209

“No, then, I must be to blame,” she said then: “what ails you to be weary so soon, and especially of us women? What would you like? No, sit yourself down! By God, I have business to discuss with you, to discuss serious matters before you go.” 214

Then every person nearby who heard that began to withdraw a little, while the two of them had their say. And when their talk was ended, of her condition and her governance, Pandarus said, “Now it is time I went. But yet, I say, arise and let us dance, and cast your widow’s habit to the Devil! Why will you disfigure yourself in this way, since so glad a chance has befallen you?” 224

“Ah, well thought of!” she said. “For the love of God, am I not to know what you mean about this?” 226

“No, this thing needs leisure,” he said, “and it would grieve me much also if I told it and you took it the wrong way. It would be better for me to hold my tongue than say a truth that should be against your liking. For by the goddess Minerva, niece, and Jupiter, who makes the thunder ring, and the blessed Venus whom I serve, you are the woman living in this world whom, I believe truly, aside from passion, I best love and am most reluctant to grieve. And this you know yourself, I believe.” 238

“Grant mercy, in truth, dear uncle,” she said, “I have always felt your friendship. To no man am I so bound, and have repaid so little, as to you. By the grace of God, to the extent of my wit, I shall never knowingly offend you; and if I ever have, I will reform! But I beseech you, for the love of God, as you are he whom I most love and trust, set aside your distant manner of speech, and say to me your niece what you have in mind.” 249

And with that word then her uncle kissed her and said, “Gladly, sweet dear niece; and please take well what I shall say to you here.” With that she began to cast down her eyes, and Pandarus to cough a little, and he said, “You know, niece, that after all, however some men may please to compose their tales with subtle art, the tales are meant for some clear end. And since the force of every tale is in its end, and since this matter is so advantageous, why should I color it very much or draw it out at length to so faithful a friend as you?” And with that word he began to gaze on her face very intently and said, “Now may there be good grace on such a mirror!” 266

Then he thought, “If I compose my tale in hard terms, or make a long story, she will find rather little savor in it, and will believe I mean to deceive her. Tender wits fancy all things to be trickery which they cannot plainly understand. So I will strive to suit my tale to her wit.” 273

10 Minerva. Goddess of wisdom and patron of Troy. See 1.152-4. Jupiter (Jove) is the God of thunder and Venus, the Goddess of Love.
There is no text to display.
stars I had loved him or Achilles, Hector or any male creature, you would have had no mercy or moderation toward me, but would have held me in eternal reproach. Who may trust this false world? What, is this all the joy that I was to celebrate? Is this your counsel, and my blissful chance, and the prize that you promised me? Was your entire ornate speech told only for this end? O Lady Pallas, provide for me in this frightful case, for I am so astonished that I should die!” 427

And with that she began to sigh sorrowfully. “Ah, is there hope of nothing better?” said Pandarus. “Before God, I shall come here no more this week, as I am mistrusted in this way. I see well that you care little for him or me or for our death. Alas, what a woeful wretch I am! If he should still live, what happens to me would not matter. O cruel our death. Alas, what a woeful wretch I am! If he should come here no more this week, as I am mistrusted in

Up he started and dashed away, until Criseyde caught him by the hem of his robe. She was the most fearful creature that ever was, and very nearly died for fear when she heard him and saw his sorrowful earnestness. And seeing nothing amiss in his prayer, and the greater harm that might occur, she began to melt and sorely to fear, and thought, “Misfortunes happen every day for love, and in such cases men are cruel and wicked against themselves. If this man were to slay himself here in my presence, it will be no comfort! What people would think about it I cannot say; I must play very cautiously.” 462

So she cried three times with a sorrowful sigh, “Ah, Lord, what an unhappy fate has befallen me! For my well-being lies in jeopardy, and my uncle’s life is in the balance. But with God’s help I shall so act as to save my honor and his life. Of two harms the less is to be chosen. I had rather receive your friend kindly, in all honor, than lose my uncle’s life! You say you require nothing else of me?” And with that she ceased weeping. 473

“No, in truth, my own dear niece,” he said. 474

“Well,” she said; “then I will undergo the hardship. I will constrain my heart against my desire, except that I will not delude him with false hopes. I do not know how to love a man, and cannot against my will, but otherwise I will strive from day to day to please him, except in what might harm

my honor. To such a thing I would not once have said no, except for my fanciful fear; and now, if the cause should cease, so too will the malady cease. But here I make an protest that, if you go deeper into this thing, certainly for no saving of you, even if you both die the death, and even if all the world turn against me on one day, I will never have more pity on him.” 489

“I agree, by my word,” said Pandarus. “But can I truly trust to you that you will truly hold to me the thing which you have promised me here?” 493

“Yes, without a doubt,” she said, “my dear uncle.” 494

“So that I shall have no cause in this matter to complain, or to preach to you again?” 496

“Why no, by God! What need of more words?” 497

Then they fell into other cheerful talk, until at the last, “Oh, good uncle!” she said, “for the love of Him that made us both, tell me how you knew first of his woe. Does any man know of it but you two?” 502

“No,” he replied. 502

“Can he talk well on love? Tell me, I pray, that I may prepare myself better.” 504

Then Pandarus began to smile a little, and said, “By my word, I will tell you. The other day, not a long while ago, he and I were in the palace garden by a fountain half the day, speaking of a means by which we might repulse the Greeks. Soon after that we began to leap, and to throw the dart, until at last he said he would sleep, and laid himself down on the grass, and I began to roam back and forth at a distance, until as I walked I heard how he began to groan so woefully, and I stalked up to him very softly from behind. As I can call to memory, he made his complaint to Love in this way: he said, ‘Lord, have pity upon my pain. Though I have been a rebel, mea culpa12, I repent. O God, who at your disposal directs the end of every person by just providence, accept my humble confession favorably, and send me such pence as pleases you, but by your kindness shield me from despair which may part my soul from you. For surely, Lord, so sorely has she that stood there in black wounded me with the looking of her eyes that it has plummeted to the bottom of my heart, through which I know that I shall die. The worst is that I may not reveal it; and coals grow hotter when they are covered with pale ashes.’” 539

“With that he smote down his head and began to mutter I know not what. I stole away and made as though I had known nothing, and then came again, stood by him and

11 Pallas. Athena, i.e., Minerva.
12 Furies. The three Furies (Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megera), agents of vengeance, are called upon in the opening passage of Book I.
said, ‘Awake, you sleep far too long! It seems not that you pine for love, since you sleep so that none can wake you! Who ever saw so dull a fellow before?’ ‘Yes, friend,’ he said, ‘let your head ache for love, and let me live as I may.’ Pale and listless for love as he was, he put on as fresh a look as if he should have led a new dance. 553

“This went on until it happened, only this other day, that I came strolling all alone into his chamber and found him lying upon his bed. I never heard a man groan so sorely. What it was that he moaned out I do not know, for as I was coming suddenly he left his complaint, at which I caught a suspicion and came nearer and found that he was weeping sorely. So God save me as I never felt more pity for anything! 567

“For the love of the God that made us, make him such cheer that he and I may save our lives. Now have I fully confessed my heart to you. You know that my intent is pure; take heed of it. And now I pray God bless you who without a net have caught such game! If you are wise as you are fair, well is the ruby set in the ring. Never were two so well brought together as you, and God grant us to see that hour when you are all wholly his as he is yours! 586

“Aha!” she said; “no, I spoke nothing of that! God help me so, you are spoiling everything.” 590

“Ah, mercy, dear niece!” he answered hastily. “Whatsoever I spoke, I swear by steel-helmeted Mars I meant no ill. Now be not angered, my dear niece, my own blood.” 594

“Well, well!” she said, “you are forgiven.” 595

With that he took his leave and went home--Lord, how happy and content! Criseyde delayed not but arose and went straight into her inner-chamber, where she sat her down as still as a stone, and turned over in her mind every word that he had said as it came back to her, and was somewhat stupefied for the very newness of it all. But when she had fully considered, she found nothing perilous, why she ought to fear; for it is possible that a man may love a woman until his heart splits, and she not love in return unless she wishes. 609

Thus as she sat alone and thought, a clamor arose about a skirmish without the walls, and men cried in the street, “See, Troilus has right now put the Greek troop to flight!” At that all her household began to shout, “Ah, let us go and see! Cast up the gates! He will ride through this street to the palace, there is no other way from the Gate of Dardanus, where the chain is open!” 618

Then he and all his men came, riding at an easy pace in two troops, just as his happy day would have it, which, some say, happens by necessity and may not be disturbed. Troilus, armed richly except for his head, sat on his bay steed which was wounded and bled, and for this he rode at a soft pace. But Mars, the god of battle, would not be so knightly a sight to look upon as he! So like a man of arms and a knight he was, so full of high prowess. For he had both the frame and the strength as well as the hardihood to do those deeds and to see him in all his gear, so fresh and young and powerful, it was heaven to look on him. His helmet, hanging behind his back by a lace, was hewn open in twenty places; his shield was dashed to pieces by maces and swords, and one might see in it many arrows that had pierced the horn and sinew and hide of it. And ever the people cried, “Here comes our hero, next to his brother the mainstay of Troy!” At this, when he heard the people cry out over him, he grew a little red for shame, so that it was a noble sport to see how soberly he cast down his eyes. 648

Criseyde all the time took in his look, and let it softly sink into her heart, until she said, “Who has given me a potion?” At her own thought she grew all red, remembering in her own mind, “Lo, this is he who my uncle swears is sure to die unless I have mercy and pity.” And, abashed only with the thought, she withdrew her head, and that quickly, while he and all the people passed by. She cast over in her mind his excellent prowess, his station, his renown, his wisdom, his form, and his nobility; but what most won her was that his distress was all for her, and she thought it would be a pity to slay such a one, if his intent were faithful. 665

Now some malicious creature may prattle thus, “This was a sudden love! How might it be that she so readily loved Troilus even at the first sight?” Yes, truly! Whosoever says so, may he never flourish! Everything must have a beginning, before it can be full-grown. I say not that she so suddenly as this gave him her heart, but only that she began to incline to like him at first, and I have told you why; and after that his manhood and his longing for her allowed love to undermine her heart. Therefore by degrees and by good service he gained her love, and not suddenly. And also blessed Venus was just then sitting in her seventh house of heaven, well placed among the stars and with benign aspects, to help poor Troilus out of his woe; and to tell the truth she had been rather favorable to him at his nativity. The better he fared for that, God knows! 686

Now let us for a moment leave Troilus riding on, and turn quickly to Criseyde, who sat alone with bent head and debated what resolution she should take at last, if her uncle should not neglect to press Troilus upon her. And Lord, how she argued back and forth in her heart, now warm and
now cold, and how she folded and unfolded what would be best to do and what to eschew! I shall write some part of what she thought, as my author sets it down. 700

She thought first how well she knew Troilus’ person by sight, and also his nobleness; she thought, “It will not do to grant him love, yet it would be an honor to me in my station, and also for his well-being, to have to do with such a lord in honest mirth. And well I know he is my king’s son, and perhaps, since he so joys to see me, if I should utterly flee his company he might bear a grudge against me, through which I might stand in a worse plight than ever. Now would I be wise to procure needless hate for myself where I may stand in favor? There is moderation in all things, I believe. Though a man forbid drunkenness, I believe he will not demand that every creature be drinkless forever. Since I know his distress is for me, I ought not to despise him for that, if it is so that his intent is good. I know his virtues of long time past, and that he is not a fool, and that men say he is no braggart and is too wise for so mean a vice. 725

“And besides, I will never make so much of him that he shall have any cause to boast of me: he shall never hold me in such a bond. Now suppose the worst, that some may guess that he loves me—what dishonor to me is this? Can I hinder him? All the time men love women without their permission: when they are weary of it, let them cease! I know well he is worthy to have the best of women in this world, saving her honor, for except only Hector he is out and out the worthiest knight. And yet now his life lies in my power! Such is love, and my good fortune. 742

“It is no wonder that he should love me; so God help me, though I wish not any man knew of my thought, I am one of the fairest and kindest women here, and so men say throughout this town. What wonder is it, though, that he take delight in me? Thank God, I am mistress to myself, well at ease for one in my station, rather young, and at liberty in a pleasant pasture, untroubled by jealousy or such strife. No husband can say to me ‘Checkmate!’ All husbands are either full of jealousy, or masterful, or love to have new loves. What shall I do? To what end should I live as I am living? Shall I not love if I wish? What, I am not a nun; and though I give my heart to this worthy knight, if I keep my honor and my fair reputation, by rights it can be no shame to me.” 763

But just as in changeful March the sun shines bright, and then a cloud is driven by the wind and overspreads the sun for a season, so too a cloudy thought passed through her soul and overspread all her bright thoughts, until she very nearly dropped with fear. 770

That thought was, “Since I am free, alas, shall I now love, and jeopardize my security and enslave my liberty? How did I dare think of such a folly! Can I not see in other people in love their joy full of fear, their servitude, their pain? No woman is in love without cause to lament it. Love is of itself the most stormy life that ever was, ever is some distrust in love, or foolish strife, some cloud is over that sun. And when we wretched loving women are in trouble, all we can do is sit thinking and weeping; all the revenge we can have is to drink up our own woe. And wicked tongues are so ready to speak harm of us! And men are so faithless that, as soon as their desire is satisfied, love ceases, and onward they go to a new love! Harm done is done, whoever may pity it. Though these men at first tear themselves for love, a sharp beginning often has a weak end. 784

“How many times it has been known, the treachery done to women! What such love is for, I cannot see; or what becomes of it when it is gone. No creature will break his shins against it! That which at first was nothing turns into nothing again. And then, if I give myself to love, how anxious and busy I must be to cajole those who prattle and gossip about love, and to silence them, that they say nothing harmful about me; for though there would be no cause, yet it seems to them that all is for some harmful purpose when people please their friends. Who can stop every wicked tongue, or the reverberation of ringing bells?” 805

And then her thoughts began to clear, and she said, “He who undertakes nothing, achieves nothing.” And then with the next thought her heart began to quake; hope went to sleep and fear awoke; now she was hot, now cold. Thus between the two, she rose up, and went out for some recreation. 812

Down the stairs she went into the garden with her three nieces, and up and down they took many turns in their play, she and Phlexippe, Tarbe and Antigone, that it was a joy to look on them, and a great throng of her other women followed her in the garden all around. The yard was large, and the paths were all bordered, and well shaded with green boughs full of blossoms, and newly furnished with benches and sanded along all the paths; in which she walked arm in arm between her nieces; until Antigone the fair began to sing a Trojan song, so that it was a heaven to hear her clear voice. 826

“O Love, “to whom I have ever been and shall be humble subject, true in my intent as I best can be, to you, Lord, for evermore I give my heart’s joy in tribute. For never has your grace yet sent to any creature such a blissful cause as I have to live her life in all security and joy. Blessed God, you have so well bestowed me in love that no living creature could imagine how it could be better; without jealousy or strife I love one of the most devoted to good service that ever was, without weariness or pretending, nor stained with the least spot. He is the well of worthiness, ground of fidelity, mirror of excellence, Apollo in wit, rock of security, root of virtue, discoverer and head of delight, through whom all sorrow has died in me; he loves me best, and so love
I him. Now may blessings be upon him wherever he
may be! 847

"Whom should I thank but you, God of Love, for
all this bliss in which I bathe? And thanks to you that
I myself love. This life that I am in is the perfect life,
to drive away all types of sin and vice, and so to
strive after virtue that day by day my will better
itself. 854

"Whoever says that to love is a fault or servitude is
either envious or downright foolish, or so wicked that
he is unable to love. Such people I believe defame
Love as know nothing of him; they speak of him, but
they never bent his bow. What, is the sun any worse
because a man on account of the feebleness of his
eyes cannot endure to look on it? Or is Love any
worse because wretches cry out against him? He who
can endure no sorrow is not worthy of happiness; and
therefore let him who has a head of glass beware of
the flying stones in battle. But I with all my heart and
strength will love to the end my dear heart, my own
knight; upon whom my heart has grown so firm, and
his on me, that they will last forever. Though I feared
at first to begin to love him, now I know well there is
no peril in it." 875

There she ceased her song, and at that point Criseyde
said, "Now, niece, who made this song?" 878

"Madame," answered Antigone, "the kindest maiden
of great status in the town of Troy, one who led her life in the
greatest bliss and honor." 882

"In truth," said Criseyde, and began to sigh, "so it seems
by her song. Lord, is there such happiness among these
lovers as they describe it so fairly?" 886

"Yes, surely," Antigone the white said freshly. "All the
people who have been or are alive cannot describe the bliss
of love. But do you judge that the perfect bliss of love is
known to every wretch? No, no! They think that any hot
desire is love; away with them, they know nothing of it!
One must ask saints if it is fair in heaven and fiends if it is
foul in hell." Why? Because they can tell. 896

Criseyde answered her nothing to this, but said, "In faith,
will be night directly." Yet every word that she had heard
from her she began to imprint firmly in her heart, and from
that point on love terrified her less than it did at first, and
began to sink into her heart, until she was almost able to
convert. 903

The glory of the day, the eye of heaven, the foe of night
(by all this I mean the sun) had run his day's course and
was fast making its way west and dropping downward; and
white things began to grow murky in the dimness, and the
stars to appear, when Criseyde and her assembly went in
together. So when she was ready to go to rest, and all but
her women had left the chamber, she said that she would
sleep, and they brought her soon to bed. When all was
hushed she lay still and thought of all of this; I need not
rehearse to you the manner and the way, for you are wise.
Upon a green cedar, under the chamber-wall where she lay,
a nightingale sang rather loud in the face of the bright
moon; by chance, in his bird's manner, a song of love that
made his heart glad. She listened to him so long that at last
dead sleep took her. 924

And as she slept, soon she dreamed how an eagle with
feathers as white as bone set his long claws under her
breast, and then rent out her heart and put his own heart into
her breast, at which she felt no fear or pain; and so, with
heart left for heart, he flew forth. 931

Now we will let her sleep and hold forth our tale of
Troilus, who has ridden to the palace from the skirmish I
told of. He sat in his chamber waiting, until two or three of
his messengers had gone for Pandarus; and they searched so
diligently that at last they found and brought him. Pandarus
came bounding in and began to jest. "Who has been well
drubbed today with swords and sling-stones but Troilus?
Who is all heated up? Lord, but you sweat! But arise," he
said, "and let us dine and go to rest." 944

"We will do as you please," answered Troilus. 945

With all the pleasant haste they could muster, they
hastened from supper to bed, and every other person
departed from the door and went away. And now Troilus,
whose very heart seemed to bleed for woe until he heard
news, said, "Friend, now am I to weep or sing?" 952

"Be still," said Pandarus, "and let me sleep, and put on
your night-cap! Your needs are taken care of; now choose if
you will dance or sing or leap! In a few words, you are to
trust in me. Sir, my niece will do well by you and love you
best, by God and by my faith, unless sloth and lack of
pursuit change things! So far have I begun your work,
in that this morning I gained for you her love, as of a friend,
and has she pledged her faith to this. At all events, a foot of
your sorrow is cut off!" Why should I make a longer speech
of it? He told it all to him as you have already heard. 966

Just as flowers, closed through the cold of night, and bent
low on their stalks, straighten themselves in the bright
sunshine, and stand spreading and blooming in rows, so did
Troilus revive, and threw up his eyes and said, "O beloved
Venus, praised be your might and grace!" And to Pandarus
he held up both his hands and said, "Lord, all that I have is
yours. I am entirely whole now; my bonds are broken.
Whoever should give me a thousand Troys one after
another would not gladden me so; oh my heart, it speaks so
for joy, surely it will fly in pieces! But how shall I do?
Lord, how shall I live? When shall I next see my dear
heart? How can this long time be driven away until you go
to her from me again? You may answer, 'Wait, wait!' but
he that is hanging by the neck waits in great distress!'" 987
“Easily now, for the love of Mars!” cried Pandarus.
“There is a time for everything. Wait until the night is gone, for as sure as you are lying here by me, with God as my witness, I will be there at prime." And therefore, do just as I tell you, or lay your charge on someone else. God knows, I have always been ready to serve you; up to the present night I have never been false to you, but have done all your pleasure to the extent of my wit, and always will. Do now as I say and bear yourself with reason: if you will not, you may blame yourself for your troubles; they are not my doing. I know well that you are wiser than I by a thousandfold; but if I were you, may God help me so, I would this moment write her a letter with my own hand in which I should tell her how poorly I fared, and beg her pity. Help yourself now, and neglect not out of sloth. 1008

“I myself will go to her with the letter, and when you know that I am with her, mount yourself a war-horse, yes, in all your best gear, and ride by the place as if it were for some other purpose; and if I may contrive it, you shall find us sitting at some window looking into the street. If you wish, you may then greet us, but see that you look most upon me, and for your life beware of delaying at all, God shield us! Ride on your way and control yourself! When you are gone, we shall speak about you somewhat, I believe, to make your ears glow! 1022

“As to your letter, you are wise enough to know how to write it. I know you will not write haughtily nor put on airs; or write it too formally or artfully. And blot it with your tears a little. And if you think of some pleasant tender word, though it may be a good one, do not repeat it too often; for if the best harpist alive, with the best-sounding and merriest harp and the best-pointed nails, should touch ever one string and ever play one tune, every creature’s ears would grow dull to hear his glee and his sounding strokes. And see that you jumble no discordant thing together, as thus, to use terms of medicine among love-terms. Let your matter have always its proper form, and let it be ever consistent with the subject. If a painter should paint a fish with ass’s feet, and give it the head of an ape, it would not agree with itself; it would be merely a jest.” 1043

This counsel pleased Troilus well, but like a timid lover he said, “Alas! dear brother Pandarus, I am ashamed to write lest in my simplicity I might speak amiss, or in anger she might reject my letter. If she did, nothing could save me from death.” 1050

“If you will,” answered Pandarus, “do as I say and let me go with it. By the Lord that formed the east and the west, I hope soon to bring an answer right from her hand. If you will not do it, let it be then, and sorry be his life that ever again tries to help you against your will!” 1057

Troilus said, “In God’s name, I agree; I will arise and write as you wish. And I devoutly pray to blessed God to help the letter I shall write, and the sending of it. And you, Minerva the white, please give me wit to devise the letter!” And with that he sat himself down and wrote in this way.

First, he called her his true lady, his heart’s life, his joy, the physician of his sorrow, his bliss, and by all those other terms for which in such cases these lovers search. Then very humbly he recommended himself to her grace. But to tell just how he did so would be to spend too much time. And then lowly he prayed her not to be angered though in his folly he was bold enough to write to her, and he said that love caused him to do so, and otherwise he could not live, and piteously he cried for her mercy. 1076

Then he said—and lied quite openly— that he was worth little, and could do even less than his small reputation, and that she was to excuse him for his lack of wit. He told how he feared her, at all points accused his own unworthiness, and told his woe, which was infinite forever and ever, and how he would always maintain his faith. Then he read it over, and folded the letter. With salt tears he bathed the ruby in his signet and set it hastily upon the wax, and a thousand times before he left off he kissed the letter that he was sealing, and said, “Letter, a blissful destiny is ordained for you: my lady shall see you.” 1092

Early the next morning Pandarus took the letter and headed to his niece’s palace; and soon he said that it was past prime, and he began to jest and said, “Surely, my heart, it is so fresh that I can never sleep through a May morning, even if it may hurt sorely. I have a jolly woe and a pleasant sorrow!” 1099

When Criseyde heard her uncle, with her heart full of timidity and desire to hear why he had come, she answered, “Now on your faith, my dear uncle, what sort of wind guides you here? Tell us of your jolly woe and your penance. How far have you gone through love’s dance?” 1106

“By God!” he said, “I am always last in the dance.” And she laughed as if her heart would burst. Pandarus said, “See that you always find a joke at my expense! But now please listen. There has but now come into town a stranger, a Greek spy, who has news to tell, about which I have brought you news. Let us go into the garden, and you shall hear a long sermon about this privately.” 1115

With that they went arm in arm down from the chamber into the garden, and when they had gone so far that no man could hear what he spoke, he plucked out the letter and said, “Lo, he who is wholly yours commends himself humbly to your favor and sends you this letter by me; read it advisedly when you have time, and provide some worthy answer, or, to speak plainly, may God help me, he cannot live longer in such pains.” 1127

14 Prime. Early in the day, about 9 a.m.
She stood still then in fear, and took it not, but all her modest expression began to grow more firm, and she said, "Bring me no letter or petition that concerns such matters, for the love of God; and also, dear uncle, I pray you have more regard for my condition than to his desires. What more can I say? Consider now if this is reasonable, and do not hesitate to admit the truth, for the purpose of gaining favor or delaying matters. Would it be agreeable to my condition to take this letter, or so to have compassion on him so as to bring harm or reproach on myself? Carry it back, in the name of Him in whom you believe!" 1141

Pandarus began to stare upon her, and said, "Now this is the greatest wonder that ever I saw. Set aside these foolish doings! May I be smitten to death by lightning if I would bring you a letter to harm you, for the entire city that spreads yonder! Why do you wish to take it this way? But you act, very nearly all of you, such that he who most desires to serve you, you care the least what happens to him, or whether he lives or dies. But for all that I ever may deserve, refuse it not," and with that word he seized her and thrust the letter down into her bosom, saying, "Now cast it away, and as she went in to dine. But Pandarus, who stood in a reverie, she caught by the hood, before he was aware, and said, "You were caught before you knew it."

"I can wait until they are gone," she said, and began to smile. "Uncle, I pray you provide such an answer as you will, for in truth I will write no letter." 1161

"No?" he said. "Then I will, if you will dictate." 1162

At this she laughed and said, "Let us go and dine." 1163

He began to jest at himself, and said, "Niece, I am pining so for love that every second day I fast," and he so flung out his best jokes that she thought she should die of laughing at his mad folly. 1169

When she had come into the hall, "Now, uncle," she said, "we will dine right now," and called some of her women and went straight to her chamber; and among her other matters this doubtless was one: to read the letter in private. She considered every line and every word, and found no defect, and thought in truth he knew good manners. She put it away, and as she went in to dine. But Pandarus, who stood in a reverie, she caught by the hood, before he was aware, and said, "You were caught before you knew it." 1182

"I grant it," he said; "do as you wish." 1183

Then they washed and sat down to eat. After dinner and noon were passed, Pandarus slyly drew toward the window on the street and said, "Niece, who has decorated that house so that stands across from us?" 1188

"Which house?" she said, and came to look and told whose it was; and then they fell into talk of small matters, and both sat down in the window. 1192

When Pandarus saw his time and that her people were gone, "Now, niece," he said, "tell me. How do you like the letter? Does he know how to write one? By my faith, I do not know!" 1197

At this she grew all rosy, and began to hum and said, "I believe so." 1199

"Requite him well, for the love of God," he said, "and to repay you I myself will sew up your letter." Then he held up his hands and fell on his knee. "Now, good niece, however small it might be, give me the task to sew and fold it." 1204

"Yes," she said, "for I am such a writer! And besides I know not what I should say to him." 1206

"No, niece," he said, "say not so! At the least I beg you to thank him for his good-will, and let him not die. Now for the love of me, refuse not my prayer this once!" 1211

"May God grant that all will be well!" she said. "So God help me, this is the first letter that I ever wrote, yes, a whole letter or even a part. And she went alone into a closet to consider it more carefully, and began to unfetter her heart a little out of the prison of Disdain, and sat herself down and began to write; and I mean to tell the substance in brief, so far as I can understand. She thanked him for all his good intent toward her, but she could not mislead him with false promises, nor bind herself to love; yet she would gladly ease his heart by kindness as of a sister. She closed the letter and went back to Pandarus where he sat looking into the street; and down she sat by him on a gold-embroidered cushion upon a stone of jasper, and said, "So may the great God help me, I never did a thing with more trouble than to write this, to which you constrain me!" Then she gave it to him. 1233

He thanked her and said, "God knows, from a reluctant beginning comes often a good ending. And, my niece Criseyde, by yonder heavens, he has reason to be glad that you are now hard to win, for men say, 'Light impressions are ready for flight.' 1239

"But it is nearly too long that you have played the tyrant, and your heart has been hard to engrave. Now stop this, and hang onto it no longer (even though you keep the appearance of reserve), and hasten to grant him some joy; for trust me, hardness that is maintained too long very often causes pain to turn to anger." 1246

At the very time they were conversing in this way, just at the end of the street came Troilus riding slowly in his troop of ten, and passed along toward them as his way was to his...
palace. Pandarus spied him and said, “Niece, see who comes riding this way. Ah, don’t fly away! He sees us, no doubt, and he might think that you shun him!” 1255

“No, no!” she said, and grew ruddy like a rose. With that Troilus humbly greeted her with a timid look, often changed color, and cast a look up courteously, nodded to Pandarus and passed on his way. I leave it to you if he sat well on his horse and was pleasing to look on that time and like a manly knight. Why should I be tedious, or tell about his accoutrements? In a word, Criseyde, who saw all, liked all, his person, his array, his look, his expression, his goodly manner and his nobleness; and liked them so well that never did she have such pity for his pain. However hard she had been before this, I hope to God she has now caught a thorn that she will not pull out in the next week. May God send her more such thorns to pluck at! 1274

Pandarus, as he stood by, felt the iron hot and began to strike. “Niece, I pray you heartily,” he said, “tell me what I ask you. A woman that should be to blame for his death, without guilt of his but only for her lack of pity--would it be well done?” 1279

“No, by my word,” she said. 1279

“So God help me,” he said, “you say the truth now! You feel yourself that I do not lie. See, how nobly he rides yonder!” 1284

“Yes,” she said, “so he does.” 1284

“Well, as I have told you three times,” he said, “let go of your false shame and your folly, and ease his heart by speaking with him. Do not let silly scruples hurt you both.” 1288

But here was a laborious task for Pandarus! Considering all things, it might not be. And why plead for speech with him? It would be too soon to grant him such a privilege yet. Her full intent, as she said, was to love him unknown to any, if she could, and reward him only with the sight of her. 1295

But Pandarus thought, “It shall not be so. If I have any power, she shall not hold this caprice for two years!” But why make a long explanation of it? He must agree to this resolution for the time; and when it drew toward night, and all was well, he took his leave, and rushed homeward, his heart bounding for joy. He found Troilus alone in bed, lying, as do these lovers, in a trance between hope and dark despair. Pandarus came in singing, as if to say, “I bring you something! Who is this buried in his bed so early?” he cried. 1311

“It is I, friend,” replied the other. 1311

“Who? Troilus? No, so help me the moon,” said Pandarus, “you must arise and see a charm that was sent to you only now and can heal you of your attack, if you do your job and help yourself.” 1316

“Yes, through the mighty blessing of God,” said Troilus. 1317

Then Pandarus handed him the letter, and said, “By God, God has helped us! Start a light here, and look on all these black marks!” 1320

Lord, how often did the heart of Troilus rejoice and quake while he read the letter, as the words gave him hope and fear! But at last he took for the best what she wrote him; for he saw something on which his heart might rest, though she covered her words under a shield. Thus he held to the better side of it, so that, what with his own hope and Pandarus’ promises, he at least gave up his great woe. 1330

But, as we may every day see ourselves, the more wood or coal there is, the greater the fire; even so, as hope of anything increases, so does the longing. Or just as an oak grows out of a little shoot, so through this letter began desire to increase and burn him. Therefore, I say, day and night hope kindled in Troilus more desire than he had before, and he did all he could to press on, by Pandarus’ tutoring, and to write to her of his sore sorrows. From day to day he did not let opportunity grow cool, but sent some note or message by Pandarus, and did his other duties that are required of a lover in such case. Depending on how the dice turned up for him, he rejoiced or said “Alas!” And at all times he pursued his fortunes, and, according to the answers that he received, his days were sorry or joyous. To Pandarus was always his recourse, and piteously he lamented to him and asked counsel or aid. Pandarus, who saw his mad torment, grew nearly dead for pity, and searched with all his heart to slay some of his woe immediately. 1358

“Lord and friend and brother dear,” he would say, “may God know that your pain is pain to me. Yet if you will only lighten this woeful expression, by my word, before two days are gone I shall arrange it that you shall come to a certain place where you can yourself pray her for favor. And certainly, I know not if you know it, but those who are expert in love say that one of the things that further a man most is to have a good opportunity himself to press his suit and a safe place to reveal his woe. In a kind heart it must kindle some pity to see and hear the guiltless in pain. Perhaps you are thinking, ‘Though it may be so that Nature may make her begin to have a sort of pity on me, Disdain will say, ‘No you shall never win me!’ Her heart’s spirit so rules her within that though she may bend, yet she grows firmly on her root. What can all this do to cure me?’ 1379

“Think, on the other side, that, when the sturdy oak has been hacked at for a long time and at last receives the lucky
stroke which fells it, its great mass causes it to come down all at once, like a rock or a mill-stone; for heavy things come down with a swifter force than light things do. The reed that bows with every blast will arise again lightly when the wind ceases, but the oak will not when it is overthrown. But I need not prove to you by examples forever. A man shall rejoice more over a great enterprise achieved well and enduringly, the longer he has been about it. 1393

“But now, Troilus, if you please, tell me something that I shall ask you: which of your brothers do you love best in your very heart of hearts?” 1397

“Surely, my brother Deiphobus,” said Troilus. 1398

“But twice twelve hours,” said Pandarus, “he shall relieve you without knowing it himself. Now leave me alone to work as I can.” 1401

To Deiphobus he went then, who had ever been his good lord and friend, and whom he loved more than any, except Troilus; and, to be brief, he said, “I pray you be friend to a cause that concerns me.” 1407

“Yes,” he said. 1424

“Ah,” Deiphobus answered him, “is not this lady Criseyde, whom you speak of as if she were a stranger, my friend?” 1424

“Yes,” he said. 1424

“Then in truth,” replied Deiphobus, “there is no more need of this, for trust well that I will be her champion with shaft and spear, and I care not if all her foes were to hear it. But you know about this matter: tell me how it may be done to most avail.” 1430

“Deiphobus, who was by nature always ready for all acts of honor and generosity, answered, “It shall be done. And I can think of still a greater help. What would you say if I should send for Helen to speak about this? I believe that is the best, for she can lead Paris as it pleases her. As to my Lord Hector, my brother, there is no need to pray him to be her friend, for once and again I have heard him speak such honor of Criseyde that he could say no more; she stands so well with him, there is no need to crave his help more, for he will be just as we would have him. But please speak also to Troilus on my behalf, and pray him to dine with us.” 1458

“Sir, all this shall be done,” Pandarus said, and took his leave, and never stopped until as straight as a line he came to his niece’s house. 1461

He found her having just arisen from her meal, and he sat himself down and spoke in this manner. “Lord, how I have run! See you not how I sweat, niece? Yet I know not whether you are more grateful to me for it! Are you not aware how false Polyphetes is about to go to law again and bring you new trouble?” 1469

“If? No!” she said, and changed color. “Why does he go about attempting to harass and injure me more? Alack, what shall I do? I should not care for him, if it were not for Antenor and Aeneas, who stand as his friends in these things. But for the love of heaven, no matter, let him have all he is after at once; I have enough for ourselves without that.” 1478

“No,” said Pandarus, “it shall never be so, for I have been just now with Deiphobus and Hector and others of my lords, and in short, set each of them against him; so that, as I hope to be saved, he shall never prevail against you, howsoever he may try.” 1484

As they were considering what was best for them to do, Deiphobus by his courtesy came himself to pray her to bear him company in the morning at dinner, to which she assented in goodly manner. He thanked her and went his way; and after him Pandarus departed quietly to Troilus, and told him word for word how he had hoodwinked Deiphobus. “Now is your time; bear yourself well tomorrow, and all is won. Now speak, now pray, now bewail piteously; do not neglect it for false shame or fear or sloth. Sometimes a man must tell his troubles for himself. Believe this, and she will show you pity; you shall, in truth, be saved by your faith. But I see clearly you are afraid at this moment, and I lay a wager I can tell why. You are thinking, ‘How can I do all this? By my very look people will see that it is for her love that I fare so poorly. I would rather die for sorrow unknown than that.’ Do not think so, do no such folly; for I have just found a cunning device so that people will not need to see your face. You shall go directly for overnight to Deiphobus’ house, as it were to amuse yourself and drive away your malady (for indeed
you seem sick. Soon after you are to go to bed and say you can no longer endure to be up; and lie right there and await your fortune. Say that your fever usually takes you about that time and lasts until the morning; and let us see now how well you can pretend, for he that is in sorrow is sick. Go now, farewell! And now before Venus I trust that if you hold to this purpose, she shall fully confirm her favor to you.” 1526

“In faith,” said Troilus, “you need not counsel me to pretend that I am sick, for I am sick in earnest, close to death.” 1530

“You will bewail yourself better, then,” said Pandarus, “and have less need to counterfeit. He who men see sweat they will readily deem hot! Hold close to your tryst15, and I will drive the deer to your bow.” 1535

With that he quietly took his leave; Troilus went straight to his palace, gladder than ever before in his life, and took Pandarus’ advice and went at night to Deiphobus’ house. What need to tell you of all the comfort that his brother offered him, or of his pretended attack, or his sick look, how they loaded him with covers when he was laid in bed, and how they tried to cheer him? All their efforts were for nothing; he held to the course that Pandarus had counseled him. But it is known that, before Troilus was in bed, Deiphobus had prayed him to be a friend and helper to Criseyde. God knows he agreed then to be her true friend with all his might; there was as much need to pray him for that as to bid a madman to run wild! 1554

The morning came and the time of dinner approached; the fair queen Helen was to be an hour after prime with Deiphobus, whom she would not fail, but came to dinner quietly as his sister, suspecting nothing. But God and Pandarus knew what this was all about! Criseyde came also, entirely innocent of this, and Antigone and her sister Tarbe as well. Now let us flee wordiness, for the love of God, and go speedily to the outcome, without a longer tale of how all these people were assembled there, and let us pass over their salutations. 1568

Deiphobus honored them all and fed them with all that might please them; but at all times his refrain was, “Alas! My good brother Troilus still lies sick,” and at that he would sigh and then he would strive to make good cheer and to entertain them as best he could. Helen also lamented his sickness so heartily that it was pitiful to hear; and every person for the moment became a doctor, and said, “Thus and thus men cure people,” “This or that charm I will tell you.” And the whole time one sat there who said nothing, but thought, “Yet I could be his doctor better than any!” 1582

After bewailing him they began to praise him, as people will do still, when someone has begun to praise a man; then the rest fell to and exalted him a thousand-fold higher than the sun: “There are few lords who are and can do as much as he.” And Pandarus did not forget to confirm all they could say in his praise. All this Criseyde heard well enough, and laid it up in her memory, while her heart bounded within her; and who would not glorify her who had the power of life and death over such a knight? But I pass over all this, lest I keep you too long; all that I tell is only for the outcome of it. 1596

When the time came to rise from dinner, they talked of this and that for a season. But shortly Pandarus broke off this speech and said, “Will you speak now, as I prayed you, of the necessities of Criseyde?” 1603

Helen, who was holding her by the hand, first spoke; “Let us do so quickly,” she said, looking kindly upon Criseyde; “ill luck and short life to him who would harm her, and to me if I do not carry out all I can to make him regret it!” 1610

“Please tell your niece’s case,” said Deiphobus to Pandarus, “for you can tell it best.” 1612

“My lords and ladies,” he began, “it stands thus--why should I delay you by a longer tale?” And then he rang them out an account of her foe, Polyphetes by name, so villainous that one would spit on it! At this each one exclaimed more indignantly than the last, and all cursed Polyphetes: “Such a man should be hanged, though he may be my own brother, and so he shall be without fail!” Why should I delay longer over this account? They all at once fully promised to be her friends in all that ever they could. 1624

Helen then said, “Pandarus, does my lord my brother know about this? I mean Hector? Does Troilus know about it?” 1627

“Yes,” he answered, “but listen to me now; since Troilus is here, I think it would good, if you agree, that she herself should tell him all this before she goes. Because she is a lady, he will have her grief more at heart. By your leave I will now but run in and let you know whether he sleeps, or will hear about this.” In he darted and whispered to him, “May God have your soul! I am bringing your bier!” 1638

Troilus smiled, and Pandarus without more talk went out at that moment to Helen and Deiphobus, and said, “If there will be no long staying nor more company, he would have you bring in my lady Criseyde here, and he will listen to her as well as he can. But you know well the chamber is small, and even a few people will quickly make it hot; rest assured, I will incur no blame by bringing in a company that might injure or discomfort him, no, not for my better arm! You who know what is best, consider whether she had

15 Tryst. Literally the station where a hunter remains during a deer hunt, toward which the game would be driven. [RC]
better wait until another time. As for me, it seems to me
best that no person should go in but you two, unless it were
I also; for I can in few words rehearse her case better than
she can; and after that she might pray him in short to be her
good lord and then take her leave. This could not much
disturb his quiet. And he need not forego his ease for you,
as he will for her, being little known to him, and then I
know well he would tell you another thing that it behooves
her not to hear, that is secret and for the profit of the town.”

1680

Then Pandarus began to polish his tongue, and then
rehearsed her case; and then shortly, when he was done,
Troilus replied, “By my word, as soon as I can walk I will
very gladly with all my might be one of those to su
ustain her cause.” 1685

“Now blessings on you for that!” said Helen the queen.
1687

“If it were your pleasure,” said Pandarus then, “that she
might take her leave before she went.” 1689

“Ah, God forbid otherwise,” he replied, “if she would
promise to do so! But you two, Deiphobus and my dear
sister, I must speak of one matter to you, to gain your
counsel”; and as chance had it he found at his bed’s head a
copy of a document and a letter from Hector, asking
counsel whether such and such a man (I know not who)
were worthy of death; and in a grave manner he prayed
them to consider it now. Deiphobus very seriously began
to unfold this letter, and as they strolled out, and down a stair,
he and Helen the queen earnestly looked upon it, and in a
green arbor read the thing together, poring over it for a full
hour. 1708

And so we leave them reading, and turn to Pandarus, who
pried about to see that all was well, and hastened out into
the larger chamber and said, “God save all this company!
Come, my niece, my lady queen Criseyde awaits you, and also
my two lords; arise and bring with you your niece Antigone
or whomever you wish. Or no matter, in truth, the less
crowd the better. Come forth with me, and look that you
humbly thank them all, and when you see a fair season take
your leave of them, lest we bereave him of his rest too
long.” 1722

Criseyde replied, fully innocent of Pandarus’ intent, “Let
us go, dear uncle,” and went in with him arm in arm, her
mind all on what she should say and how to present herself;
while Pandarus said earnestly to the rest, “I pray you all to
remain here, and be not too noisy in your mirth; consider
what people are nearby here, and in what a situation one of
them is, God help him!” 1731

And as he went in, he said, “Niece, I ask you, begin
softly; and in the name of Him who has given life to us all,
slay not this man who suffers so for your love! Fie on the
Devil! Consider which one he is and in what state he is
lying. Hasten yourself, and remember that while you delay,
time is utterly lost, as you will both say when once you are
one. And secondly, think that as yet none suspects anything
of you two. Hasten now, if you can; while people are
blinded, all the time is clear gain. 1743

In the time that you are hesitating, pursuing, and delaying,
the moving of a straw will set people to guessing, so that,
though afterwards you would have merry days, you will
dare nothing. And why? Because she-and-she spoke such
a word, and he-and-he cast such a look! I dare not deal longer
with you, lest I lose time; so up with you, and bring him to
health!” 1750

But now, you lovers that are here, was not Troilus in a
perilous state, who lay and heard them whispering, and
thought, “Ah Lord, now is my lot being cast, utterly to die
or immediately to have comfort!” At this, the first time
when he should entreat her for love, O, mighty God, what
shall he say? 1757

Here Ends The Second Book.

Book III

Here Begins The Prologue Of The Third Book.

O blessed planet of which the bright beams adorn all the
third fair sphere of heaven, O darling of the sun, dear
daughter of Jove:16 giver of love’s pleasure, excellent
gracious one, ever ready to go to gentle hearts, O very
cause of prosperity and of gladness, may your might
and bounty be praised! In heaven and hell, in earth and
in the salt sea, your power is felt; man and beast, bird and fish,
herb and green tree, if I see clearly, in their due seasons feel
your heavenly influence. God loves, and will not forbid to
love, and no living creature in this world without love is
worth anything or can endure, 14

You first did move Jove to those joyous deeds through
which all things live and are, and made him amorous of

mortal beings; and as you wished you gave him
ccontentedness or adversity in love forever, and made him to
come down in a thousand forms for love on earth, and to
take whomever you wished. 21

You appease the anger of fierce Mars, and as you wish
you make hearts noble; those who you wish to set a-fire
abandon vices and dread shame; you make them to be
courteous, joyous and kind; and to high and low, according
to a creature’s wishes, your might sends what joys they
have. You hold kingdom and house in unity; you are the
true cause of friendship; you know all those inner properties
of things at which people wonder so, when they cannot
construe how it may come about that she loves him or he
her, just as why this fish and not that comes to the net. You
have set a law for people through the whole world, and this
I know from lovers, that whoever strives against you will
fare worse. Now, beautiful lady, by your kindness teach me
to describe in honor of those who serve you, whose clerk I
am, some of that joy that is felt in your service. Pour feeling
into my barren heart, and let me show your sweetness! 44

Calliope, may your voice be now present, for now is there
need! Do you not see the strait I am in, how I must tell now
in Venus’ praise the joy of Troilus? To this joy may God
bring him who has need. 49

To behold his manly sorrow at this point might have
melted a heart of stone. Pandarus wept as if he would
turn to water, and poked his niece repeatedly and said, “It is true
of the faith to a fool), she accepted him.

When Troilus heard his lady ask him for lordship, he was
between life and death for shame, nor could he have said a
word in reply, even if someone had been about to smile off
his head; and Lord, how red he grew so suddenly! And, sir,
the lesson that he thought he knew by heart to beseech his
lady with, had fully run out of his memory. 84

Crisyeide, because she was wise, noted all this well
enough and loved him none the less, even though he was
not presumptuous or self-assured or arrogant enough to sing
a fool a mass 17. But what he said, when his shame had
begun to pass, I will tell you as well as I can, as I find it in
old books. In a voice changed and trembling for true fear,
and his pleasant manner abashed, his hue now red now pale,
and his look downcast and his expression humble and
submissive, lo, the first word that escaped him, twice, was,
“Mercy, mercy, dear heart!” 98

After these words he stopped a while, and his next words,
when he could bring them out, were, “God knows, so far as
I have any wit at all, I have always been entirely yours,
and shall be until I am buried. Though I neither dare nor know
how to make my lament to you, in faith I suffer no less
pain. Thus much I can utter now to the perfect woman
whom I serve. If this should displease you, very soon I will
avenge it upon my own life, and do your heart a pleasure if
my death can appease your wrath; for since you have once
heard me say this, I do not know how soon I may die. 112

In the mean time lay Troilus repeating his lesson in this
manner: “My faith! I will say thus, and thus; I will lament
thus to my dear lady. This word is good, and I will make
my expression like this. In no way will I forget this.” May
God help him to do as he plans! And Lord, how his heart
began to flutter and his sighs to come short, as he heard her
come. Pandarus, leading her by the robe, approached and
began to peep in at the curtain, and said, “May God work a
cure on all the sick! See who is come here to visit you; here
she is who is to blame for your death”; and at this it seemed
as if he almost wept. 64

“Ah, ah,” said Troilus pitifully, “God knows if I am
woeful enough! Who is there? In faith, I see nothing.” 67

“Sir,” Crisyeide said, “it is Pandarus and I.” 68

“You, dear heart? Alas! I am not able to rise to kneel and
do you honor.” And with that he raised himself upright, and
she at once put both her hands softly upon him. 70

“Ah, for the love of God, do not so to me,” she said. “Ah,
what does this mean? Sir, I am come to you for only two
causes: first to thank you, and then to beseech you for
continued support of your friendly lordship.” 77

17 Sing a fool a mass. This phrase is not used elsewhere in
Chaucer’s time. The whole sentence seems to mean that, although
and perhaps because he did not present himself over-confidently
(as if in his singing of the mass he could communicate the sanctity
of the faith to a fool), she accepted him.
your commands; and that you grant to honor me so much as
to lay any order upon me at any hour; and that I should be
your true, humble, trusty servant, patient in my pains,
evermore freshly desirous of diligent service, ready to
receive your every desire with good will, however sorely I
suffer: this is my meaning, my own dear heart.” 147

“Lo, here is a reasonable request,” said Pandarus, “and a
difficult one for a lady to refuse! Now, my niece, if I were a
god you should die without mercy before the feast of Jove’s
birth, you who have heard that this man desires nothing but
your honor, see him very nearly dying, and yet are so loath
to allow him to serve you.” 154

At that she began to turn her eyes on Troilus simply and
gently, while she considered the matter, and hastened not
too fast with any word, but said soberly, “Saving my honor,
and in such form as he has now said, I am truly willing to
receive him fully to my service; beseeching him for God’s
love, and to the honor of faithfulness and nobility, that as I
mean well to him so will he to me, and ever safeguard my
honor with prudence and diligence. And if from henceforth
I can give him joy, in truth I will not fail. 167

“Now be all whole again and mourn no longer. But
nevertheless I give you this warning, though you are a
king’s son, you shall have no more sovereignty over me in
love than is right in such a case. If you do wrong, I will not
refrain from showing you my wrath; and while you serve
me I will cherish you according to your deserts. And in a
word be glad, dear heart and my very knight, and be lusty
and strong once again, and I will truly with all my power
turn all your bitter into sweet. If I am she who may give you
joy, for every woe you shall recover a joy.” And then she
took him in her arms and began to kiss him. 182

Pandarus fell on his knees, threw up his eyes to heaven
and held his hands on high: “Immortal god Cupid,” he said,
of this you may boast; and Venus, you may make melody.
For this miracle I seem to hear each bell in the town ringing
without hands! But stop, no more now of this; for these
people before now will have read the letter and will be up
soon. Hark! I hear them. But I ask you, Criseyde, and you,
Troilus, when you are able to walk, that you be in my house
soon. Hark! I hear them. But I ask you, Criseyde, and you,
or the other creature that has left and the doors were
shut tight, to tell it shortly, Pandarus rose up and sat on the
bedside, and began to speak soberly to Troilus as I shall tell
you: “My most loved lord and dear brother, God knows,
and you know, how sorely I grieved this year when I saw
you so languishing more and more for love; so that with all
my might and wit I have ever since done my duty to bring
you to joy, and I have now brought you to the state you
know of; so that through me you stand now in a good
position to prosper. Yet I say this for no boast, and do you
know why? Because (and a shame it is to say it) for your
sake I have begun a sort of game which I will never do
again for any man, even if he were my brother a thousand-
fold. 252

“That is to say, between game and earnest I have become
for your sake such a go-between as brings women to men.
You know yourself what I mean. I have made my innocent
niece to trust your honor so fully that everything shall be
just as you desire. But I take the all-wise God to witness
that I never completed this work this out of covetousness,
but only to relieve that distress for which I thought you
were very nearly dying. So good brother, for God’s love,
since you have discretion, spare her fair name. 266

“You well know that among the people her name as yet is
holy, for I dare to say that there never was creature that ever
knew her to do wrong. Woeful am I that I who have caused
all this should know that she is my dear niece, and I at once
her uncle and betrayer. Were it known that I had contrived
to put the fantasy into my niece’s head to do your pleasure
and to be wholly yours, why, all the people would cry out
upon it and say that I did the worst treachery in the world;
she would be ruined and you profited absolutely nothing. 280

18 Bear the bell. Take first place.
“Therefore, before I go a step further, I pray you again on your life that secrecy may go with us in this affair, that is, that you never reveal it. Be not angered though I often pray you to hold such an important matter secret, for my request you well know is reasonable. Think what woe has occurred in the past from making boasts, as we read, and what misfortunes there are yet in this world from day to day for that same wicked offence. Therefore, these wise scholars that are dead have ever handed down such proverbs to the young: ‘The first of virtues is to hold your tongue.’” 294

And if it were not for diffuseness of speech, I could produce for you nearly a thousand old stories of women lost through men’s false and foolish bragging. You know enough proverbs yourself against that fault of telling tales, even though men told the truth as often as they lie. Alas, how often has one tongue made many bright skinned ladies to say ‘Alack the day that I was born!’ and renew many maidens’ sorrow; and for the greater part, if it were brought to the test, what men boast of is all untrue. In the very nature of the thing, no braggart is to be believed. 308

“Boaster and liar, both are one. Suppose this: a woman grants me her love and says she will have none other, swears me to keep it secret, and afterwards I go and tell it to two or three; surely at the best I am a braggart, and a liar too, for I broke my promise. Look then if they are not to blame, such people—indeed, what shall I call them?—who make their boast of women, and name their names, who never yet promised them anything, nor knew them more than my old hat! May God save me, it is no wonder that women fear to deal with us men. I do not say this for mistrust of you or of any wise man, but because of silly fools and the harm that comes in this world as much from folly as from malice. No woman, if she will consider well, fears that fault in wise people; for the wise are cautioned by folly as from malice. No woman, if she will consider well, fears that fault in wise people; for the wise are cautioned by the fools. 329

“But now to the point. Dear brother, keep all this that I have said in mind; keep it to yourself and be of good cheer. In due season you shall find me faithful, and I will set your affair in such train that you shall be well content, for it shall be just as you would have it. I know well that your intent is honest, and therefore I dare fully undertake this. You know what your lady has granted you; the day is set to draw up the charter! And now good-night, for I can no longer wake, but now that you are in bliss pray for me that God will send me soon either death or relief!” 343

Who could tell half the joy and jubilation that the soul of Troilus felt when he heard Pandarus’ promises? His old woe, that had made his heart faint, wasted and melted away in his joy, and all his store of sore sighs took wings at once, and he felt them no longer. Just as these hedge-rows and woods that have been dead and dry through the winter dress themselves again in green when May has come, when every cheerful creature wishes to play, so too was his heart suddenly full of joy, and never was there a gladder man in all Troy. 357

He cast up his look on Pandarus gravely and friendly, and said, “Friend, you will remember how close to death for woe you found me last April, and how busily you tried to learn from me the cause of my distress. You know how long I avoided telling it to you who are the man whom most of all I trust; yet there was no peril in revealing it to you, as I knew well. If you please, since I was so hesitant about even you knowing it and no other person can hear us now, tell me how could I, who am trembling now, dare to tell others of this matter?” 371

“But nevertheless I swear to you by that God who governs this whole world at His own pleasure. And may Achilles with his spear cleave my heart, even if my life were as eternal as it truly is mortal, if I swear falsely and if I sooner or later would or dared or could reveal it, for all the wealth that God made under the sun. I swear to you that I would rather die, come to my end in cruel King Agamemnon’s prison, in the stocks among wretchedness and filth and vermin; and this I will swear to you tomorrow in all the temples of this town upon all the gods, if you wish to hear me. And I know well that you have done so much for me that I can nevermore deserve it, though I could die for you a thousand times a day. What more can I say than that I will serve you as your very slave, wherever you go, forever until my life’s end?” 392

“But here I beseech you heartily that you never fancy in me such folly as this. I thought I saw in your speech your fear that I might think what you are doing for me for friendship’s sake to be the acts of a bawd. I am not mad, though I may be uneducated; I know well the difference, by God. He that goes on such an errand for gold or riches, call him what you will; but this thing that you are doing, call it a gentle deed, and compassion and fellowship and trustfulness. All men know that distinctions must be made between things that look alike. 406

And so that you may know I do not think this service of yours to be a shame or scorn, I have for you my fair sister Polyxena, or Cassandra, or Helen or any of the group; however beautiful and shapely she may be, tell me which of them you wish to have for your own, and let me alone to arrange it for you! But since you have done me this benefit to save my life and out of no hope of reward, now for the love of God carry out this great enterprise to the end, for now is there greatest need, and I will always obey all your wishes, great and small. So now good-night, and let us both sleep.” 420

Thus was each of them well content with the other, so that the whole world could not have made them more so. In the

19 Agamemnon. The leader of the allied Greek armies besieging Troy.
morning, when they were up and dressed, each went about his own affairs. But Troilus, though hope and pleasure made him burn in the sharp flames of desire, forgot not his prudent self-control, but restrained in manly manner each hasty act and unbridled look, so that not a living person could have known by word or manner what was in his mind. His true thoughts were as far as the clouds from every creature, so well he could dissemble. 434

And all this time that I am speaking of; this was his life: by day with all his power he served Mars in knightly arms, and for the most part he lay the long night and thought how he might best serve his lady and win her thanks. And though he lay softly, I will not say that he was not somewhat discomforted in his thoughts, and that he did not turn often on his pillows, and he did not long often after the thing he lacked. In such cases, for anything I know, other men do not find it all pleasure, not any more than he did. But meanwhile, to come to the main thing, it certainly is written in the story that he saw his lady sometimes, and also that she spoke with him when she dared and would, a nd that he saw his lady sometimes, and also that he spoke with her when she dared and would, and that they both considered warily how they should proceed in everything in this matter. But they spoke so hurriedly and in such watchful dread lest any person should guess or overhear, that more than anything else they wished that Cupid would send them grace to enable them to finish their speech quickly. 462

But in the little that they spoke or did together, he was so heedful of all, that he seemed to her to know what she thought without a word from her, so that she had no need to ask him to do anything, or to forbid anything; for this reason it seemed to her that love, though it had come late, was opening to her the door to all joys. And to pass along in this tale quickly, he so well employed his words and acts that he stood fully in his lady’s grace, and twenty thousand times before she was done she thanked God that ever she had met with him. He knew how to bear himself in this lover’s-service so well that no one in the world could have shown a better way. For she found him in all things so discreet, so secret and so compliant, that she felt he was to her a wall of steel, a shield against everything displeasing, so that she was no longer afraid to be under the governance of so prudent a man, I mean so far as ought to be required. 483

And to keep this fire alive Pandarus was at all times ready and diligent: all his thoughts were set on assisting his friend. He always pushed on, as he was sent to and fro; he fetched letters when Troilus was away. Never did a man bear himself better to help his friend in time of need. 490

But now by chance some man may look for me to rehearse every word or message, every look or smile of Troilus to his lady dear in all this time. I believe it would be a long thing to listen to, or to describe, at length all the words or every look of a man that stands in such a plight! In truth, I, nor anyone here, have never heard it done in any story, I believe. I could not tell it all, even if I wished, for, as my author says, there was one letter passed between them that may well have contained a hundred verses, which he wished not write about; how then should I compose a line of it? 504

But now to the main point. I say this, that--while these two were in quiet and concord, as I have said, during this time that was so sweet, save only that they could not often come together or have leisure to say all they would--Pandarus thought he had found a time for that which he had long striven for, to bring his fair niece and Troilus together sometime at his house, where all this important matter of their love might be fully unraveled at leisure. Earnestly deliberating, he had foreseen and executed everything which might help his plan, and had spared no cost or labor. Let them come if they wished, nothing should be lacking to them. And as for being noticed there at all, he knew that to be impossible. For certain the wind was clear of every prattling magpie and every spoil-sport; thus all was well, for the whole world, every wild and civilized creature, was blind to the thing. The timber is all ready to set in place; nothing is lacking but that we should know the hour in which she is to come. 532

Troilus, who knew fully of all this planning and watched it longingly, had founded his own plans upon it and devised his pretext, namely, that, if he were missed night or day while he was about this service, he was gone to do his sacrifice, and must watch alone at such and such a temple to receive an answer from Apollo, and to see the holy laurel-tree quake before Apollo spoke from it, to tell him when the Greeks should flee. Therefore, let no man hinder him, God forbid! Rather, pray Apollo to aid him in his need. 546

Now there was little more to do; but Pandarus was up and at it, and (in brief) just after the changing of the moon, when the world is lightless a night or two, and when the heavens seemed preparing a rain, he went directly one morning to his niece, with the intent you have all heard. When he arrived, he began to make sport as he was accustomed; and to mock himself; and finally he swore by this and that and told her that she should not evade him or make him hunt after her any longer; but she must certainly promise to come and dine in his house that evening. At this she laughed and made excuses, and said, “It is raining. Why, how can I go?” 562

“A truce to this,” he replied; “stand not thus debating. This must be done, and you shall soon be there.” 564

So at the last they agreed upon it; otherwise, as he softly swore to her in her ear, he would never come where she was again. And she began to whisper to him, and asked if Troilus were to be there. No, he swore to her, for he was out of town, and added, “Supposing he were, niece, you need not fear, for rather than people should notice him there I would die a thousand times.” 574
My author wishes not to declare fully what she thought when he told her that Troilus was gone out of town, whether she thought he spoke truth in that or not; but he says that without more delay she agreed to go with him, since he begged her, and gave him due obedience as his niece. But nevertheless she begged him, though there would be no real cause of fear, to beware the talk of silly, goosish people, who dream things that never were, and to consider well whom he brought to his house. “Uncle, since I must trust you,” she said, “look that all be well, for I am doing as people, who dream things that never were, and to consider be no real cause of fear, to beware the talk of silly, goosish niece. But nevertheless she begged him, though there would since he begged her, and gave him due obedience as his says that without more delay she agreed to go with him, whether she thought he spoke truth in that or not; but he when he told her that Troilus was gone out of town, everything was flooded, she thought, “I may as well remain to together, took heed of his request, and since it rained so and Criseyde, who had as much prudence as half the world all executed, for which she must remain. The bent moon with homeward; but entirely without her leave the gods’ will was be beasts! This I say now, that Criseyde was about to hasten to be gone, soul and body, with King Pluto as deep in hell as Tantalus! Why should I make a long story? When all was fixed, he arose and took his leave. 595

That night she came to supper with a certain attendance of her own men, and her fair niece Antigone and eight or nine more of her women. But who was glad now? Who but Troilus, do you think, stood and saw them through a little window in a closet where he was caged up until midnight, unknown to everybody but Pandarus? But now to our point. When she had arrived, with all joy and friendly greeting her uncle took her then in his arms, and after, when the time came, one and all sat themselves down quietly to the supper. God knows, there was no fine food that was lacking! After supper they rose, well content with the world, and with hearts lusty and glad. Happy was he who had the best device to please her, or who made her laugh! One sang; another played, one told a tale of Wade 20 and by the gods that dwell in heaven; or else, he would rather remain, soul and body, with King Pluto as deep in hell as Tantalus! Why should I make a long story? When all was fixed, he arose and took his leave. 595

But O Fortune, executor of fates! O, influences of the high heavens! It is true that, under God, you are our governors, though the manner may be veiled from us beasts! This I say now, that Criseyde was about to hasten homeward; but entirely without her leave the gods’ will was executed, for which she must remain. The bent moon with her pale horns, and Saturn and Jupiter, were joined in Cancer, so that such a rain came down from heaven that every woman there was in a true fright for that pounding rain. At this Pandarus laughed and said, “Now would be the time for a lady to go away! But, good niece, if I ever pleased you in anything, I beg you now to do my heart such a pleasure as to remain here all night with me; for niece, this is your own house, by God! Now, by my word, I do not say it in sport, for you to go now would shame me.” 637

Criseyde, who had as much prudence as half the world all together, took heed of his request, and since it rained so and everything was flooded, she thought, “I may as well remain and agree gladly, in a friendly manner, and win his thanks, as grumble and then remain; for as to going home, that may not be.” 644

“I will,” she said, “sweet dear uncle; since you wish me, it is only reasonable, and I am very glad to remain here with you, and I was but jesting when I said I would go.” 648

“Grant mercy, niece, truly,” he said. “Whether you were jesting or not, I am very glad now that you will remain.” 651

Thus far all was well. And then new joy and festivity began again. But Pandarus would gladly, if he could in manners, have hastened her to bed; and said, “Lord, this is a huge rain, this is a storm to sleep through, and my advice is that we soon begin to try! And, niece, do you know where I shall lodge you? Right over there in my little inner chamber, that you may hear no noise of thunder or of rain, and I alone in the outer house will be guardian of all your women. They shall all sleep well and soft in this middle chamber that you see here, and you shall be in there; and if you rest well tonight, come often, whatever weather is above you. Now the wine! Whenever you are ready, it is time to go to rest.” 679

There is nothing more to say but that, the wine having been drunk, and the curtain having been drawn, every creature who had nothing else to do in that place went out of the chamber. And evermore it rained so violently and at the same time blew so amazingly loud that scarcely could one hear another. Then her uncle Pandarus, as was fitting, with those of her women who were closest to her, brought her cheerily to her bed’s side, and took his leave, bowing low and saying, “Outside this chamber door and just across, lie all your women, so that you may call here whomever you wish.” So when she had laid down in the inner chamber, and all her women in bed in order as I have told, there was no more skipping or tramping about; but anyone stirring anywhere was bidden get to bed, and bad luck to them! And let those who were in bed get to sleep. 693

But Pandarus, who knew well the old game and every point of it, when he saw that all was well so far, thought he would begin his work. He softly undid Troilus’ closet door, sat down by him as still as a stone, and, to come briefly to the point, told him every word of all this thing, and said, “Make yourself ready now, for you shall enter into the bliss of heaven!” 704

“Now, blissful Venus,” said Troilus, “send me grace, for I have never had such need before, nor half the fear!” 707

“Fear never a bit,” said Pandarus, “for it shall be just as you would have it. May I be saved, this night shall I make all well, or else cast all the gruel in the fire!” 711

20 Stock or stone. Tree stumps or rocks: objects of worship, usually pagan worship.
21 Wade. Legendary hero in the thirteenth-century German epic in which the figure of Kudrun parallels Pandarus as a go-between. The phrase “tale of Wade” may also simply mean a tall tale.
"Yet do you inspire me, blessed Venus," said Troilus, "as surely as I serve you now and ever shall better and better until I die! And, O mirthful goddess, if I was subject to the evil aspects of Mars or Saturn when I was born, or if you were rendered powerless by the sun or otherwise withheld from providing a benign influence at my birth, ask your father of his grace to turn away all that harm, so that I may go my way rejoicing, for the love of him whom you did love in the wood-shaw, I mean Adonis, who was slain by the boar. And help, Jove, for the love of fair Europa, whom you in the form of a bull did fetch away! Mars, with your bloody mantle, do not hinder me, for the love of the Cyprian woman22! Phoebus, think how Daphne shut herself under the bark and for fear grew laurel; yet for her love, help me now at this need! Mercury too, for the love of Herse, for which Pallas was angry with Aglaurus23, now help! And Diana24. I beseech you that this enterprise be not hateful to you! O three sisters of Fate, who spun me my destiny before any garment was created for me, now help this work that is beginning!" 735

"You wretched mouse’s heart!” said Pandarus. “Are you afraid that she will bite you? Why, put on this furred cloak over your shirt and follow me. I will take the blame! But wait, and let me go before you a little.” With that word he began to undo a trap, and led Troilus in by the corner of his cloak. 742

The stern wind snorted so loud that no creature could hear any other noise, and they who lay outside the door were all safely asleep. Pandarus with a sober countenance went at once to the door where they lay and softly shut it. As he was coming back secretly, his niece awoke and asked, “Who is walking there?” 751

“My dear niece,” he said, “it is I. Wonder not at it, and fear not.” And he came close and said in her ear, “Not a word, for the love of God, I beseech you! Let nobody arise and hear us talking.” 756

"Why, God bless you, which way did you come in,” she asked, “thus without their knowing?” 758

"Here at this little trap-door,” he said. 759

"Let me call someone,” she said then. 760

"Eh, God forbid that you should do such a folly!” said Pandarus. “They might imagine what they have never once thought of. It is not good to wake a sleeping hound or to give any creature cause for conjecturing. I will promise your women are all asleep, and will be until sun-up, so that men might lay siege to the house without waking them.

And when I have said all my say, I will go away unnoticed just as I came. 770

"Now, my niece, you must understand, as all you women will grant, that for a woman to hold a man long time in hand and let him call her “sweetie” and “dear heart,” and then pull the hood over his cap—I mean love another all this time—she beguiles him and shames herself. Now why do I tell you all this? You know yourself as well as any that your love is fully granted to Troilus, the worthiest knight of this world, and you have pledged your word to this; so that, unless it were his fault you should never be false to him while you live. Now here is what has happened since I left you. Troilus, to speak plainly, has come in all this rain over a gutter by a secret route into my chamber quite unknown to everyone except to myself; I swear by the faith I owe King Priam. And in such pain and distress he has come that unless by now he is quite mad, he must speedily fall into madness, without God’s help. And the cause is this: he says he has been told by a friend that you are said to love another, named Horastes25, for sorrow at which this night is to be the end of all for him!” 798

Criseyde, when she heard all this strange talk, began to grow cold about her heart, and answered immediately with a sigh, “Alas, I believed that, whoever told tales, my dear heart would not so lightly hold me false! Alas for mistaken fancies, what harm they do! Now I have lived too long! Horastes! And beguile Troilus! I know him not, so God help me! Alas, what wicked spirit told such a thing? Now surely, uncle, if I see him tomorrow, I will as fully acquit myself of that as ever a woman did, if he will have me. Oh God!” she sighed, “how worldly happiness, which scholars call false felicity, is mingled with so much bitterness! God knows, the condition of vain prosperity is full of anguish, for either joys come not together or else they will not last. 819

"Oh fragile well unstable earthly joy! With whatever creature you show yourself merry, either he knows you are mutable or knows it not; it must be one of the two. Now if he knows it not, how can he who is ever in the darkness of ignorance say that he has true joy and bliss? And if he knows that joy is fleeting, as every worldly joy must be, then every time he remembers this, the dread of losing joy keeps him from perfect happiness: and if he cares at all about losing his joy, it must seem that joy is worth very little. Therefore I must conclude in this matter that truly, for anything I can see, there is no true well-being here in this world. But ah jealousy, you wicked serpent, you misbelieving envious folly, why have you made Troilus distrust me, who never yet wittingly offended him?” 840

“This matter has taken place thus—” Pandarus began. 841

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22 Cyprian woman. Venus.
23 Aglaurus. Sister of Herse, turned to stone by Mercury.
24 Diana. Diana, the moon, is here the seventh of the planets to be invoked in this passage.
25 Horastes. Though the name, Orestes, is a real and famous one, here it is just part of Pandarus’ fabrication.
“Why, dear uncle,” she cried, “who told him such a thing? Alas! Why does my dear heart thus?” 843

“You know, my niece, what it is,” he said. “I hope all that is wrong shall yet be well; you can quench all this if you wish. And I believe it is best that you do just so.” 847

“So I will tomorrow, in truth, before God,” she said, “so that it shall suffice.” 849

“Tomorrow? Alas, that would be a fine deed!” he replied. “No, no, it may not work in this case, for scholars write that peril goes with delay; no, such dallying is not worth a bean. There is a time for everything. I dare say. When a chamber or a hall is afire there is more need to save it promptly than to dispute and ask, ‘How did that candle fall into the straw?’ Ah, God bless you! In all this bother the harm is done, and—farewell, thrush! 860 And now, my niece, take this not badly, but if you allow him to be in this woe all night, so God help me, you never loved him; here between you and me alone I am bold to say that. But I know well you will not do so, you are too wise to do such great folly as to jeopardize his life all night.” 868

“I never loved him? By heaven, I believe you never loved anything so well,” she said. 870

“By my word now,” he said, “we shall see that. For since you make this comparison with me, if I wished to see him all night in sorrow, for all the treasure in Troy, I pray God I may never see happiness again! Look now, if you that are his love put his life in jeopardy all night for a venture of nothing, by the God above us this delay comes not only from folly but from malice, and that I swear to. What! I tell you flatly, if you leave him in his pain, it is neither a wise nor a gentle deed!” 882

“You may do one thing,” answered Criseyde, “and with it cure his distress. Take this blue ring and bear it to him, for there is nothing that might better please him, except I myself; or more rest his heart. And tell my dear heart that his grief is causeless, and that he shall see tomorrow.” 889

“A ring?” said he. “Yes, the hazel-woods shake. Yes, dear niece, that ring should have a stone that could make dead men live, and such a ring I believe you do not have! Discretion has gone out of your head; I can see that, and that is a pity. O time lost, well you may curse sloth! Do you not know that a noble and high heart neither sorrows nor is calmed for a little thing? Were a fool in a jealous rage, I should not care a bit about his sorrow, but should present him with a few soft words some day when I should chance to see him. But this thing stands in quite another fashion. This man is so noble and so tender of heart that he will avenge his sorrow on himself by his own death, for trust well, however he may suffer, he will speak no jealous word to you. 907

“And therefore before you break his heart, niece, speak to him of this matter, for with a single word you can control his heart. Now I have told you his peril, and his coming is unknown to everybody, and there can be no harm or sin in it, by God. I will be with you myself all the time. You know how he is your own knight and that by rights you ought to trust him; so I am ready to fetch him when you wish.” 917

This entire tale was so piteous to hear, and sounded at first thought so like a truth, and Troilus her knight was so dear to her that, with his secret coming and the security of the place considered, it is no wonder she granted him such a favor, since she did all in innocence. “So God rest my soul,” she answered, “as I am truly sorry for him! And if heaven grant me grace, I gladly would do the best I can. But in faith, unless God will send me better guidance, I am right at my wit’s end, at dulcarnoun 27, whether you stay or go for him.” 931

“Paandarus said, “Yes, niece, will you listen? Dulcarnoun is “the banishment of wretches;” it seems hard, for wretches will never learn, because of true sloth and other deliberate flaws. But this is only for those who are not worth two beans in any case; you are wise, and know that this cause of mine is neither hard nor reasonable to withstand.” 938

“Well, uncle,” she replied, “do here as you wish. But before he comes I will first arise; and for the love of God, since all my trust is on you two prudent men, now manage so discreetly that I may keep my fair name as well as he his happiness, for I am here in your power.” 945

“That is well said, dear niece,” he replied; “blessings on that wise, gentle heart! But lie still, you need not spring up for him; receive him right here, and each of you for God’s love relieve the other’s pain! And ah! Venus, I praise you, for I hope soon we shall be all merry.” 952

Soon Troilus was on his knees right at her bedside, and soberly in his best fashion greeted his lady. But, Lord, how red she grew suddenly! Even if men were to cut off her head, she could not have brought out a word, because of his sudden arrival. But Pandarus, whose feeling was so quick in every case, began then to make sport, and said, “Niece, see how this lord can kneel now to beg for your pledge! Only see this nobleman now!” And with that word he ran for a cushion and said, “Kneel now as long as you wish! And may God soon bring your hearts to rest!” 966

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26 Farewell, thrush! The bird has flown. It is too late.

27 Dulcarnoun. In the state of perplexity. The expression comes from an Arabic epithet meaning “two-horned.” It was also the name of the 47th proposition of Euclid’s geometry. [RAS]

28 Banishment of wretches. A translation of faga miserorum, corresponding to Eleusfaga, a name for Euclid’s 5th proposition (also a difficult one). Pandarus may be confusing his terms. [RAS]
If she let him kneel for a time, I cannot say whether sorrow made her forget, or whether she took it as only due from her suitor; but well I know that she did him this much pleasure, that she kissed him, though she was sighing sorely, and then told him sit down. 973

“Now you shall make a fair beginning,” said Pandarus. “Now, good dear niece, make him sit upon your bedside within the curtains, so that each may hear the other better.” And at that he drew toward the fire and took a light and assumed the appearance of looking over an old romance. 980

Criseyde, who felt herself truly Troilus’ lady and clearly stood upon secure ground, thought her servant and knight should not have fancied any faithlessness in her. Yet nevertheless, considering his distress and that greatness of love is one cause of such folly, she spoke gently to him of his jealousy: “Lo, my dear heart, it is the excellent glory of love, against which no man can or ought to make resistance, that drives me thus to take pity on your pain, and also love, against which no man can or ought to make resistance, which I mean to put a final end to the pain that holds your heart and mine in heavy case, and to redress every wrong.

But O Jove, author of nature, is it an honor to your godhead that innocent people suffer injury and he who is guilty goes free? Ah! If it were lawful to complain against you who permit undeserved jealousy, I should cry out against you. And all my woe is that now people are accustomed to say, ‘Yes, jealousy is love,’ and would excuse a bushel of venom because one grain of love is dropped into it! But the great God in heaven knows if it may be like love, or hate, or anger! And thereafter it ought to have its rightful name. 1029

But certain it is that one kind of jealousy is more to be excused than another; as when there is cause, or when the jealous fantasy is so well and dutifully repressed that it scarcely does or says anything wrong, but generously consumes all its own distress. Such jealousy I excuse for the nobleness of it. Some jealousy is so full of fury and malice that it surmounts all repression. But you, dear heart, are not in such case, as I thank God. Wherefore this passion of yours I will but call an illusion forged by abundance of love and overactive anxiety, which causes your heart to endure this pain; for which I am very sorry but not angered. 1044

But now, to clear me and rest your heart, for the love of God let us test this suspicion, whether by ordeal or by oath, by casting of lots, or in whatever manner you wish! If I am guilty, let me be slain! Alas, what more can I do or say?” 1050

With that a few bright fresh tears fell from her eyes, and she cried, “O God! You know that never yet was Criseyde false to Troilus in action or thought!” And then she laid her head down in the bed, covered it with the sheet, sighing sorely, and held her peace. 1057

But now may God help to quench this sorrow, and so I trust He will, for He can best! I have often seen a misty morning follow a merry summer’s day, and again green May follows after winter. We always see and read in books that after sharp conflicts come victories. 1064

When Troilus heard her words, trust me, he cared not to sleep. It seemed to him no light punishment to see his lady Criseyde’s tears, but indeed, for every tear that escaped her, he felt the cramp of death creep and clutch him about the heart. In his mind he began to curse the time that ever he came there or ever was born, for now bad had turned into worse, and all the labor which he had done already he deemed lost, and himself lost as well. 1076

“Ah Pandarus, alas” he thought, “your wiles serve for nothing, alack the day!” He hung down his head and fell on his knees and sorrowfully sighed. What could he say? He felt himself nothing but dead, for she who only could lighten his sorrows was angered. But nevertheless, when he was able to speak, then he said, “God knows that I am not to blame, when all is known, for this game!” And then grief so shut up his heart that not a tear fell from his eyes; his spirits contracted its force, so that they were bewildered and oppressed. Sorrow and fear and every other feeling faded away from him, and down he fell suddenly in a swoon. 1092

It was no little sorrow to see this, but all remained hushed, for Pandarus was up quickly; “Not a word, niece,” he said, “or we are lost! Be not afraid!” At last in spite of anything he cast himself upon the bed, saying, “Thief; have you a man’s heart?” and tore off his mantle. “Niece,” he said, “unless you help now, your own Troilus is lost.” 1101

“In faith,” she said, “I would gladly if I only knew how! Alas that I was born!” 1103
“Ah! my niece, if you wish to pull out the thorn,” he said, “that sticks in his heart, say ‘All is forgiven,’ and all the trouble will be over.” 1106

“Yes,” she answered, “that would be full preferable to me than all the good the sun goes around!” And at that she vowed to him in his ear, “Indeed, dear heart, I am not angered, I pledge my word,” and she swore many other vows; “now speak to me, for it is I, Criseyde.” 1113

Yet he did he come to any more. They began to rub his wrists and the palms of his hands and to wet his temples; and to deliver him from his bitter bonds she often kissed him, and in a word she did all she could to revive him. At last he began to draw breath, and soon after that to come out of his swoon, and memory and reason began to dawn upon him. When he was more fully awake, “Oh mercy, God” he cried, “what is this?” 1124

“Why do you behave so strangely?” said Criseyde. “Is this a man’s game? What, Troilus, for shame! Will you do thus?” With that she laid her arm over him, often kissed him, and forgave him all. And he thanked her, and relieved his heart by talking to her, and she answered him, and with her courteous words cheered him up and comforted his sorrows. 1134

Then Pandarus said, “For anything I can see, neither I nor this candle serve any purpose here. Light is not good for sick people’s eyes! But now for the love of God, since you are brought into this pleasant plight, let no heavy thought be hanging in your two hearts!” And then he carried his candle to the chimney. 1141

And then, when she had taken of Troilus such oaths as she wished, though there were no need of them, she felt no fear or cause to bid him rise. In some cases a thing less than an oath may be enough, for every creature who truly loves means nothing but what is noble. But she wished to know toward what man, and why, and on what occasion he felt this jealousy, since there was no cause; and she told him to tell her carefully the signs from which he conceived it, or otherwise certainly she affirmed that this was of malice, to test her. In a word, he must obey his lady’s wish, and feign a cause to avoid a greater ill. He told her, “when she was out at such and such a festival she might at least have looked at him.” I know not what he said, something not worth a farthing, having to fish for an excuse. 1162

“Sweet, even if it were so,” Criseyde answered, “what harm was that, since I meant no evil? For, by that God who made us both, my intent is innocent in all things. Such talk is not worth a bean! Will you act like the childish jealous lover? Now truly you deserve to be beaten!” 1169

Then Troilus began to sigh sorrowfully, and his heart died within him lest she should be angered, and he said, “Alas, my sweetest heart Criseyde, have mercy upon my sick fancies. If there might be any wrong in those words that I said, I will trespass no more. Do what you wish: I hang on your grace!” 1176

“For guilt, mercy,” answered Criseyde. That is to say, I forgive it all. And evermore you must remember this night, and be sure that you offend no more. 1180

“No, my dear heart, in truth,” he said. 1181

“And now,” she said, “forgive me that I caused you pain, my own sweet heart!” 1183

This faithful, loving Troilus, taken by surprise with the bliss of it, put all in God’s hand, as one who meant nothing but good, and by a sudden resolve caught her to him fast in his arms. And Pandarus with good intention laid himself to sleep, saying, “If you are prudent, swoon no more now, lest more people arise.” 1190

What can the poor lark do when the sparrow-hawk has her in his foot? I know no more. Even if I were to delay a year, at some time in the future I will be able to do no less than follow my author in telling about these same two, of their joy as well as their heaviness, whoever may find the tale sweet or sour! Criseyde, as scholars write in their old books, began to quake like an aspen-leaf when she felt him folded her in his arms. And Troilus, entirely recovered after his cold cares, began to thank the seven bright gods. And thus various pains bring people to paradise. So Troilus began to hold her tightly in his arms, and said, “Oh sweet, as sure as I am alive now you are caught! Now there is nothing but the two of us! Now yield yourself, for there is no escape!” 1208

And to that Criseyde answered, “Had I not before this yielded myself; my sweet, dear heart, in truth I would not be here now!” 1211

Ah, truly it is said, and men may always see, that to be healed of a fever or other great sickness men must drink bitter drink; and to win gladness men often must swallow pain and great woe. And here we see it, for this adventure after pain has won its cure. And now sweetness seems sweeter because bitterness was tasted before. Out of woe they are floating into bliss, such as they had never felt since they were born. Is this not better than if both should be lost? Let every woman take heed, for the love of heaven, to do thus when need comes. 1225

Criseyde, all free now from dread and trouble, and with just cause to trust him, now that she knew his faithfulness and honest intent, made so much ado over him that it was a joy to see. As the sweet woodbine with many twists twines about a tree, each wound arms about the other. And as the

29 Seven bright gods. Seven planets, all named for gods.
little abashed nightingale stops at first when she begins to sing, if she might hear any herdsman’s voice or any creature stirring in the hedge, and afterwards confidently lets her voice ring out, so Criseyde, when her fear was over, opened her heart and told all her thoughts. And as a man who sees certain death before him, for anything that he can tell, and by a sudden rescue escapes, and out of death is brought into security, for all the world in exactly such present gladness was Troilus with his lady dear. (May God grant that we never meet with worse luck!) Thus he began to delight himself in this heaven, and with all this he kissed her a thousand times until he scarcely knew what to do for joy. 1253

“O Love, O Charity,” then he cried out, “and your mother Cytherea the sweet, next after you may she be praised, I mean Venus the benevolent planet! And next I salute you, Hymen. The god of marriage. 30 For never was a man so indebted to you gods as I, whom you have brought out of my cold cares. Benign Love, holy bond of all creatures, whoever would have grace and will not honor you, his desire attempts to fly without wings. All would be lost, I dare to say, unless your grace passed our deserts, unless you from your loving-kindness would aid those who in all ways labor and serve you best. I who have least desert among all that are admitted to your grace; you have helped me where I was likely to die, and have bestowed me in so high a station that no bliss can go beyond it. I can say no more, but may laud and reverence be given to your kindness and your might!” And at this he kissed Criseyde, at which in truth she felt no discomfort! 1274

“And finally, in one word, welcome, my knight, my peace, my sufficiency.” 1309

One of the least of their joys it would be impossible for my wit to tell. But you who have been at such a feast of gladness, judge if they were glad! I can say no more but that this time, between dread and security, these two felt the full worthiness of love. O blissful night, sought by them so long, how joyful you were to them both! Why had I not bought such a time with my soul, yes, or the least joy that was there! Away, you foul fear and you coy disdain, and leave them dwelling in this heavenly bliss, which is so high that none can tell it! 1323

But though I cannot tell all, as my author can with his goodly pen, yet, before God, I have ever told and shall tell the main part of his words. And if, in reverence of Love, I have added anything, do with it as you will. For all my words, here and everywhere, I speak under the correction of you who have feeling in the art of love, and commit them wholly to your discretion, to increase or diminish what I have written; and to do so I beseech you. But now to my former narrative. 1337

These two that we left in each other’s arms were so loath to part that it would have seemed violent ravishment; or rather this was their greatest fear, that all this might prove to have been a foolish dream. Therefore very often each of them said, “Sweet, am I holding you thus, or am I dreaming it?” And Lord! With so pleasant a look he gazed upon her that his eyes never moved from her face. “Oh dear heart!” he said, “can it be that you are really here?” 1348

“Yes, my own heart, may God be thanked for His goodness,” said Criseyde, and kissed him until for joy he knew not where his spirit was. Often he kissed her two eyes, and said, “Oh bright eyes, it was you that made me this woe, you modest nets of my dear lady! Though there is mercy written in your looks, God knows the text is hard to read. How were you able to bind me without cords?” And then once more he would take her strongly in his arms, and would sigh a thousand times; not such grievous sighs as men utter for woe, or when they are sick, but gentle sighs, such as give ease and show the feeling within. Of such sighs he could never heave enough. 1365

And then soon they fell to speaking of various matters which had to do with their case, and in sport exchanged rings, of which I find nothing more in my books. But I know well that Criseyde gave him a brooch of gold and azure, in which was set a ruby like a heart, and stuck it on his garment. 1372

Lord! Could a man believe that a miser or a wretch, who blames love and scorns it, was ever yet granted such delight from all the coins that he can scratch together and hoard, as there is in one moment of perfect love? No, may God save

30 Cytherea. Venus.
31 Hymen. The god of marriage.
me, no niggard\textsuperscript{32} can have such perfect joy. They will say yes, but Lord, how the anxious wretches lie in their throats, full of woe and fear! They call love a folly or madness, but it only happens to them as I shall tell you: they shall forego the white and the red\textsuperscript{33} as well, and live in woe; may God give them bad fortune, and promote every faithful lover! I wish to God that these wretches who despise the service of love had ears as long as greedy Midas\textsuperscript{34} had, and had drunk as hot and strong a drink as Crassus\textsuperscript{35} drank for his evil lusts, to teach them that greed is sin, and love, despite the fact that men hold it folly, is virtue. 1393

These two of whom I am telling you were talking joyously in full trust of each other, and began to rehearse how and when and where each first knew the other, and every woe and fear that now had passed. All that heaviness, God be thanked, was turned to joy! When they came to speak of any woe of times past, the tale would always break off in kissing and fall into a new joy; and since they were now one, they used all their might to recover their bliss and be at rest, and to countervail past woe with joy. Reason wishes not that I even speak of sleep, for it has nothing to do with my matter. God knows, they thought of it very little! Lest this time so dear to them should in any way escape in vain, it was passed entirely in eager and noble joy. 1414

But soon the cock, the widely-known astronomer, began to flap on his breast and crow, and Lucifer\textsuperscript{36}, messenger of day, began to rise and throw out his beams, and eastward also rose Jupiter for any man to see, and then with sore heart Criseyde said to Troilus, “Alas that I was born, my heart’s life, my trust, my joy! What woe that day must sever us! For it is time for you to go away, or else I am ruined forever. Alas, night, why will you not hover over us as long as when Jove lay with Alcmena?\textsuperscript{37} O black night, that was created by God, as people read in books, at certain times to hide this world with your black weeds, so that under it people may rest, well may beasts complain and men scold you, that when day is to break us with labor, you flee thus away and grant not to give us rest. Too shortly you do your duty, you hasty night! Because you in malice so hasten downwards, may God, author of nature, curse you and bind you to our hemisphere so that nevermore you shall revolve under the earth! For it is through your rash hurrying out of Troy that I have so soon foregone my heaven!” 1442

At those words Troilus seemed to feel bloody tears distill out of his heart; never yet had he felt such heaviness to grow out of such joy. He began to hold his lady dear tightly in his arms, and said, “Cruel day, accuser of the happiness that love and night have stolen and covered up, cursed be your coming into Troy, for every little hole has one of your bright eyes! Envious day, why do you wish to spy so? What have you lost? What do you seek here? May God of His grace quench your light forever! Alas, pitiless day, how have lovers offended you? May yours be the pain of hell! Many lovers have you slain, and shall slay! You pour in and let them rest nowhere. Why do you offer your light here for sale? Go sell it to those who engrave little seals\textsuperscript{38}. We do not want you; we do not need to have day!” 1463

And he would scold Titan, the sun, and say, “O fool, well may men despise you, that has Aurora\textsuperscript{39} all night by your side, and allow her so soon to rise up from you, thus to plague lovers! What! Keep your bed, you and your precious Morning! I pray God for ill luck to both of you!” 1470

Then he sighed sorely and said, “My own lady, very root of my wellness and woe, O my godly Criseyde, must I be gone too? Must, I alas? My heart will burst in two! How shall I keep my life an hour, since with you is all the joy I have? What shall I do? I know not how or when I shall see the time to be with you again. God knows how it will fare with my life. Since longing for you even now so constrains me that I am dead unless I return, how can I remain long away from you? But, my own radiant lady, if I knew utterly that your own servant and knight were as firmly enclosed in your heart as you in mine (which would be more precious to me to know than to possess two such worlds as this), I should better endure my pain.” 1491

To this Criseyde answered with a sigh, “Dear heart, in truth the game has now gone so far that sooner shall Phoebus fall from his sphere, and every eagle mate with the dove, and every rock move from his place, than Troilus shall fade from Criseyde’s heart! You are so deeply engraved upon my heart that, even if I were to die upon the rack and even if I wished to turn you from my thoughts, may God save me, I could not! For the love of God who made us, let no other fancy creep into your brain and cause me to die! I beg you to have me as firmly in mind as I have you; if I could be sure that I would find that to be true, God could not increase my happiness by one point. Dear heart, be true to me, or else it would be a pitiful thing, for by heaven and by my word I am yours! Be glad therefore, and live in trust; this I never said before, nor shall to another. If it were a great gladness to you to return after you are gone,

\textsuperscript{32} Niggard. Miser.
\textsuperscript{33} White and Red. May refer to silver and gold or to white wine and red wine. As the two colors combined make a recurring image throughout Chaucer’s works, he may have something else in mind. The point to the passage, that love is more important than money, is still clear.
\textsuperscript{34} Midas. A figure of greed who so wished to possess gold was granted the power to change anything he touched into gold.
\textsuperscript{35} Crassus. Likewise a figure of greed, he was slain in by the king of Parthia in 53 B.C. and had molten gold poured into his mouth because in life he had been so greedy for wealth.
\textsuperscript{36} Lucifer. Literally, the light one or bearer of light; the morning star, Venus.
\textsuperscript{37} Alcmena. Mother of Hercules, for whom Jove, at the time of his seduction of Alcmena, extended the night to three times its normal duration.
\textsuperscript{38} Seals. Presumably because they need extra light.
\textsuperscript{39} Aurora. The dawn.
I would be as glad as you that you should, as surely as I hope for rest for my soul!” And then she took him in her arms and kissed him often. 1519

Against his will, since it must be, Troilus rose up and prepared to go, and a hundred times took his lady dear in his arms; and hurried on his way, saying in such voice as though his heart were bleeding, “Farewell, dear sweet heart, may God grant us to meet again safe and soon.” To this she answered not a word for sorrow, so sorely did their parting pain her, and Troilus went to his own palace as woebegone, to say the truth, as she was. 1530

So hard wrung him the pain of sharp desire to be again in bliss that it would not out of his remembrance. Having returned to his royal palace, he crept softly to his bed, to sleep long, as he was accustomed. But all for nothing; for all he lay and shut his eyes, sleep would not sink into his heart, for thinking how she for whom desire burned him was worth a thousand-fold more than he had believed. And in his mind he began to revolve up and down every word and look of her, and firmly to imprint in his thoughts even the least point of all that joy; and truly, from the very remembrance, longing burned him newly again, and the sweetness of love began to breed more than before, and yet there was nothing that he could do. 1547

Criseyde also, in the very same way, was enclosing in her heart the worthiness of Troilus, his lustiness, his prudent acts, his nobility, and every point of their meeting; thanking Love that he had laid siege to her so well, and longing to have her dear love again in such a situation where she dared treat him kindly. 1554

In the morning came Pandarus to his niece and greeted her fairly, saying, “All night long it rained so hard that, alas, I fear you had little chance for sleep and dreams, sweet niece! All night the rain so kept me awake that some of us must have a headache, I believe!” Then he came nearer and said, “How is it now, this bright morning? Niece, how are you doing?” 1563

“Never the better for you,” Criseyde answered, “fox that you are. May God give your heart anxiety! Before God, for all your innocent words it was you who caused all these doings. Ah, one who first sees you knows you little! With that she covered her face with the sheet and grew red for shame. 1570

Pandarus began to pry under it, and said, “Niece, if I am to be slain, here is a sword; smite off my head!” With that he thrust his arm behind her neck, and at last kissed her. 1575

I pass over all that which needs not to be said. What! God forgives our sins, and she also forgave, and began to talk merrily with her uncle, for she had nothing else against him except this. But to make an end of this thing, when the time came she went home to her house. So now Pandarus has wholly gained his purpose. 1582

Now let us turn again to Troilus, who lay long in bed restlessly, and secretly sent after Pandarus to come to him in all haste. He came at once. Little did he refuse, and greeted Troilus soberly and sat down upon his bed’s side. With all the emotion of friendly love that heart can think of; Troilus fell on his knees before Pandarus, and before he would arise from the spot he thanked him earnestly a thousand times and blessed the day that Pandarus was born to bring him out of his trouble. 1596

“Ah friend, best of all friends that ever were,” he said, “you have brought my soul to rest in heaven out of Phlegethon, the fiery river of hell. Though I could give up my life a thousand times a day in your service, it would not help a bit to pay my debt. The sun which sees all the world never saw yet, I dare stake my life, one so wholly fair and good as she whose I wholly am and ever shall be until I die. And for the fact that I am hers, may thanks be given to the high majesty of Love, and to your kind diligence! It is no little thing that you have given me, for which my life is your property forever. For it is through your help that I live, or else I had been dead now many days!” And with that word he laid himself down in his bed. 1615

Pandarus listened seriously until all was said, and then answered, “My dear friend, if I have done anything for you, God knows I am glad, as glad as a man could be of it, so God help me. But do not take what I say in the wrong way. For the love of God beware of this, that you should bring to an end the joy into which you have come. For all fortune’s sharp adversities the worst is this: for a man to have been in happiness and to remember it when it is gone. You are wise enough; therefore, make no error. Though you now sit warm and comfortable, do not be too rash; if you are, surely it will ruin you. Now you are at ease, and in this way keep yourself well in hand. For as sure as fire burns, it is as great a skill to keep something as to gain it. Bridle your speech always, and your passions, for we hold to worldly joy only by a wire, as we know well because it always breaks so often. Therefore, we must be gentle with it! 1638

“Before God, my dear friend,” said Troilus, “I hope I shall so bear myself that nothing shall be lost through my fault; nor shall I ever be so rash as to hurt her. It is not necessary to bring up this matter often. If you knew my heart well, Pandarus, in faith you would have little anxiety about this!” 1645

Then he began to tell him about that happy time, and how at first he feared that he had angered her. And then he said, “Friend, as I am a true knight, and by the faith that I owe to God and to you, I have never had it half as hot as at this moment! And the more love stings me, the more it delights me. I know not certainly how it is, but now I feel a new
quality in my love, yes, quite another one than I felt before now.” 1655

“He that once has been in the joy of heaven,” answered Pandarus, “I dare be sworn, ever afterwards feels otherwise than when he first heard tell of it.” 1659

To say all in one word, Troilus was never tired of talking about this matter, with praising to Pandarus the goodness of his own dear lady and with thanking and making much of him. This talk was begun over and over again, brand-new, until night parted them. 1666

Soon after this, as Fortune would have it, came the blissful sweet time when Troilus was forewarned that he should meet his lady again where they met before, for which he felt his heart swim in joy, and duly praised all the gods. Let us see now if he can be merry! The form and manner of her coming, and of his, were observed as before, and need not be described; in joy and security Pandarus brought the two together when they wished, and left them in quiet and peace. 1680

Now that they are together you need not ask me if they are joyful. If it was well before, it now was better a thousand-fold, I need not tell you; gone was every sorrow and fear, each sought only to please the other, and both had and knew they had as much joy as a heart can contain. This is no little thing to say; it passes every wit to describe. It is not enough to call it that perfect felicity which these wise scholars so commend. This joy cannot be written with ink; this passes all that heart can conceive. 1694

But alas, the time! They began to see the well-known signs of day’s approach, for which they seemed to feel death’s wound. They changed color for woe, and they began anew to revile day, calling it envious, traitor, and more evil names, and bitterly cursing the morning light. 1701

“Alas!” said Troilus, “now I see that Pyrois and the three other swift steeds that draw the sun’s chariot have gone by some shortcut to spite me, which makes it so soon day. And now because the sun so hastens to be up, I will never again make a sacrifice to him!” But day must part them as before, and when their loving talk and endearments were over, they set a time for another meeting. 1712

And many times they did the same, and thus for a while Fortune left Criseyde and the Trojan prince in bliss. So in contentment, bliss and singing Troilus led his life. He spends, jousts, gives feasts; he gives freely on all sides and wears many garments, and at all times keeps about him, as suited to his nature, a world of people, the best and lustiest that he could find; so that such a report of him for honor and generosity spread throughout the world that it rang upwards to the gate of heaven! And as to his love, he was in such gladness that in his heart he deemed, I believe, that there was no lover in the world so well at ease as he; and thus did love please him. 1722

The goodliness or charm that nature had placed in any other lady could not untie so much as one knot of the net that Criseyde had woven about his heart. It was so closely meshed and knit that to undo it anywhere—for anything that might happen—would never be possible. Often he would lead Pandarus by the hand into a garden, and there make such a long and joyous tale of Criseyde and her womanhood and beauty that it was heaven to hear his words; and then he would sing, in this manner:— 1743

“Love, that has the rule of earth and sea, Love that has set his laws in high heaven, Love, that with a saving bond holds the peoples joined as he wishes, Love, that frames laws for true friendship and makes wedded couples to dwell in virtue, may he bind the harmony of which I tell! 1750

“That the world with eternal fidelity holds his diverse times and seasons in concord; that the warring elements observe an ever-lasting bond; that Phoebus must lead forth his rosy day, and that the moon has lordship over the nights—all this is caused by Love, may his power always be praised! 1757

“The sea, ever greedy to flow, constrains his floods in a certain limit so that they will grow not fiercely to drown the earth and all things for evermore. And if Love ever relaxed his bridle, all that now love should leap asunder, and all would be lost that now Love holds together. 1764

“And so I wish to God, Who is the author of nature, that Love with his strong bond would encircle all hearts and tie them so firmly that none should know the way out of his bondage! And to cold hearts I wish that he should give a wrench, to make them love and have pity on sore hearts and protect those who are faithful.” 1771

In all that the siege demanded he was foremost, always the first to be clad in arms, and certainly, unless books err, most dreaded of any creature, save Hector. And this increase of hardihood came to him from love, to gain his lady’s thanks, which so changed the spirit within him. In time of truce he would ride to go hawking or else hunt boar, lion or bear. The small beasts he ignored! When he came riding back to town, often his lady, as fresh as a falcon that has just come out of the cage, was ready at her window to give him a pleasant greeting. 1785

His talk was mostly of love and virtue, and scorned all meanness, and there was no need, I promise you, to beg him to honor the worthy and relieve those in distress. And he was very glad when he heard that any lover was faring well.
For, to tell the truth, he considered everyone to be lost unless they were in Love’s high service, I mean people who rightfully well should be so. And beyond all this, he could compose his complete behavior so well from personal experience and in such a marvelous manner, that every lover thought all was well, whatever he did or said. Though he had come from royal blood, he took care not to mistreat anyone with too much pride; to each person he was kind, which won him thanks on every side. Love--praised be his grace--made him flee pride and envy, anger and greed, and every other vice. 1806

You beautiful lady, daughter to Dione, and your blind and winged son Lord Cupid aa well, you nine sisters that by the Helicon River on Mount Parnassus choose your abode, since you must leave me now, I can say no more but may you be praised forever, without end. Through you I have told in my song fully the joyous course of Troilus’ love, albeit there may have been some distress mingled in it, as my author chooses to describe. My third book thus I now end and leave Troilus in joy and peace with Criseyde, his own sweet heart. 1820

Here Ends The Third Book

Book IV

Here Begins The Prologue of the Fourth Book.

But alack the day! Such joy lasts all too little; thanks to Fortune, who always seems truest when she wishes to deceive, and she can so attune her song to fools that she catches and blinds them, the common traitor! And when a creature is thrown down from her wheel, then she laughs and makes faces at him. From Troilus she began to turn away her bright face, and took no note of him, but cast him cleanly out of his lady’s grace and set up Diomed on her wheel. 11

For this my heart begins to bleed even now, and my very pen to quake for fear of what I must write; for the matter of my book must henceforth be how Criseyde and Troilus or at least how she was unkind, as people write who have handed down the story. Alas, that they should ever know cause to speak ill of her, and if they slander her, in truth they should have the ignominy themselves! O you Erinyes, Night’s three daughters, that lament in endless torture, Megaera, Alecto, Tisiphone, and you cruel Mars also, father to Quirinus, please help me finish this fourth book, that in it may be fully showed Troilus’ loss of life and love together. 28

Here Ends The Prologue To The Fourth Book.

Here Begins The Fourth Book.

While the mighty Greeks were lying about the city of Troy as a troop, as I have said before, and Phoebus was shining from the breast of Hercules’ Lion, it happened that Hector with many bold barons planned to fight with the Greeks, as he was accustomed, to do them what harm he could. I know not how long it was between the taking of this purpose and the day they meant to sally forth; but one day Hector and many worthy creatures issued through the gates in armor bright and fair, with spear in hand and big bows bent, and soon their enemies met them beard to beard in the field. With spears ground sharp, with arrows, darts, swords and fierce maces they fought all the day long, and brought horse and man to the ground, and with their axes dashed out brains. But the last assault, to confess the truth, the people of Troy conducted so poorly that they had the worse and fled homewards at night. 49

On this day Antenor was taken prisoner, in spite of the prowess of Polydamas or Mnesteus, Xanthippus, Sarpedon, Polymnestor, Polytes, or the Trojan Sir Riphaeus, and such other lesser people as Phoebuseus; so that for that blow the people of Troy dreaded in great part to lose their safety. But nevertheless at their urgent asking a truce was made, and they began to treat for making an exchange of prisoners, and, for the surplus which the Greeks had, gave large sums; and soon this plan was known in every street in town, and also in the camp, and among the first it reached Calchas’ ear. 63

When he had learned that this treaty was to be carried through, he went and pressed into the council among the old Greek lords and sat him down where he was accustomed; and with a changed face begged a favor, and that for the love of God they should offer him such reverence as to cease from noise and give him a hearing. 70

“Lo, my lords,” then he said, “I was once a Trojan, as it is doubtedless known; and, if you so remember, I am Calchas, who first of all gave you comfort when you needed it, and informed you well how you should prosper. For doubt you not that before long through your means, Troy shall be burnt and beaten down to the ground. And in what manner you are to destroy this town and achieve all your will, you have before now heard me describe. This you know, my lords, I believe. And because the Greeks were so dear to me, to teach you how in this case you would fare best, I came myself in my proper person, having no regard for my treasure or my income, in comparison with your well-being.

40 Bright lady. Venus.
41 Nine sisters. The Nine Muses.
42 Erinyes (Herynes). The three Furies.
43 Quirinus. One of the names for Romulus, one of the founders of Rome.

44 Phoebus. The sun.
45 Hercules. Lion. The zodiacal sign of Leo.
Thus I left all my goods and came to you, my lords, deeming that I should please you in this. 88

“All this loss brings me no regret; I am willing, as I hoped to be saved, for your sake to lose all that I have in Troy, except a daughter whom I left at home asleep, when I fled out of the town, alas! What a cruel and harsh father I was! How could I have had so hard a heart? Alas that I brought her not in her shift! For sorrow of this I will not live until tomorrow, unless you lords have pity on me. For before now I saw no way to deliver her, I have held my peace; but now, or never, I may have her very soon if it please you. Grant me help and grace! Among all this gathering may some have compassion on this old wretch in trouble, since it is for you that I have all this heaviness! You have now Trojans enough fettered in prison, and, if it be your will, my child may now be redeemed by one of them. Now for the love of God and of generosity, alas, grant me one out of so many. 110

“Why refuse this prayer, since you shall shortly have both town and people? On peril of my life, I lie not; Apollo has told it me faithfully, and I have also found it in the stars, and by divination and augury, and I dare to say that the time is hard at hand when fire and flame shall spread over all the town, and thus shall Troy turn to cold ashes. For it is certain that Phoebus and Neptune, who made the walls of the town, are so angered with the people of Troy that they will bring it to ruin even for anger with King Laomedon; because he would not pay them their hire, the town shall yet be set in flames.” 126

As this grey old man was telling his tale, humble in his speech and looks, the salt tears ran fast over his two cheeks. So long he begged them for aid that, to relieve his bitter sighs, they granted him Antenor without more pause. And who was glad but Calchas then! And soon he laid his charges on them who should be exchanged in the treaty, and earnestly prayed them to bring back King Thoas and Criseyde in return for Antenor; and when King Priam had granted his safe-conduct, the ambassadors went straight to Troy. 140

When the cause of their coming had been told, the aged King Priam summoned then his whole parliament, whose decision was that the exchange of prisoners and all the requests pleased them well, and so the ambassadors proceeded. 147

Troilus was present when Criseyde was asked in place of Antenor, and very nearly died to hear the words. His face changed soon, but lest men should spy his feeling, he said not a word and with manly heart kept his sorrow under. Full of anguish and grisly fear he awaited what other lords should say. If they should grant the exchange of her (God forbid!), then he thought of two things: first to save her honor and then how best he might withstand the exchange. 160

Diligently he considered it. Love made him eager to keep her and to die rather than let her go, but on the other side Reason said to him, “Do not so without her assent, lest, if you resist it, she should become your enemy, and say that through your meddling your loves are blown abroad which before were unknown.” Thus he thought it best that, even though the lords wished that she should go, he would let them decide as they wished, and tell it to his lady first; and when she had told him her wish, then he would fall speedily to work, though all the world should strive against it. 175

Hector, when he heard how the Greeks would have Criseyde for Antenor, resisted it and answered gravely, “Sirs, she is no prisoner. I know not who laid this charge upon you, but for my part you may say to them directly that we are not accustomed here to have women for sale.” 182

An outcry immediately then arose as violent as the blaze of straw set a-fire; for their evil fortune would have it so that the Trojans demanded the cause of their own ruin. “Hector,” they cried, “what spirit inspires you thus to shield this woman and cause us to lose Antenor, so wise and bold a baron? You choose a wrong course. He is one of the greatest of our townsmen, and anyone may see we have need of people. Hector, leave behind such fancies. King Priam,” they cried, “we say this, that we all vote to give up Criseyde and to deliver Antenor.” 196

Ah Lord Juvenal, your sage words are true, that people so little know what is to be desired that often they find their ruin thus, blinded to their true advantage by the cloud of error. And, lo, here is a prime example! These people desire now to deliver Antenor, who brought them to disaster; for he was afterwards traitor to the town of Troy. Alas, they let him free too early: foolish world, behold your discernment! Criseyde, who never did them harm, shall no longer bathe in bliss. Antenor should come home, and she should leave, so everyone demanded. So the parliament pronounced that Criseyde should be yielded up for Antenor, and it was decreed by the president. Though Hector often prayed against it, and whatever creature spoke against it, all was for nothing; it must and should be, for the larger part of the parliament would have it so. 217

When the assembly had broken up, Troilus without a word sped to his chamber, all alone, except for a man or two of his, whom he ordered to leave quickly, for he wished sleep, as he told them. And then he laid himself down upon his bed. As in winter the leaves drop away one by one until the tree is naked and nothing but branch and bark, so lay Troilus bereft of all his welfare, bound in the black bark of misery, ready to go out of his mind, so sorely had the exchanging of Criseyde oppressed him. 231

This sorrowful man rose up and shut every door and window and then sat himself down upon his bed’s side, like an image of a dead man, pale and ashen. Then the woe
heaped up in his breast began to burst out, and he in his
frenzy acted like a wild bull when he is pierced to the heart,
and plunges here and there and roars aloud in lament of his
death. So Troilus flung himself about the chamber, smiting
his breast violently with his fists over and over again, and
beating his head upon the wall and his body on the ground
for to kill himself. His two eyes streamed out like two swift
springs. His loud sobs so bereft him of speech that he
scarcely could say, “O death, alas, why will you not take
me! Cursed be the day when Nature framed me to be a
living creature!” 252

But when the fury that twisted and oppressed his heart by
length of time began somewhat to assuage, he laid himself
down to rest on his bed. But then began his tears to burst
out still more, to such an extent that it is a wonder that a
man’s body could hold out against half this grieving. Then
he said thus, “Alas the day! Fortune, what have I done,
what is my crime? How did you have the heart to deceive
me so? Is there no grace, must I perish? Must Criseyde
depart? How can you find it in your heart to be so cruel to
me? Have I not honored you all my life above all the
gods, my heart and let it burst, and follow forever your lady; your
ground! Soul, lurking in this woe, leave your nest; fly from
you not fly out of the most woeful body that ever walked on
darkness. 301

A thousand sighs, hotter than coals, passed one after
another out of his breast, mingled with the plaints which at
all times fed his woe and with his never-ceasing tears. In a
word, his pains so racked him, and he grew so weak, that he
felt at last neither joy nor suffering, but lay in a trance. 343

Pandarus, who had heard at the parliament what every
lord and burgess said, and how the exchange had been
decreed with one voice, began very nearly to go out of his
mind. Scarcely knowing what he did, he rushed to Troilus.
A knight, who at the time was keeping the chamber door,
undid it at once, and Pandarus went softly into the dark
chamber toward the bed, tenderly weeping and so dazed
that he knew not what to say. With his face all drawn and
arms folded he stood before Troilus and looked on his
piteous face. But, Lord, how chilled grew his heart to see
his friend in woe! When Troilus was aware of his friend, he
began to melt as the snow before the sun, for which
Pandarus wept as tenderly as he; and for a space the two
were speechless, and could not say one word for grief. 371

But at last Troilus, nearly dead for suffering, burst out in a
groan, and said in a husky voice amid his sighs and sobs,
“When my heart is dead, receive in kindness the spirit that
hastens to you, for it shall ever be your servant. Therefore it
matters not if the body may die! Lovers, who are set high
upon the wheel of Fortune in good estate, may God grant
that you ever find love of steel, and long may your lives
endure in joy! But when you pass my sepulcher, remember
your comrade rests there, for I, though unworthy, loved too.
Corrupt, wicked old man, Calchas I mean, alas, what ailed
you to become a Greek, since you were born Trojan?
Calchas, who will be my bane, you were born in a cursed
hour for me! I pray to blessed Jove that I once had you
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glad, dear friend; if she should be lost, we shall find another! What! God forbid that all pleasure should be in one thing only and in none else! If one can sing, another can dance well; if one be pleasant, another is merry and light-hearted; and this one is pretty and that one carries herself well. Each thing is prized for its singular virtue, this falcon for heron and that one for waterfowl. “The new love often drives out the old,” as writes Zanzis", who was very wise. A fresh case will have a fresh plan. 416

“Think too that you are bound to preserve your own life. Such a fire as yours must by nature grow cool in time, for since it is but chance pleasure, some chance will put it out of your remembrance. For as sure as day follows night, a new love, or labor or other trouble, or else seldom seeing the beloved one, causes old affections to pass away. As for you, one of these you will have, to shorten your sharp and bitter pains; her absence will drive her out of your heart!”

427

These words he said only to help his friend, lest he should die for sorrow, and assuredly, so he stanched his woe, he understood not what nonsense he spoke. But Troilus gave little heed to it all. One ear heard it, and it went out the other. But at last he answered, and said, “Friend, this medical treatment, and to be healed thus, would be very well if I were such a fiend as to betray her who is true to me. But I pray to God, may such counsel go to the Devil! May I die at once on this spot, before I do as you wish me to do! She whom I serve, to whom my heart is rightly given, shall have me as wholly hers until I die, whatever you say. What, Pandarus! Since I have promised her, I will be false to please no one, but as her man I will live and die, and never serve another creature. 448

“And when you say you will find another as fair as she--leave that behind, do not compare her with any being formed here by nature. O my dear Pandarus, stop there! You shall never convince me with all this. Therefore I beg you hold your peace: you slay me with your words. You bid me let Criseyde go, and get me another fresh new love. It lies not in my power, dear friend, and even if I could I would not. Can you play at rackets 47 with love to and fro, in and out, now this and now that. May woe come to her who cares for your woe. You, Pandarus, treat me as if I were one who comes swifly to a man in pain and says, “Think not of pain and you shall feel none!” You must first transform me into a rock and take from me all my passions, before you can so lightly take my woe from me. This sorrow may undermine my breast so long that death may well take my life from it. But Criseyde’s arrow will nevermore leave my soul, and when I am dead I will go dwell in pain with Proserpina 48, and there I will eternally lament this woe, and how the two of us are divided. 476

“And then you also made here an argument how it should be a lesser pain to forego Criseyde because she has truly been mine and we were together in ease and happiness. Why do you talk such gibberish, who once said to me, “It is worse for him who is thrown out of good fortune than if he had never known that good fortune”? But tell me this: since it seems to you so light a thing to change ever to and fro in love, why have you not done your best to exchange her who has caused all your trouble? Why not let her slip out of your heart? Why not love another sweet lady, who may set your heart at ease? If you have ever had misfortune in love, yet cannot drive it from your heart, tell me how I, who have lived in lustiness and joy as much as any man alive, should forget it, and do it so soon? 494

“Where have you been cloistered so long, who argue with such formal logic? No, Pandarus, all your counsel is worth nothing, and finally, in spite of anything, I am doomed to death. Ah death, the ender of every grief, come now, since I have called you so often! For kindly is death when, often called, he comes and ends pain. Well I know that, while I lived in peace, I would have paid ransom before death should slay me; but now his coming is so sweet that there is nothing on earth I long after more. O death, please either quench with your cold stroke this heat of sorrow, or else drown me now in tears. You at all times slay so many in so many ways, unmanned, against their will: do me this service at my prayer. Deliver the world now of the most woeful creature that ever was, for it is time that I die who am useless in the world!”

518

And then Troilus distilled in tears like liquor out of an alembic. Pandarus held his peace and cast his eyes upon the ground; but at last he thought, “What, by God! Rather than my comrade should die I will say something more to him!” Friend, “he began, “since you are so heavily burdened, yet are pleased to blame my arguments, why not reverse your sorrow and by your own manhood stop all this trouble? Can you not carry her off? Shame on you! Either keep her here, or let her go and leave this foolish grief. Are you in Troy, yet have no hardihood to seize upon a woman who loves you and wishes herself to be on your side? Isn’t this all just a foolish vanity? Rise up and leave behind your weeping and show you are a man. Within this hour I will be dead or she shall remain with us!”

539

To this Troilus answered gently, “Dear brother, of all this I myself have often thought, and of more yet. But why it cannot be you shall hear; and when you have given me a hearing, then you may speak your mind entirely. First, since the town has all this war because of the violent ravishing of women, as you know, I should never be permitted to do so great a wrong. I should also be blamed by every creature if

46 Zanzis. The source is not certain, but the best possibility is Zeuxis, the painter who assembled the best features of a number of women in order to approximate the beauty of Helen.
47 Rackets. A predecessor to tennis.
48 Proserpina. Goddess of the underworld
I so resisted my father’s decree, since she is to be exchanged for the town’s good. I have thought also, so she would agree, to ask my father’s grace; then I thought, this would serve to accuse her, and to no purpose, since I know well I cannot gain her thus. For since my father has sealed her exchange in so high a place as parliament, he would not take back his word for me. 560

“Most of all I fear to trouble her heart by violent acts if I do such a thing; if I should do it openly, it must be slander to her reputation, and I would rather die than defame her. God forbid that I should not hold her honor dearer than my life! Thus for anything that I can see, I am lost; for certainly, being her knight, I must hold her honor dearer than myself in every case. Thus I am pulled between desire and reason; desire counsels me to trouble her, and reason and fear will not.” So, weeping as if he could never stop, he said, “Alas, how wretchedly shall I go on! I feel my love and the causes of my woe ever increase, Pandarus, and hope is ever less and less. Alack and alack! Why will my heart not burst? In love there is little ease for the heart.” 581

“Brother, for all of me,” said Pandarus, “you may do as you wish. But if I had it so hot, and were of your rank, she should go with me. Even if the entire town cried out on this thing in chorus, I should not care a penny for the noise. When people have shouted well, then let them whisper, for a cause for wonder lasts never in town but nine nights! 588

“Consider not reasons so deeply and subtly, but help yourself now. It is better that others weep than yourself, and most of all since you two have become one. Be found a little to blame rather than die here like a gnat, without any hurt. Rise up, by my head, she shall not go! 595

“It is not ravishment or sin, in my mind, to detain her who loves you most of all. Perhaps she may hold you for a fool, to let her go in this way to the Greek camp. Consider also, as you well know, Fortune helps the strong in his enterprise, and flees from wretches for their cowardice. 602

“Though your lady might be a little vexed, hereafter very well you shall make your peace, but as for me I truly cannot believe that even now she could take it badly. Why then should your heart quake in fear? Think how Paris your brother has his love; then why should not you have yours? 609

“And, Troilus, one thing I dare swear to you. If Criseyde your beloved loves you as well as you love her, before God she will not take it badly if you remedy this mischief. And if she is willing to pass forth from you, then she is false; so love her the less! Therefore take knightly heart, and think that for love every law is broken every day. Show now somewhat your courage and strength. Fear not, but have mercy on yourself. Let not this wretched woe gnaw upon your heart, but stake the world like a man on the cast of the dice, and if you die as a martyr, go to heaven! I will stand by you myself in this act, though I and all my kin at once should lie in the street like dead dogs, stricken through with many wide, bloody wounds. In every case you shall find me a friend. But if you wish to die here like a wretch, adieu, and let the Devil have him who cares!” 630

At these words Troilus began to come to life. “God have mercy, friend,” he said, “I agree. But, in truth and finally, though I should die otherwise, you cannot so spur me, nor pain so torment me, that I should plan to take her away unless she herself wills it.” 637

“Be that as it may be,” answered Pandarus. “But tell me then, you that have been grieving so, have you sought her wishes?” 640

“No,” he answered. 640

“Where does this dismay come from then,” said Pandarus, “when you know not that she will be ill-pleased to be carried off, since you have not been with her? Has some angel whispered it in your ear? Rise up, then, as if nothing were amiss, wash your face and go to the king, or he may wonder why you are thus absent. You must by your prudence deceive him and the others, or perchance he may send after you before you are aware. In a word, dear brother, be of good cheer and let me take care of this affair. For I shall so manage it that somehow and sometime this night you shall come to private speech with your lady, and by her words and by her looks you shall very soon learn all her mind, and what is best to do. And now farewell, for on this I rest.” 658

The swift Rumor, which reports things false and true equally, flew on ready wings through Troy from man to man, ever freshly telling this tale, how Calchas’ fair-faced daughter was to be exchanged for Antenor by decree of parliament. As soon as she had heard this tale, Criseyde, caring nothing for her father at such a time, nor whether he lived or died, heartily prayed Jupiter to confound him who brought such a report! Soon she began to fear to ask any person about it, lest it might be true, for all her heart and mind she had so utterly given to Troilus, so that all this world could not loosen her love nor cast him out of her heart, but she must be his as long as life should last. Thus she was so burning between love and fear that she knew not what to do. 679

But as we see in towns everywhere that women will ever be visiting their friends, so a crowd of women began to come to Criseyde, for piteous joy, thinking to please her. And with their various opinions, which were not worth much, the women, who dwelled in the city, sat themselves down, and, as I shall tell, discussed the matter. 686

Said one first, “I am truly glad for your sake, who are going to see your father.” 688
“In truth,” said another, “am not I so glad, for it is too short a time that she has been with us.” 690

“I hope,” said the third, “that she will bring in peace on both sides, and may God almighty conduct her when she goes!” 693

All this womanly talk she heard no more than as if she were in another place. All the while, though her body sat among them, God knows her attention and her heart were elsewhere. Her soul was roaming after Troilus, and without a word she thought of him. And these women, intending to please her, went on pouring out their talk about nothing. Such trivial things could bring no comfort to her who meanwhile was on fire with quite another feeling than they supposed; so that she felt her heart almost die within her for woe and for weariness of that company. Therefore no longer could she restrain her welling tears, which gave signs of the bitter pain of her spirit, when she remembered from what heaven into what hell she had fallen, now that she must forego the sight of Troilus. 714

Criseyde, full of pitiful sorrow, went up out of the hall into her chamber and fell on her couch nearly dead, fully determined never to rise from that place; and she began to act as I shall tell you. The salt tears poured out from her two eyes like a shower in April. She beat her white breast, cried a thousand times for death, and believed herself a lost creature, because she must forego him who alone was accustomed to lighten her woe. She tore her wavy hair of sun-like hue, ever wrung her long and slender fingers, and prayed to God for His mercy to cure her ills by death. 739

Her pale hue, once so bright, bore witness of her woe and stress, and thus she spoke sobbing: “Alas! woeful wretch, luckless being, born under a cursed constellation, I must go from this place and part from my knight. Woe to that day when I first saw him with my two eyes, and above all else woe to that evening that causes me, as I him, all this pain! What will he do? What shall I do, how shall I live if I part from him? Dear heart that I love so, who shall do away the sorrow that you are in now? O father Calchas, may this crime be at your door, and cursed be the day when Argiva bore me of her body to be a living soul. 763

“To what purpose might I live in such sorrow? What is Criseyde worth apart from Troilus? How should a fish last without water, or a plant or other creature without its natural food? Thus I have often heard the saying, ‘Earthless, green things soon die.’ Thus I shall do: since I dare not handle sword or arrow, for their cruelty, from the day when I leave you (if the sorrow of leaving does not kill me) no meat or drink shall enter my body, until my soul is unsheathed from my breast, and thus I shall slay myself. 777

“And Troilus, all my dress shall be black, to signify that I who was accustomed to possess you in peace, dear heart, am as one withdrawn from worldly life; and until death meet me, my convent-rules shall ever be sorrow, lament and abstinence. I bequeath my heart and the woeful ghost therein to complain eternally with your spirit, for they shall never part. Though on earth we two may be parted, yet in those compassionate fields where Pluto reigns 49, and where there is no torment, shall we be together, as Orpheus is with his mate Eurydice. Alas, dear heart, thus for Antenor I shall soon be given up! But how shall you fare in this woeful case? How shall your tender heart support it? Forget this sorrow, my love, and me also; for in truth, so you fare well, I care not that I shall die.” 798

How could the complaints that she made in her distress ever be all read or sung? I know not, and, as for me, if I could describe all her grief, my little pen should make it seem less than it was and childishly deface her noble sorrow. Therefore I pass it by. 805

You have heard me tell how it was agreed that Pandarus should be sent from Troilus to Criseyde; and so he came secretly to tell his message, where she lay in torment and in frenzy, and behaving in piteous manner. He found her breast and face bathed with her salt tears, her mighty tresses unbraided and her sun-like hair hanging all about her ears, which gave him a true sign of the torment of death that she was longing for. When she saw him, she began for shame to hide her tearful face in her arms, at which Pandarus was so woebegone and so steeped in pity that he scarce could remain in the chamber. For if at first she had wailed bitterly, now she began to wail a thousand times more. 826

“Dear uncle Pandarus,” she began, between her sobs, “was the great first cause of many joys to me, which is now transformed into cruel woe. Am I now to welcome you or not, who first brought me into the service of love which, alas, is ending thus? Does love end, then, in woe? Yes, or men lie, and so does every earthly joy, I think. Sorrow always takes possession of the end of bliss, and whoever believes it not let him look on me, woeful wretch, hating myself and cursing my birth, as I feel myself pass from grief to desperation. Whoever sees me, sees at once sorrow and pain, torment, lament and woe; there is no harm lacking

49 Where Pluto reigns. I.e., in Hades.
to my woeful body--anguish, cruel bitterness, languor, annoyance, smarting, dread, fury, and sickness. I believe truly tears rain down from heaven in pity of my bitter suffering.” 847

“You, my distressful sister,” said Pandarus, “what do you plan to do? Do you have no regard for yourself? Why will you destroy yourself, alas! Leave all this sorry work behind and listen to what I shall say, and listen meekly to the message that I bring from your Troilus!” 854

Criseyde turned to herself then, making such lament that it was death to behold. “Alas, what words,” she said, “can you bring? What can my dear heart say, whom I fear never to see again? Will he have a shower of tears from me before I go? I have enough, if that is what he sends after!” 861

To look upon her face was as if to look upon one swathed and carried on a bier. Her face, once the image of Paradise, was now changed into quite another sort; the sportiveness, the laughter and every joyous trait that men were accustomed to find in her were all fled, she lay deserted by them all. Her two eyes were encircled by purple rings, a true sign of her pain, so that it was a deathly sight to behold. Therefore Pandarus could not restrain his tears from pouring down. But nevertheless as best he could he repeated the message of Troilus. 875

“Niece, I believe well you have heard how the king and other lords have thought it best to make an exchange of Antenor and you, which is the cause of all our trouble and woe. How this thing pains Troilus no man’s tongue on earth can tell, for his final resolve is to die. For this we have so grieved, he and I, that it has very nearly slain us both, but through my counsel he has at last somewhat given over his sorrow, grieving, he and I, that it has very nearly slain us both, but I promise you.” 945

Pandarus departed and sought Troilus, until he found him all alone in a temple, caring no longer for life, moaning and praying tenderly to each of the merciful gods to let him pass soon out of the world. That there was no other favor for him he thought well, and (to say it all in few words) he was so fallen into despair that he was utterly resolved to die. For thus was ever his argument: he said, “I am utterly lost, alas! For all things that happen, come by necessity; thus it is my destiny to be lost. For certainly I know well that divine Providence has ever foreseen that I should lose Criseyde; since there is no doubt that God foresees all things, and ordains and disposes them to be as they have deserved to be. 966

“But nevertheless whom shall I believe? Alas! For though there may be many great scholars that prove foreordination by arguments, some men say that nothing comes of necessity; but that free choice is granted to every one of us. Alack! So cunning are ancient scholars I do not know whose opinion to hold. For some men say, if God foresees everything—and God cannot be deceived, by God—then that must happen, though men had sworn it should not, which Providence has foreseen. Thus I say that, if from eternity He has known our thoughts and deeds, then, just as these scholars declare, we have no free choice. For other thoughts or deeds could never come to pass but such as infallible Providence has all-wisely foreseen. For if there might be a chance to twist our way from God’s foreknowledge, then there would be no prescience in God, but rather only an uncertain expectation. And surely it would be blasphemy to believe that God has no more perfect and clear knowledge than we men, who have doubtful conjecturings. But it would be false and foul and wicked cursedness to fancy in God such a possibility of erring. 987
“Also this is an opinion of some whose crowns are shorn high and smooth, that things come not because Providence has foreseen them, but that because things are to come, therefore Providence all-wisely foresees them. Therefore in this opinion the necessity passes in the opposite direction. For the necessity is not that what is foreseen must surely happen, but (as they say) that what happens must all surely have been foreseen. Herein I am inquiring diligently which thing is the cause of which—God’s foreknowledge the cause of the necessity of things to come, or the necessity of things to come the cause of the foreknowledge. But though I strive not further to show in what order the causes stand, I know well that things foreknown must certainly occur, even if it follow not from this that it was the foreknowledge which made the occurrence necessary. 1022

“For if a man should be sitting yonder on a seat, then surely your belief that he is sitting must be true; and even as true must be the converse, that, if your belief be true because he is sitting, then he must be sitting. And thus there is necessity on either side, in his necessity of sitting and in your necessity of rightness. But, you may say, the man sits not because your belief that he is sitting is true; but, rather, because the man was already sitting, therefore your belief is true, in faith. And I say, though your belief may be true because of his sitting, yet there is interchange of necessity between him and you. 1043

“Thus in the same way, as it seems to me, I may frame my reasoning on God’s providence and on things to come; by which reasoning men may well see that those things which come to pass on earth come all by necessity. For although it be true that because a thing is to come it is foreseen, and not that it be to come because it is foreseen; yet nevertheless one of the two must be true, that a thing to come must be foreseen, or else a thing foreseen comes of necessity, which in truth suffices utterly to destroy our free choice. But now it is absurd to say that the occurrence of temporal things is cause of God’s eternal prescience; truly that would be a false conclusion. 1064

“What would be such a thought but to believe that God foresees things to come only because they are to come, and that all things which have happened in the past have been the cause of that sovereign providence which infallibly foreknows all things? Just as when I know there is a thing, that thing must be so, so too when I know a thing as coming, come it must. And thus the occurrence of things known before the time cannot be escaped by any path.” And then he ended, “Almighty Jove upon your throne, who knows the truth about all this, pity my sorrow and let me die now, or else bring Criseyde and me out of our trouble!” 1082

While he was in this heaviness, disputing with himself in this matter, Pandarus came in. “O mighty God upon your throne!” he said: “Ah, who ever saw a wise man carry himself so! Why, Troilus! Have you such pleasure to be your own enemy? What do you plan to do? Criseyde is not gone yet, by God! Why allow fear so to destroy you that your eyes seem dead in your face? Did you not live all your life before without her, and did you fare well and at ease? Were you born for her and no other? Did Nature fashion you only to please her? Can you not think about this in your trouble, that as chances fall in dice, so there come and go pleasures in love? And this is my foremost wonder: why you sorrow in this way when you know not yet how her departure shall take place, nor have you yet tested her wit, whether she can herself avert the departure. It is time then for a man to sorrow at the hard necessity and to offer his neck, when his head must come off. 1106

“Therefore listen carefully to what I say, I have been with her talking a long while, just as you and I agreed, and it seems to me more than ever that she has something in the privacy of her heart by which, if I perceive correctly, she can put a stop to this whole thing you fear. Therefore my advice is that you go to her at night and make an end of this. I hope that of her great might blessed Juno50 will send her grace to us. My heart says, “Certainly she shall not go.” Therefore let your heart rest a while and be constant; that is best.” 1120

“You speak very well,” Troilus answered, sighing sorely, “and I will do just so.” And then he said to him what more he wished. When it was time to go, he came alone privately to her, as he was accustomed. And how they acted I will tell you now. It is the truth that when they first came together, the sorrow so wrung their hearts that neither could greet the other, but could only embrace and softly kiss. Which had less woe knew not what to do nor could bring out a word, for woeful sobbing. The tears which they let fall were as bitter, beyond the manner of tears, as aloes or gall. The woeful Myrrha51, as I find written in books, wept not through her bark tears so bitterly; there is not so hard a heart in all this world that would not have felt compassion. 1141

But when their two weary spirits returned to their proper seats, by length of sobbing the pain began somewhat to grow dull, and the spring of bitter tears to ebb, and their swelling hearts to subside. Criseyde spoke thus, with broken voice all hoarse with crying: “O Jove, I die! Mercy, I beg! Help, Troilus!” With this her woeful spirit was on the point of flitting from its home, and she laid her face upon his breast and lost the power of speech. 1155

Thus she lay with her hue entirely livid which once was the freshest and fairest ever seen; as he gazed upon her, calling her name, she lay as if dead, answerless, her limbs cold and her eyes rolled upward, and the sorrowful man

50 Juno. Wife of Jupiter, patron of wives and advocate of fidelity in love.
51 Myrrha. Traditional image of a weeping woman. For deceiving and seducing him, she was turned into a myrrh tree and wept myrrh tears.
could think of nothing to do except to kiss her cold mouth again and again. God Himself knows that he was woeful! He arose and stretched her out at length; for anything that he could find, there was no sign of life in her. So often his song was, “Alas! Alas!” When he saw how she lay speechless, with sorrowful voice and joyless heart he said to himself that she was gone from this world. After he had bewailed her long, wrung his hands, said what he could not avoid saying, and besprinkled his breast with salt tears, then he began to wipe his tears dry and with piteous devotion to pray for her soul, and said, Lord, upon your throne, have pity also on me, for I must shortly follow her!” 1176

She was entirely cold and without feeling, so far as he could tell, and he could feel no breath, which to him was a faithful sign that she was gone forth out of this world. And when he saw that there was no other resource, he placed her limbs in such a fashion as men do for people who are to be laid on bier. And then with stern and savage heart he plucked his sword out of its sheath to slay himself, whatever agony it might cost; so that his soul might follow hers where the decree of Minos should place it, since love and cruel Fortune wished not that he should live longer in this world. 1190

“O cruel Jove, and you, hostile Fortune,” he said, filled with high scorn, “I can not say otherwise than that you have falsely slain Criseyde; and since you can do no worse to me, fie on your might and your works so perverse! You shall never succeed against me in such a cowardly way—no death shall part me from my lady! For since you have slain her thus, I will leave this world and hasten forth after her spirit. Never shall a lover say that Troilus dared not for fear die with his lady; in very truth I will bear her company. But since you will not suffer us to live here, yet suffer our souls to be together. And you, city, that I leave thus woefully, thou, Priam, and my mother and all my brethren, far well, since you will not suffer us to live here, yet suffer our souls to be here; and in order that it may be so I will show you my purpose to find the best way to help us. But what remedy is there here except that we make our plans soon to meet again? This is the conclusion of the whole matter, dear sweet heart! Now that I shall guide things so that I shall return soon after I have gone—of this I have no manner of doubt. Certainly within a week or two I shall be here; and in order that it may be so I will show you a multitude of ways in few words. I will not make a long speech, for time lost can never be recovered, but I will go right to my conclusion. And forgive me, for God’s love, if I speak anything against your heart’s rest, for truly I say it for the best. And I protest that this thing that I shall say is only to show you my purpose to find the best way to help us. And I beg you to take it in no other way, for, surely, I will do whatever you command me; there is no question about that. 1295

“I suppose our woe is for nothing else than because we must part. Considering all, we shall find nothing else amiss. But what remedy is there here except that we make our plans soon to meet again? This is the conclusion of the whole matter, dear sweet heart! Now that I shall guide things so that I shall return soon after I have gone—of this I have no manner of doubt. Certainly within a week or two I shall be here; and in order that it may be so I will show you a multitude of ways in few words. I will not make a long speech, for time lost can never be recovered, but I will go right to my conclusion. And forgive me, for God’s love, if I speak anything against your heart’s rest, for truly I say it for the best. And I protest that this thing that I shall say is only to show you my purpose to find the best way to help us. And I beg you to take it in no other way, for, surely, I will do whatever you command me; there is no question about that. 1295

Now listen; you know well that my going is so fully decreed by parliament that I judge it cannot be annulled by the entire world. And since no plan to hinder it can help us, let that pass out of mind, and let us devise a better way. It is true that our parting will trouble and distress us cruelly, but he that serves Love must sometimes have pains if he would

52 Minos. Judge of the underworld. In life, he was the king of Crete.
53 Cyprian Venus. The island of Cyprus was considered sacred to Venus.
have joy. And since I am to go no farther from the city than I can ride back in half a morning, it ought to cause us less sorrow. I shall not be so caged up that, since you well know there is now a truce, you shall not well learn of my condition from day to day, my own dear heart. And before the truce is over I shall be here, and thus you will have won both Antenor and me also. Strive now to be cheerful, and think, “Criseyde is gone now, but she will speedily return!”

“Very shortly, by heaven. Before ten days, I’ll be bound to return. And then soon you will be so glad because we shall evermore be together, that the whole world could not express our joy. Often, as we are now, to hide our secret, we have found it best that you speak not with me for a whole fortnight nor I with you, nor even see you in the street. Can you not then wait ten days in such a case to save my honor? If not, in faith, you can bear little. 1330

“You know too how all my kin are here, save only my father, and everything else that is mine, and especially you, dear heart, whom I would not cease to see for all this world, wide as it is! If this is false, may I never behold Jove’s face in heaven! Why, do you believe that my father so craves to think, “Criseyde is gone now, but she will speedily return!”? 1353

“Here is another way, if all this does not satisfy you. My father is old, as you know well, and age is full of unkind,” he said, “and if you return not on the day set, I shall never again have health or honor or joy. For as truly as the sun rises in the morning, and so surely may God bring to return. And then soon you will be so glad because we shall evermore be together, that the whole world could not express our joy. Often, as we are now, to hide our secret, we have found it best that you speak not with me for a whole fortnight nor I with you, nor even see you in the street. Can you not then wait ten days in such a case to save my honor? If not, in faith, you can bear little. 1330

“You know too how all my kin are here, save only my father, and everything else that is mine, and especially you, dear heart, whom I would not cease to see for all this world, wide as it is! If this is false, may I never behold Jove’s face in heaven! Why, do you believe that my father so craves to see me thus, except for fear, lest people in this town despise me for his unhappy act? What does he know of the life that I lead? If he knew how well I am doing in Troy, we should not be grieving over my departure. 1344

“You see too that every day more and more men talk of peace, and it is supposed that Queen Helen shall be given back, and that the Greeks shall amend all the ways they have injured us. So though there may be no other comfort than that on every side men are proposing peace, you may dwell in more ease of heart. For if there will be peace, dear heart, of necessity men must gather together and ever be riding and walking to and fro as thick as bees fly in a hive, and every creature have liberty to remain where he wishes, without leave. And even if there should be no peace, here I must return; for where should I go, or how should I remain there ever in fright among those men of arms? A plague upon it all! Therefore, so may God help me, I cannot see what you should fear. 1365

“How I mean it I will tell you. I will take to my father the goods that I have in this town, and say they are sent in trust from a friend or two of his to save them; these friends fervently pray him to send in haste after more, while the town stands thus in jeopardy. And that shall be a huge amount, I shall tell him. But lest people should see it, this may be sent by none but me. I shall also show him how many friends I have near the court, if peace should come, to mollify the wrath of Priam and bring him back to grace. 1393

“So, in one way or another, I shall so enchant him with my words, sweet one, so that he shall dream his soul is right in heaven! For Apollo, or his learned precepts, or calculating will not help three berries! Desire of gold shall so dazzle his soul that I shall make accomplish what I wish. And if he shall seek by his augury if I lie, I shall truly contrive to disturb him and pluck him by the sleeve performing his augury, or persuade him that he has not well understood the gods. For the gods speak in equivocations, and for one truth they tell twenty lies. And it was fear that first invented gods, I suppose (this is what I shall say to him), and it was his coward heart that made him construe the gods’ text incorrectly when he fled from his Delphi in fear. If I do not make him turn about speedily and do as I wish within a day or two, I pledge myself to die!” 1414

And truly, as I find it written, all this was said with sincerity and good intent, and her heart was true and loving toward him, and she nearly died for woe when she left him and intended ever to be faithful; thus those who knew of her deeds have written. With eager ear and heart Troilus heard all this debated to and fro, and truly it seemed to him he was of the same mind; yet evermore his heart troubled him, as to letting her go. But finally he settled his heart so as to trust her and make the best of it. Therefore the great fury of his pain was quenched with hope, and they began their old joyous endearments. Just as the birds, when the sun is bright, delight in their song among the green leaves, so too the words that they spoke together delighted them and cleared their hearts. 1435

But nevertheless, in spite of all, the going of Criseyde would not leave his mind, and often he prayed her piteously that he might find her true of heart. “Surely, if you are unkind,” he said, “and if you return not on the day set, I shall never again have health or honor or joy. For as truly as the sun rises in the morning, and so surely may God bring me, woeful wretch, out of this cruel sorrow to rest, I will slay myself if you delay. Though there be little to care about in my death, please remain here, rather than cause me to suffer so, my own dear heart! For truly the sleights that I hear you plan are very likely to fail altogether. Thus people say, ‘the bear thinks one thing, but his leader quite another’! Your sire is wise, and it is said, ‘Men may outrun but not outwit the wise.’” 1456

54 Delphi. The oracle at Delphi at the temple of Apollo was a place where Greeks found the answers to difficult questions, though the answers were usually in the form of riddles.
It is very hard to limp undetected before a cripple, for he understands the art. In trickery your father is eyed as Argus, for albeit he is bereft of his goods, his old craft so remains with him that for all your woman’s art you shall not blind him nor feign anything, and that is my fear. 1463

I do not know if peace will ever come. But peace or no peace, for jest or earnest, since Calchas has once been on the Greek side and so fouly lost his honor, he will dare come here no more for shame. Therefore to hope that way, for anything that I can see, is but a fantasy. You shall see also your father will cajole you to marry, and he can preach so well, and will so commend and praise some Greek, that he will ravish you with his words or force you to do as he wishes. And Troilus, for whom he will have no pity, will die in his fidelity. Besides all this, your father will despise us all and say this city is as good as lost and that the siege will never cease, because all the Greeks have sworn to maintain it until we are slain and our walls overthrown.

“Thus he will frighten you, and I fear that you will remain there forever. And also you will see so many lusty knights among the valiant Greeks, and each will be so diligent with heart, wit and might to please you, that you will weary of the rudeness of us simple Trojans, unless pity would sting you, or sense of fidelity. And that is so grievous a thought to me that it will send the soul from my breast. I can look for no guarantee but evil if you go. Your father’s trickery will ruin us. If you go, as I have told you already, think that I am a dead man, without help. 1498

“Therefore with a heart piteous, true and humble I cry you mercy a thousand times. Pity my bitter pains and contrive to act as I wish you would. Let us steal away, the two of us alone. Think how it is folly, when a man has his choice, to lose the substance for the show. This is what I mean: since we can well steal off before day and be together so, what sort of wit would it take to put it to the test, in case you should go to your father, whether you can return again or not? I mean it would be a great foolishness to put this sureness into jeopardy. 1512

“Therefore put down all this heat by reason. ‘Patience conquers,’ people say, and ‘Whoever will have something he wants must give up something he wants.’ Thus make a virtue of necessity through your patience, and think that one that cares not about her is always lord of Fortune, and that she daunts no creature but a wretch. Trust to this, dear heart, that before Phoebus’ sister bright Lucina, which is now in the Ram, will pass out of the Lion, I will be here, without any doubt. I mean—and so may Juno, queen of greatest need, as you suffer all this fear without cause. For on that day when I am false to you, my Troilus, my knight, for dread of my father or any other man, or because men cherish me or offer marriage or station or pleasure, may Saturn’s daughter Juno by her power cause me, as mad as Athamas, to remain eternally in Styx, the pit of hell! And this I swear to you by every celestial god and every goddess, on every infernal deity, on every nymph and faun and satyr great and small (which are half-gods of the wilderness). And let Atropos snap my thread of life if I should be false! Now doubt me if you will. And you, Simois, that like a clear arrow ever run through Troy downward to the sea, bear witness of this word, that, on the day when I am untrue to Troilus, my own noble heart, you return backward to your source, and I sink body and soul into hell 1554

“But as to what you speak of, to go away in this way and abandon all your friends, God forbid you should do so for any woman’s sake, and above all since Troy has now such need of help. Take heed of one thing: if this were known, my life and your honor should lie in the balance. May God shield us from such disaster! And if peace be made hereafter (as always, after distress, comes mirth), by God, what sorrow and woe you would be in because you dared not for shame return! 1565

“Before you so jeopardize your honor, do not be too hasty and eager in this business; sorrow is never lacking to the hasty man. What do you believe the people all around would say of you? That is easy to divine. They would say, and swear to it, that not love but voluptuous pleasure and cowardly fear drove you to this deed; thus your honor, which now shines so bright, would be wholly lost, dear heart. And also think on my fair name, which still is green; how fouly I should disgrace it, and spot it with what filth, if I should depart with you in this way! Even it I lived to the end of the world I should never win it back. Thus I would be wholly lost, and that would be a pity and sin. 1582

“Therefore put down all this heat by reason. ‘Patience conquers,’ people say, and ‘Whoever will have something he wants must give up something he wants.’ Thus make a virtue of necessity through your patience, and think that one that cares not about her is always lord of Fortune, and that she daunts no creature but a wretch. Trust to this, dear heart, that before Phoebus’ sister bright Lucina, which is now in the Ram, will pass out of the Lion, I will be here, without any doubt. I mean—and so may Juno, queen of

56 Styx. One of the rivers of the Underworld, a prominent feature in the geography of Hell in the Middle Ages.
57 Atropos. The fate who cuts the thread of life. Lachesis measures it, and Clotho spins it.
58 Simois. A river in Troy.
59 Lucina. Ram, Lion. Lucina is the moon; the Ram, the zodiacal sign of Arie; Lion, Leo.
And now," said Troilus, "if that be true, I will resolve to endure to the tenth day, since I see it is necessary. But for the love of God, let us steal secretly away, if it may be so, for ever alike my heart says it will be the best for us to live in quiet peace." 1603

"O mercy, God, what a life this is!" she said. "Alas, you slay me for true sorrow! I see well now that you mistrust me, for by your words it is now clear. Now for the love of radiant Cynthia and in pity for me, do not mistrust me like this without cause, since I have given you my promise to be faithful. Think well that sometimes it is wisdom to let one occasion go, to gain another. I am not yet lost to you though we are apart for a day or two! Drive out these fancies from your head, trust me and let go of your grief, or by my word I will not live until morning. 1617

"For if you knew how sorely it pains me, you would cease in this; God knows the very spirit in my heart weeps to see you weep whom I love most, and because I must go to the Greek camp. Yes, were it not that I know a way to come again, I would die right here. But surely I am not so foolish a creature that I cannot imagine a means to return the day that I have promised. Who can hold back what will away? Not my father, for all his cunning devices! By my life, my departure shall another day turn us wholly to joy. 1631

"Therefore I beseech you with all my heart, if you wish to do anything at my prayer and for the love with which I love you too, that before I leave you I may see you of such good cheer and comfort that you may put my heart at rest which is now bursting. And besides this, my own heart’s true sufficiency, since I am wholly yours, I pray you that while I am absent no delight in another will remove me from your remembrance. I am ever in fear, for, as people declare, ‘Love is a thing ever full of anxious fear.’ 1645

"For if you should be untrue, God forbid, no lady lives in this world who would be so betrayed or woebegone as I, who believe all faithfulness in you. Surely, if I believed otherwise, I would be no better than dead, and unless you find reason, for God’s love, do not be not unkind to me!" 1652

"God, from whom no thought is hidden, grant me joy," answered Troilus, "as surely as never, since the day I first cast these eyes on her, was I false to Criseyde or shall be until I die. In few words, well may you trust me! I can say no more. It shall be found indeed at the test.” 1659

"May God have mercy, indeed, my best lover,” she said; and may blessed Venus let me never die until I may stand at a point of happiness to repay him well who deserves so well! While God leaves me my wit, I shall act in such a way that honor shall be reflected back on me, as I have found

you so true! For trust well that neither vain delight, nor yet your royal estate, nor only your valor in war or martial tourney, nor your pomp or splendor, nobility or wealth, made me take pity on your distress, but your moral virtue, founded upon your faithfulness—this was the reason why I first had pity on you. And your gentle heart and manhood, and that I believed you held in scorn all that tended to ill, such as roughness and vulgar desires, and that your reason bridled your pleasures—this gave me over to you more than to any other creature, to hold for life. And this may not be spoiled by length of years or changeful Fortune. 1682

"But may Jupiter, who through his might can make the sorrowful glad, grant us the gift to meet here again before ten days, that it may content your heart and mine. And now farewell, for it is time that you were up and away!” 1687

After they had long lamented, and had often kissed and been folded in each other’s arms, the day began to rise and Troilus prepared to go, and looked pitifully upon his lady, feeling the cold pains of death, and commended him to her grace. Whether or not he was woeful, I need not ask. For the mind of man cannot imagine, nor understanding consider, nor tongue tell, the cruel pains of this hapless lover, who passed every infernal torment. When he saw that she who was rending his soul out of his heart could not remain, he went from the chamber without anything more. 1701

Here Ends The Fourth Book.

Book V

The destiny of fate was approaching which Jove has in his disposition and commits to you, angry Parcas60, sisters three, to execute by which Criseyde must leave Troy, and Troilus must dwell in pain until Lachesis would twine his thread no longer. The golden-tressed Phoebus on high had thrice with his bright beams melted the snows and Zephyr had as often brought back the tender green leaves, since the son of Queen Hecuba62 had begun to love her for whom all his sorrow was, so that she must depart that morn. 14

At prime63 Diomed was ready to lead Criseyde to the Greek host, for sorrow at which she felt her heart bleed, not knowing any remedy. Truly, as we read in books, never was known a woman so full of care or so loath to leave a city. Troilus, at his wit’s end, as a man that had lost all his joys,

60 Parcas. The three Fates.
61 Lachesis. The fate who measures the thread of life. Clotho spins it, and Atropos cuts it.
62 Hecuba. Troilus’ mother.
63 Prime. 9 a.m.
was ever awaiting his lady, the true blossom, and more, of all his former happiness. But, Troilus, farewell now to all of it, for never again shall you see her in Troy! It is truth that while he thus waited he hid his woe in such manly fashion that it was scarcely seen in his demeanor. At the gate where she was to ride out he delayed with certain people awaiting her, so woebegone, though he would not lament, that for his pain he scarce could sit on his horse. 35

When Diomed mounted his horse, Troilus quaked for anger, so was his heart gnawed within him, and he said to himself, “Alas, such a foul wretchedness—why should I endure it? Why will I not set it right? Would it not be better to die at once than evermore to languish thus? Why should I not give rich and poor enough to do now, before she should go? Why not bring all Troy upon an uproar, why not slay this Diomed, or why not rather with the help of a man or two steal her away? Why should I endure this, why not help to cure my own woes!” 49

I shall tell why he would not do so cruel a deed; he had at all points in his heart a sort of fear that might be slain Criseyde in the uproar. This was all his anxiety, or else he would have surely done it. 56

When Criseyde was ready to ride, sorrowfully she sighed, “Alas!” But there was no help, and she had to go forth, for anything that might occur, and she slowly rode onward. Should it be any wonder that it pained her, when she was foregoing her own dear heart? Troilus in a courteous fashion, with a hawk on his hand and a great troop of knights, rode far on to bear her company beyond the valley. And gladly he would no doubt have ridden farther, and woeful was he to part so soon; but turn he must. And with that Antenor had come from the Greek host, at which every creature was glad and made him welcome. Troilus, though his heart was not light, did his best at least to refrain from weeping, and kissed Antenor and made much of him. 77

Then he had to take his leave; he cast his eye piteously upon her and rode nearer, to speak to her and take her gravely by the hand. Lord, how tenderly she wept! And he said to her softly and secretly, “Now keep your day and do not kill me!” Then with a pale face he turned his courser around and did not speak a word to Diomed nor to any of his troop, and departed homeward. 88

The son of Tydeus took note of this, as one that knew more than the creed of such a craft: when he saw the people of Troy departed, he took her by the bridle and thought, “All my labor shall not be in vain, if I may help it; I will say something to her, for at the worst it may shorten our journey. I have heard it said a couple dozen times, ‘He is a fool that will forget himself.’” 98

But nonetheless, he thought well enough too. “Surely I am attempting nothing, if I speak of love or act too boldly, for doubtless, if she should have the one I think she has in her thoughts, he cannot be put out of it so soon. But I shall find a way so that she shall not know yet what I mean.” 105

In due season Diomed, knowing well what he was doing, began to engage in speech of this and that, and asked why she was in such distress, and asked her that if he could in any way advance her pleasure, she should command it him, and he would do it, he said. And faithfully, as a knight, he swore her there was nothing that could content her that he would not do with all his heart. 116

He prayed her to appease her sorrow, and said, “In faith, we Greeks can delight to honor you as well as people of Troy. I know it seems strange to you,” he said also, “and no wonder, it is all so new, to exchange the acquaintance of these Trojans for people of Greece, who are all foreign to you. Yet God forbid but you should meet among us all as kind a Greek as any Trojan is, and as true. 126

“And because even now I swore to you to be your friend and as helpful as I could, and I have had more acquaintance with you than any other Greek has had, from this time forth day and night I pray you to command me, whatsoever it may cost, in all that may please your heart, and to treat me as your brother, and not to scorn my friendship. Though your sorrow may be for some great matter, I know not why, but my heart feels a joyous desire to put it away at once; and if I cannot set your troubles right, I am sorry for your heaviness. 140

“For though you Trojans have been angry with us Greeks many days, in truth we still all serve one god of Love; and for the love of God, my noble lady, whomsoever you may hate, be not angry with me. For truly no person serving you can be half so loath to merit your wrath. And if we were not so close to the tent of Calchas, that we both can see, I would tell you all that imy full opinion. But all this shall be kept under seal until another day. Give me your hand; so may God help me, as I am and ever shall be, while life shall last, your own above every creature. This I never said before now to any woman born, for as I hope for joy, I never loved a woman before, nor ever shall again. 158

“For God’s love be not my foe, dear lady, though I know not how to make my complaint to you aright, because I have yet to learn. Wonder not, my own beautiful lady, though I speak to you of love so early; I have heard before this about many cases in which a man had loved a lady whom he had never seen in his life before, nor have I the power to strive against the god of Love, but I must always obey him and ask you for mercy. With such worthy knights as there are in this host, and you so beautiful, every one of them will do his best to stand in your favor; but if so fair a grace should come to me that you would call me your

64 Creed of such a craft. Diomed knows more than the bare essentials (the creed) of the craft of love.
To that talk Criseyde answered rather little, being so oppressed with sorrow that in effect she heard not his tale except here and there a word or two. Her sorrowful heart seemed ready to burst, and when she saw her father from afar, she very nearly sank down off her horse. But nevertheless she thanked Diomed for all his trouble and good spirit, and for offering his friendship; she would accept it in good part, and would gladly do what might to please him, and would trust him, as well she might (so she said). And then she alighted from her horse. Her father took her in his arms, and twenty times he kissed her sweetly. “Welcome, my dear daughter,” he said. She said she too was glad that she might be with him, and stood forth mute, mild, and meek. 194

And here I leave her remaining with her father, and I will tell you next about Troilus. 196

To Troy this woeful creature had returned, in sorrow bitter above all other sorrows, with fierce look and pitiless face. Abruptly he leaped down from his horse, and with a swollen heart stalked through his palace to his chamber; he took no heed of any creature, nor for fear did any dare to speak a word to him. And there he gave full expression to the sorrows that he had held in, and cried out for death; and in his frantic mad throes he cursed Jove and Apollo: he cursed Cupid and Ceres, Bacchus and Venus, he cursed Nature, his own birth, himself, his fate, and every created thing except his lady. He went to bed, and there swallowed and turned like Ixion65 in hell, and in this state he remained until nearly day. 213

Then his heart began a little to subside through the tears which began to gush upward, when Troilus sent for Pandarus. The faces of the night began to grow pale, and wan for longing will be your fresh womanly face as I shall until I die.” 175

And when he fell into any slumber, soon he would begin to groan, and dream of the most dreadful things that might be: such as that he was in a solitary horrible place forever lamenting, or that he was among his enemies and fallen into their hands. And with this his body would start, and with the start he would suddenly awake, and feel such a tremor in his breast that his body would quiver for fear. And he would make a sound, and feel as if he were falling far and low from on high, and then he would weep, and so sorrowfully pity himself that it was wondrous to hear his fantasy. Another time he would earnestly comfort himself, and say it was folly to suffer such dread without cause; and then his bitter pains would begin anew, so that any man would pity his sorrows. Who could tell accurately or fully describe his woe, his lament, languor, and pain? Not all the men who are or have been on earth! You, reader, can well divine that my wit cannot depict such woe; in vain I should toil to write it when my wit is weary to think it! 273

The stars were still visible in heaven, though the moon had grown entirely pale, and the eastern horizon began to whiten, and Phoebus with his rosy chariot soon after began to draw upwards, when Troilus sent for Pandarus. The full day before, Pandarus could not have come to see him, not if he had pledged his head, for all day he was with King Priam, so that it lay not in his liberty to go anywhere. But in the morning he went to Troilus when he sent after him, for in his heart he could well divine that all night Troilus had been awake for sorrow; and that he wished to talk to him about his trouble Pandarus knew full well without book. Therefore he made his way straight to the chamber, gravely greeted Troilus, and sat him down on the bed. 294

“My Pandarus,” said Troilus, “I cannot long endure this grief. I believe I shall not live until tomorrow, therefore upon that chance I would devise to you the manner of my sepulchre, and make certain that you dispose of my goods exactly as seems best to you. 301

“As to the funeral-fire in which my body shall be burned to coals, and the feast and funeral games at my vigil, I pray you take good care that all be well done. And offer Mars my steed, my sword and helmet; and, beloved brother, give my bright-shining shield to Pallas. The dust into which my heart shall be burned I pray you to take and conserve in a vessel of gold that men call an urn, and give it to my lady whose I am and for whose love I die so piteously, and do me this grace to pray her to keep it for a remembrance. 315

“For I feel clearly, by my malady and by my dreams now and before, that I certainly shall not live; and the owl, that men call Ascalaphus66, has shrieked after me all these two

65 Ixion. Bound forever to a turning wheel in hell.

66 Ascalaphus. Proserpine, queen of the Underworld, transformed him into an owl.
nights. And, O you god Mercury, please guide my soul and fetch it when you wish!" 322

“Troilus, my dear friend,” Pandarus answered and said, “I have long told you that it is folly to sorrow thus and without a cause; therefore I can say no more. But whoever will not trust counsel or instruction, I can see no help for him but to let him alone with his fantasy. But I pray you tell me now, Troilus, do you believe that any man before this was ever so hotly in love as you? Yes, God knows! And many worthy knights have foregone their ladies a month, and yet not made half your lament! What need do you have to make all this woe, since day by day you can see yourself that men must part from their loves or from their wives? Yes, though he may love her as his own heart, yet he will not thus contend with himself, for well you know, dear brother, that friends cannot always be together. 343

How do these people go on that see their loves wedded and bedded with others through compulsion of friends, as happens so often? God knows, they take it discreetly, well and mildly, for good hope keeps up their hearts; and because they can bear a time of sorrow, as time hurts them, time cures them! So should you hold out, and let the time slip by, and strive to be glad and light-hearted! Ten days is not so long to wait! Since she has promised you to return, she will not break her promise for any man. Fear not, but she will find a way to return, I dare stake my life on that. 357

“Your dreams and all such fancies—drive them out and let them go to the Devil! They proceed from your melancholy, which causes you all this suffering in your sleep. A straw for all dreams and their significances—so may God help me; I value them not two peas! No man knows exactly what dreams mean. Priests of the temple say that dreams are the revelations of the gods; and they say as well that they are infernal illusions. And doctors say that they proceed from men’s natural temperaments, or from gluttony or fasting. Others say that visions come through impressions, as when a person has held a thing fast in mind. Others say, as they read in books, that by nature men dream according to the time of year, and that the manner of it is determined by the moon. Thus who knows, in truth, what they signify? Do not believe them. It is these old wives who find great worth in dreams, and also in auguries of birds (such as death-bodings of ravens or shrieking of owls), for fear of which people expect to perish. To believe in them is both false and base. Alas, alas! That so noble a creature as a man should dread such filth! 385

“Therefore I beseech you with all my heart that you spare yourself all this, and now arise without a word more and let us plan how this time may best be passed away, and how we may live lustily when she returns, which shall be very soon. So God help me, you would be best do thus. Rise, let us occupy the time, and speak of the lusty life that we have led in Troy, and delight in the time to come that shall bring us our bliss now so quickly. By this we shall so forget or overcome the languor of these ten days that it shall scarce be a hardship. This town all about is full of lords, and all this time the truce is lasting; let us go to Sarpedon, who lives but a mile away, and amuse ourselves in some lusty company. Thus you shall wile away the time until that blissful day when you are to see her who is causing your grief. Now rise, dear brother Troilus; surely it does you no honor to weep and crouch so in your bed. Believe me truly in one thing; if you lie thus a day or two, people will say that you are feigning sickness out of cowardice and dare not arise!” 413

“Dear brother,” answered Troilus, “people who have suffered grief know that it is no wonder if a man weeps and makes sorrowful expressions who feels pain and anguish in every vein. I am in no way to blame though I always lament or weep, since I have lost the cause of all my happiness. But since I must arise by true necessity, I will do so as soon as I can. May God, to whom I offer my heart, send quickly the tenth morning! Never was a bird so glad for May as I shall be when she returns who is cause of both my torment and my joy. But where in all this town is it your advice that we can best amuse ourselves?” 429

“By heaven, my advice is,” said Pandarus, “that we ride to King Sarpedon to enjoy ourselves.” This they talked of back and forth, until at last Troilus consented to rise, and they went forth to Sarpedon. 434

This Sarpedon, always honorable and generous, fed them day by day with every rich food that could be served on table, although it cast a fortune. Such splendor, so said great and small, was never known at any feast before that day. Nor is there any instrument delicious in sound of wind or touch of string, which tongue may tell of or heart remember, in all this world so far as men have traveled, that it was not heard in harmony at the feast. Nor was so fair a company of ladies ever seen before in the dance. 448

But what did the matter to Troilus, who cared for none of it on account of his sorrow? At all times his piteous heart was seeking busily after his lady Criseyde. All that his heart thought was ever of her, now this, now that, so firmly set in his imagination that no festival could gladden him. Since his own lady was away, it was a sorrow to behold the ladies at the feast or to hear instruments of music. When she was absent who bore the key to his heart, he preferred that none ought to make melody. Nor was there an hour in all the night or day, when he was where he could not be heard, that he did not say, “O bright and lovely lady, how have you been since you were here? Welcome indeed, my own sweet lady!” 467

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67 Mercury. The messenger god, who is also the guide and transporter of souls after death.
But alack! Fortune was only deluding him and meant to mock him even more. 469

The letters that she had sent him long ago he would read over alone a hundred times between nones and prime 68, configuring within his heart her form and her womanhood, and every word and act that was past. Thus the fourth day wore through; and then he was for going home. “Dear brother Pandarus,” he said, “do you mean that we shall remain here until Sarpedon shall dismiss us? It would be more seemly that we took leave ourselves. For the love of heaven, let us take our leave this night and turn homeward, for truly I will not delay thus.” 483

“Have we come here to fetch fire and run with it home again?” Pandarus replied. “God bless me, in very truth I cannot tell where we could go where any person should be gladder of us than Sarpedon is. If we hasten away so suddenly, I hold it for churlishness, seeing we said we would remain with him a week to take our leave the fourth day, truly he would wonder at it. Let us hold to our purpose, and, since we promised to remain, keep our agreement and then ride away.” 497

Thus with all the trouble in the world Pandarus made him remain, and at the week’s end they took leave of Sarpedon and went on their way. “Now Lord grant me the grace at my homecoming,” said Troilus, “to find Criseyde has returned!” and he began to sing. 504

“Yes, a likely story!” thought Pandarus, and said softly to himself, “God knows, this hot excitement may have time to cool before Calchas sends Criseyde back!” But nevertheless he joked and jested and swore his heart promised him that she would come as soon as ever she could. When they were come to Troilus’ palace, they alighted and took their way to his chamber, and until night began to fall they talked of the beautiful Criseyde; and then when they wished, they moved from supper to rest. 518

In the morning, when day began to brighten, Troilus started out of sleep and said piteously to his dear friend Pandarus, “For the love of God, let us go see Criseyde’s palace; since as yet we can have no more gaiety, let us at least see her palace. And with all that, to mislead his household, he devised a reason for going to town, and they took their way to Criseyde’s house. But Lord! How woeful was this poor Troilus! He felt his sorrowful heart would burst in two; for when he saw her doors all barred, he nearly fell down for sorrow, and when he saw how every window was shut, his heart grew cold as frost. With a changed and deadly pale face he passed by without a word, and rode so fast that no creature observed his countenance. 539

And then he said, “O desolate palace, ah house once called the best of houses, empty and comfortless palace, lantern whose flame is quenched, palace that now art night, and once was day and crown of all houses, illumined with the sun of all bliss, o ring from which the ruby has fallen out, o cause of woe as once of solace! You ought indeed to fall, and I to die, since she is gone who governed us both. Yet since I can do no better, I gladly would kiss your cold doors, if I dared before these people. Farewell, shrine, from which the saint is gone!” And then with a changed face, piteous to see, he cast his eye upon Pandarus, and as he rode, when he could see his time, he told him his new sorrow and his former joys so pitifully and with so deadly a look that any one would have had compassion. 560

Then he rode up and down, and everything came to his memory as he rode by places in the city where in earlier times he had enjoyed Love’s pleasantness: “Yonder I last saw my lady dance, and in that temple my sweet lady first caught me with her clear eyes. And yonder I have heard my dear heart laugh so merrily. And yonder she looked on me in so pleasant a manner that my heart is hers until death. And in that corner of that house, I heard my dearest lady sing so well with her wanly melodious voice, so wonderful and so clear, that in my soul the blissful sound seems to ring yet! And in that yonder spot my lady first took me into her grace.” 581

Then he thought, “O blissful lord Cupid, when I remember the history, how you have warred against me on every side, men might make a book of it like a tale. What need do you have to seek a conquest of me, since I am yours, wholly at your will? What joy is it to you to destroy your own people? Lord, well have you avenged your anger on me, mighty god, deadly to offend! Show mercy now, O lord! You know well I crave your grace above all dear pleasures, and will live and die in your faith in reward for which I ask but one gift, that you send me back Criseyde speedily. Let her heart long to return as eagerly as mine to see her; then I know well she will not delay. Blessed lord, I pray you to be not so cruel to the blood of Troy as Juno was to Theban blood, for which the people of Thebes had their destruction!” 602

After this he galloped to the gate where Criseyde had ridden out. Up and down there he made many turns, and often said to himself, “Alas, here my joy and bliss rode away! I wish to the blessed God that I might see her come again into Troy! I conducted her to yonder hill, alas! And there I took leave of her. Yonder I saw her ride toward her father, for sorrow of which my heart will split. And here at evening I came home; and here I remain and ever shall, outcast from happiness, until I can see her again in Troy!” 616

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68 Nones and prime. Nones: 12 to 3 p.m. Prime: 6 to 9 a.m. Therefore, he read them fifteen to twenty-one hours a day, i.e., all day and night.
And he imagined himself often to be worn and pale and grown thinner than he was accustomed, and that men said secretly, “What can it be? Who can guess the truth, why Troilus shows these heavy looks?” And all this, that he had these fancies, was nothing but his melancholy. Another time he would imagine that every creature passing along the street pitied him, and that they said, “I am so sorry Troilus is dying.” And thus, as you have heard, he went through a day or two, living as one who stands between hope and dread. For this he took comfort in showing in verses as best he could the occasion of his woe, and in making a song in few words, somewhat to relieve his heavy heart. And when he was out of every man’s sight, with a soft voice he would sing thus of his sweet lady as you shall hear:

O Star that has withdrawn from me your light,
With heart so sore I have good cause to wail,
That ever dark, in torment night by night,
Toward my death with wind astern I sail.
Therefore if by the tenth night I should fail
To see your guiding beams for but an hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour.

When he had sung this song, he would fall immediately to his old sighs, and every night he would stand beholding the bright moon, and telling her all his sorrow and would say: “Surely, when you are newly horned I shall be happy, unless all the world be false. I saw your old horns the morning when my own sweet lady rode away, who is the cause of all my torment. Therefore, O bright Latona, for the love of God, run fast about your sphere for when your new horns begin to spring, my bliss shall return.”

Ever more and more the days seemed to him longer than they usually were, and the sun to go his course wrongly, by a longer way than before. “Truly,” he said, “I fear the sun—surely. What some people blame, others will always according to every person’s opinion, shall never prosper; tongues. Wretches have only shown malice toward love! They usually were, and the sun to go his course wrongly, by my heart yearn for death. And I cannot amend things, alas! For now are they worse than ever I believed they could be. Regardless of anything I can do to please him, my father will not grant me the favor to return; yet if I outstay my time, my Troilus will think in his heart that I am false, as indeed it will seem. Thus I shall have blame on either hand.

“Alas! And curse the day that I was born! And if I jeopardize myself and steal away by night, and if I am caught, I shall be held to be a spy; or else, as I fear most, if I fall into the hands of some wretch, I shall be a lost woman, true though my heart may be! Mighty God, pity my sorrows.”

Her bright face grew pale and her limbs lean, as she stood all the day, when she dared, and looked on the place where she was born and had ever dwelt; and lay all the night weeping, alas! And thus the woeful woman led her life, despairing of all help. Many times a day she would sigh distressfully, and went ever imagining to herself the great worthiness of Troilus, and recalling all his goodly words since the first day when her love began to spring forth.

Thus she set her woeful heart ablaze by the remembrance of what she longed for. There is not so cruel a heart in the entire world that would not have wept at her bitter pains, if the ear had heard her tenderly weeping morn and eve. She did not need to borrow any tears! And the worst of her pain was that there was none to whom she dared lament.

Sorrowfully she looked toward Troy, and beheld the high towers and roofs; “Alas, the joy now is turned into bitterness, which I have often had within yonder walls! Troilus, what now? Lord, do you still think about Criseyde? Alas, that I did not trust his counsel and did not go with him! My sighs had not then been half so bitter. Who could have said that I did wrong to steal away with such a one as he? But the medicine comes too late when men bear the corpse toward the grave! Too late now to talk of that! Alas, Prudence! I always lacked one of your three eyes before I came here; time past I well remembered, and could well see time present, but I could not foresee the future, until I was in the snare, and that brings now my bitterness.

But, nevertheless, come what may, tomorrow night I shall steal at some point out of this encampment, and go with Troilus where he wishes. This is best, and I will maintain this purpose. I don’t care about the wagging of wicked tongues. Wretches have only shown malice toward love! Whoever will pay heed to every word, or rule oneself according to every person’s opinion, shall never prosper, surely. What some people blame, others will always commend. For all such varying talk, happiness is sufficient.

69 Charybdis. A dangerous whirlpool between Sicily and Italy, across from Scylla, a huge rock. The two together formed the most perilous hazard on the seas.  
70 Latona. The moon.  
71 Phaeton. Troilus alludes to the most popular story about Phaeton, Apollo’s son, in which he begs his father to drive his car, loses control, and scorches the earth. Before he can do further damage, Zeus destroys him.
... for me! Therefore, without more debate, I resolve to go to Troy; and that is my conclusion!” 765

But, God knows, before two full months she was far from that intent. Both Troy and Troilus shall slip from her heart with nothing to secure them, and she shall resolve to remain. 770

This Diomed, of whom I told you, went about arguing within himself with all the ingenuity that he ever knew, how he might best and soonest bring Criseyde’s heart into his net. This purpose he never could leave, and laid out hook and line to fish for her. He believed well that she was not without a lover in Troy, for never since he brought her from there could he see her laugh in gladness. He could not think how he might best soothe her heart; he would think “but to make an attempt can do no harm, for he that attempts nothing achieves nothing.” Again, one night he said to himself, “Am I not a fool now, knowing well how her woe is for love of another man, to go about testing her thus? I should know it cannot profit me. Wise ones say in books, “Men shall not woo a creature in sadness.” 791

Ah! But whoever could win such a flower away from him for whom she mourns day and night, he might call himself a conqueror indeed!” And right away, being a bold fellow, he thought in his heart, “Come what may, I will seek her heart, though I might die for it; I can lose no more than my words!” 798

This Diomed, as books tell us, was prompt and courageous in his acts, with stern voice and mighty square limbs, hardy and headstrong, sturdy and knightly of deeds like his father Tydeus; some men say he was lavish in his speech; and he was heir of Calydon and Argos. 805

Criseyde was moderate of stature, and in form and face and expression there could be no more beautiful thing created. Often it was her custom to go with her bright hair in tresses along her collar, down her back, and bound with a thread of gold. Except for the fact that her eyebrows joined together, there was no blemish in anything that I can learn of. But to speak of her clear eyes, truly those who saw her wrote that Paradise stood formed in her eyes. And within her at all times love competed with her rich beauty, as to which was greater. She was grave and simple and discreet, the highest-bred and stateliest lady that could be, ever goodly of speech, charitable, generous, and gay; nevertheless was pity lacking in her tender heart, which was somewhat unstable. Her age truly I cannot tell. 826

Troilus was well-grown in height, and so perfectly formed and proportioned that nature could not have amended him; young: fresh, strong, bold as a lion, and true as steel in every point, one of the best-endowed with virtues of all beings that ever were or shall be while the world lasts. And certainly it is found in the histories that he was never second unto any man of his time in the valor that belongs to a knight. Though a giant might pass him in strength, his heart stood equal to the first and best, to dare to whatever he wished. 840

But, to tell on of Diomed, it happened that on the tenth morning after Criseyde left the city, Diomed, fresh as a bough in May, went to the tent where Calchas lodged, pretending some business with him. What was in his mind I shall tell you shortly. Criseyde welcomed him, and made him to sit down by her, and it was easy enough to get him to delay! Quickly men brought forth the wine and spices to them, and they talked on about this and that, as friends do, and some of the talk you shall hear. First he fell into speech of the war between them and the people of Troy, and he asked her to tell him also what she thought about the siege. From that question he came to asking if the Greek customs and behavior seemed strange to her; and why her father delayed so long to marry her to some noble person. 863

Criseyde, who was in strong pains for love of her own knight Troilus, answered him as well as she could, but as to what was in his mind it seemed as if she did not know. 868

Nevertheless Diomed began to gain boldness, and said, “If I have listened to you correctly, my lady Criseyde, I think that, since I first laid hand on your bridle when you came that morning out of Troy, I have never been able to see you in any other way than sorrow. I cannot say what the cause may be, unless it may be the love of some Trojan. This would grieve me sorely, that you should ever spill a quarter of a tear for any creature that dwells there, or that you should cheat yourself so piteously. For without a doubt, it is not worth your while. 882

“... The people of Troy, one and all, are as it were in prison, as you see yourself; nor could one of them come from there alive for all the gold between sun and sea. Trust me and understand me well: not one shall come alive to mercy72, even if he were lord of ten worlds! Before we depart from here, such vengeance shall be taken on them for the carrying off of Helen, that the very Manes, gods of torment, shall be aghast for fear the Greeks may do them harm as well. And from here to the end of the world men shall dread to ravish a queen, so cruel shall our vengeance appear! 896

And unless Calchas has misled us with sly double words and equivocations, such as men call words with two faces, you shall know well that I lie not, and all this you shall see with your own eyes, and so soon that you could scarcely believe how soon. Now listen carefully, for it shall be so! What! Do you believe that your wise father would have readily given Antenor for you if he did not know that the city should be destroyed? No, no, as I hope for joy! He knew well that not one Trojan shall escape, and for that great fear he dared not let you dwell there longer. 910

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72 Come to mercy. I.e., be saved.
What more do you wish, sweet lovely lady? Let Troy and the Trojans pass out of your heart! Be of good cheer, drive out that bitter hope, and call the beauty of your face back again, which you so mar with salt tears. Troy is brought to such peril that now no remedy can save it. Think well that before tomorrow you may find among the Greeks a more perfect lover than any Trojan is, and more kind and more zealous to serve you. And if you consent, beautiful lady, I will be he to serve you, yes, rather than be lord of twelve Greeces!” 924

With those words he began to grow red, and his voice to tremble a little, and he turned his face away somewhat and was silent a while. Afterwards he recovered himself, and throwing a grave look on her, he said, “I am, though you may care nothing for it, as well-born as any in Troy. If my father Tydeus had lived longer, Criseyde, before now I should have been king of Calydon and Argos, and so I hope I yet shall be. But all too soon he was unfortunately slain at Thebes, to the misfortune of Polynices73 and many others—alas, the pity! 938

“Since I am your man, and you the first, dear heart, whom I ever sought permission ardently to serve (as I ever shall do while I live), before I leave this place I pray you grant me that I may tomorrow at better leisure tell you all my pain.” 945

Why should I tell all the words that he said? He must have spoken enough for one day at least, for Criseyde granted him to have speech with her in the morning, if he would speak no more of such matters. And so she said to him, as you may hear, as she that had her heart so firmly set on Troilus that none could uproot it, she spoke to him coldly: “Diomed, I love that place where I was born, and may Jove by his grace deliver it soon from all its troubles! O God, through your might grant it prosperity! That the Greeks would take out their wrath on Troy if they could, I know well; but, before God, it shall not happen as you say. 963

“I know my father is wise and ready of wit; and since he has bought me so dear, as you have told me, I am even more bound to him. That the Greeks are men of noble parts I know full well; but in truth one can find within Troy people just as worthy, as perfect, wise, and gentle as are between the Orkneys and India74! That you could serve your lady well, and win her thanks, I well believe. 973

“But, to speak of love, I had a lord to whom I was wedded, and to whom all my heart belonged until he died; and no other love is there now in my heart, nor ever was, so may Pallas75 help me. That you are of noble and high kindred I have indeed heard it said. And it gives me great wonder that you will so mock any woman! God knows, love and I are far apart; I am better disposed to lament woefully until my death, I swear on my life. As yet truly I care not for mirth; what I shall do after this I cannot tell. Day by day now my heart is busy in tribulation, and you are busy in arms. 989

Perhaps it may so happen, when you have won the town, and when I see what I never yet saw, that I shall do what I never yet did! This ought to suffice you. I will gladly talk with you tomorrow, as long as you speak not of this matter. And you may come here again when you wish. Before you go, I will say this much: so help me bright-haired Pallas, if ever I take pity on any Greek, it shall be you, by my word! I am not saying therefore that I will do it, nor am I saying not; and my last word is that as God sees me, I mean it honestly.” With that she lowered her eyes and began to sigh, saying, “O Troy, I pray to God that I may yet see you in peace and quiet, or else let my heart burst!” 1008

But, to speak in few words, this Diomed began freshly to press on again, and begged hard for her grace, and after this he took her glove, for which he was very glad; and finally, when the sun had set and all was going well, he rose and took leave. 1015

Bright Venus had followed in the west and showed the way where broad Phoebus had gone down, and Cynthia the moon was urging on her chariot-horses to whirl out of the Lion if she could, and the Zodiac was showing its bright candles, when Criseyde withdrew to her rest within her father’s bright fair tent. Turning over in her soul up and down were the words of this impetuous Diomed, his high station, the peril of the town, and how she was alone and had need of friends’ help. And so, to say the truth, she began to breed the reason why she resolved to remain where she was. 1029

The morning came, and Diomed came to Criseyde; and briefly, lest you should interrupt my tale, he spoke so well for himself that he allayed all her sighs, and finally consoled her for the greater part of her grief. After this, the story tells us, she gave back to him the beautiful bay steed which he had once won from Troilus; and she gave him a brooch (and there was little need for that!) which Troilus had given her. And, to console his amorous sorrow, she made him to bear on his lance her sleeve as a penon. 1043

I find elsewhere in the histories that when Diomed was hurt through the body by Troilus she wept many tears, seeing his wide wounds bleed, and that she took good care in nursing him. And, to heal him of his bitter grieving, they

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73 Harm of Polynices. Son of Oedipus who fought against his brother Eteocles for control of Thebes. Tydeus fought on the side of Polynices, so his loss was unfortunate for Polynices.
74 Between the Orkneys and India. I.e. from one end of the (known) world to the other.
75 Pallas. Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom and patron of the city of Troy. It was the removal of the image of her that inspired the Trojans to battle.
say—I know not—that she gave him her heart. But truly the history tells us that a woman never made more lament than she, when she became false to Troilus. 1053

“Alas!” she said, “my reputation for fidelity in love is now completely gone for evermore! For I have betrayed one of the gentlest men that ever was, and one of the worthiest. Alas! Unto the world’s end no good word shall be sung or written of me, for these books shall reproach me. Ah, my name shall be tossed on many tongues, and throughout the world the bell of my bad name will be rung, and women most of all shall hate me! Alas that such a case should happen to me! They will say that, as much as in me lay, I have done them dishonor. Though I may not be the first that has done wrong, how will that help to put away my blame? But since I see there is nothing better and that now is too late to repent, at least I will be true to Diomed. But, Troilus, since there is no help, and you and I are thus parted, still I pray to God to bless you, as truly the noblest man that I ever saw, for faithful service and watchful keeping of his lady’s honor.” 1077

At those words she burst out weeping. “And surely I shall never hate you, but you shall always have of me the love of a friend and my words of praise, even if I should live forever! Truly I should he sorry to see you in any adversity, and I know well I leave you without any blame. But all things shall pass away. And so I take my leave.” 1085

How long it was before she forsook him for this Diomed, truly I believe no author tells it. Let everyone now examine the books, and they will surely find no time set down; for though Diomed began before long to woo her, yet there was more to do before he won her. Nor would I scold this unhappy woman further than the history scolds her. Alas! Her name is published so far that it ought to suffice for her guilt. And, because she was so sorry for her faithlessness, if I could in any way excuse her, in truth I would do it yet for pity. 1099

Troilus was living through the time, as I have told before, as well as he could. But often his heart was hot and cold, and chiefly that same ninth night, in the morning after which she had promised him to come again. God knows, little rest and no desire to sleep had he that night! The laurel-crowned Phoebus, as he went ever upward in his course, was beginning to warm the wet waves of the eastern sea, and Nisus’ daughter the lark was singing with fresh spirit, when Troilus sent after his Pandarus. They went to amuse themselves on the walls of the town, and to see if they could see anything of Criseyde, and until it was noon they stood to watch who might be coming. Every sort of person coming from afar they said must be she, until they could see him clearly. Now was Troilus’ heart dull, now light! And thus deceived the two stood to stare after nothing. 1120

“For anything I can think,” said Troilus, “Criseyde surely can not come into the town before noon. She has enough to do, I dare swear, to escape from her old father at all. He will make her dine, too, before she goes—a plague upon him!” 1127

“It may well be, certainly,” Pandarus answered, “and therefore let us dine, I beg you, and after noon you may return.” 1130

Home they went without more words, and then returned. But they seek for a long time before they find what they are looking for; Fortune meant to mock them both! 1134

“I see well now,” said Troilus, “that she has so long delayed with her old father that it shall be nearly evening before she comes. Come forth, I will go to the gate. These porters are always dull of wits, and I shall find some excuse to make them keep the gates open, in case she comes late.” 1141

The day went fast, and evening came, yet no Criseyde came to Troilus. He looked forth past hedge, tree, and grove, and reached his head far out over the wall. At last he turned around and spoke: “By heaven, Pandarus, I know her meaning now! My woe was almost renewed! This lady shows her wit, in truth; she intends to ride back secretly; she will not have people foolishly stare at her when she comes, but she intends to ride softly into the town at night, and by my hood, I commend her wisdom! Do not think it is too long to wait here, dear brother; we have nothing else to do. And Pandarus, now will you believe me? By my word, I see her! Yonder she is. Lift your eyes, man! Can you not see?” 1159

“No, by my honor,” Pandarus answered; “all wrong, by heaven! Man, what are you saying? Where are your eyes? What I see yonder is only a traveling cart!” 1162

“Alas, you say the truth!” said Troilus. “But surely it is not for nothing that I feel such joy in my heart now, my thoughts anticipate some good; I do not know how, but I have never felt such a comfort since I was made. She comes tonight, I dare stake my life.” 1169

“It may be, well enough,” answered Pandarus, and held with him in all that ever he said. But in his own heart he had his thoughts, and laughed softly, and then said gravely to himself, “All that you are waiting for here might as well be on the moon! Yes, farewell to all your chances!” 1176

56 Nisus’ daughter the lark, Scylla. For the love of Minos, she caused her own father’s death. To save her from the vengeance that she was about to suffer, she was turned into a bird. See Chaucer’s Legend of Good Women, 1900-21.

77 Pandarus’ thought here is wrapped in colloquial speech, but the translation carries the essence of it: “From heselwode, there joly Robyn pleyde,
The gate warden began to call the people who were without the gates, and bade them drive in their beasts, or else they must remain outside the walls all the night. And well into the night Troilus turned his horse homeward with many tears, for he saw it did not matter to remain. But nevertheless he cheered himself with the thought that he had calculated the day inaccurately, and said, “I understood her incorrectly; for the night I last saw Criseyde she said, ‘I shall be here, if I can, sweet dear heart, before the moon now in the Ram will pass out of the Lion.’ Therefore she may yet keep her promise.”

And in the morning he went to the gate, and up and down on the walls, westward and eastward, he made many turns. But all for nothing, his hope ever deceived him. Therefore at night he went home at last with sorrow and sore sighs. Hope fled clean out of his heart. He now had nothing now on which to rely any longer, and so sharp and wondrous strong were his threos that his heart seemed to bleed for the pain. For when he saw that she broke her promise and remained so long, he knew not what to think of it.

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days after the ten days, his heart lay between hope and fear, yet somewhat trusted still to her old promises. But when he saw she would not keep to her time, he could find no help except to plan soon to die. At that the wicked spirit (God bless us from him!) that men call mad Jealousy crept into his heavy heart; for this, because he wished to die soon, he neither ate nor drank, on account of his melancholy, and he fled from every company as well. This was the life he led all this time. He was so wasted that scarcely could anyone tell it was him; he grew so lean, so pale and ashen and feeble, that he walked with a staff.

Thus he wore himself out by his resentment. And whoever asked him where his trouble was, he said it was all about his heart. Often Priam and his dear mother, and his brothers and sisters, asked him why he was socast down and what was the cause of all his pain. But all for nothing; he would not lament to them for the true cause, but said he felt a grievous malady about his heart, and would gladly die.

So one day when he had laid himself down to rest, it happened that in his sleep he seemed to be walking in a forest to weep for the love of her who was giving him this pain. As he roamed up and down through the forest, he dreamed he saw a boar with great tusks lying asleep in the heat of the bright sun, and by this boar, folding it fast in her arms and continually kissing it, lay his beautiful lady Criseyde. For sorrow and rage at this sight he started out of his sleep, and cried aloud to Pandarus: “O Pandarus! Now I know the beginning and end of it, and there is no more but that I am a dead man! My beautiful lady Criseyde, whom I trusted above every creature, has betrayed me; she has pleased her heart elsewhere! The blessed gods through their great power have showed it in my dream. This is how I beheld Criseyde in my dream—.” And he told him the whole matter.

“Alas, my Criseyde! What guile, what new pleasure, what beauty or wisdom! What cause have I given you for anger? What guilt of mine, or what dread event, has taken your thoughts from me, alas! O trust and faith and confidence! Who has torn Criseyde, all my joy, away from me? Alas, why have I ever let you go, and very nearly started out of my wits when you left? Who will ever believe in oaths again? God knows, beautiful lady, Criseyde, I believed that every word you spoke was gospel. But who can better beguile, if he wishes, than one whom people most trust? O my Pandarus, what shall I do? Now I fear so sharp a new pain, that since there is no help now, it would be better if I slew myself with my two hands than ever thus to weep. Death would put an end to the woe that every living day wears me away.”

“Alack the day that I was born!” cried Pandarus. “Have I not said before that many men are beguiled by dreams? Why? Because people expound them incorrectly! How dare you for any dream say your lady is false, only out of your own fears? Let this thought be, for you understand not the interpretation of dreams. When you dreamed of this boar, perhaps it may signify that her old grey father is lying in the sunshine at the point of death, and that she is crying and weeping and kissing him as he lies on the ground. That is the true way to read your dream!”

“How can I then understand this,” said Troilus, “even if it were a small matter?”

“Now you speak like a wise man,” replied Pandarus; “my advice is that, since you can write well, send her a letter without delay, which shall bring you certainty instead of doubtfulness. And see now why! For, I swear, if she should be untrue I cannot believe that she will write again; and if she should write, you shall soon learn whether she has the power to come back, or else, if she is hindered, she will somewhere tell the cause. You have not written to her since she went, nor she to you. I dare wager, she may know such good cause that you yourself would readily agree that her delaying is best for both of you. Now write her therefore, and you will speedily feel the truth of this; and that is all there is to do.”

The two lords agreed in this resolution, and did so at once; and immediately Troilus sat him down and turned over and over in his mind how he could best depict his woe to his own dear lady. He wrote thus:

Fresh flower, in whose service alone I have ever been and shall be, with heart, body, life, desires,
thought, and all, I, woeful creature, recommend
me to your noble favor, as steadily as matter fills
space, and in every humble way that tongue can
tell or heart think. May it please you to remember,
dear heart, as you well know, how long ago it was
that you went away and left me in bitter pains. As
yet I have had no remedy, but am ever from day to
day more woebegone, and so must remain so long
as it may please you who are the spring of my
wellness and woe. Therefore, as one driven by
sorrow to write, with timid faithful heart I write to
you of my woe, increasing newly every hour, and
lament as much as I dare, or can express myself.
For what is defaced herein, you may blame the
ears that rain from my eyes, which themselves
would speak and lament if they could. 1337

I first beseech you not to deem your clear eyes
defiled if they look on this, and that you will
promise to read through this letter. And if, because
my cold cares are slaying my wit, anything wrong
should escape me, forgive it me, my own dear
heart. If any lover dared or might justly complain
piteously upon his lady, I believe that I am he:
considering this, that you have delayed these two
months amid the Greek host, where you said you
would remain but ten days. But in two months you
have not returned. Yet forasmuch as I must be
content with all that contains you, I dare complain
no more; but humbly and with sad sighs I
must write you of my grievous restless sorrows,
desiring evermore from day to day to know fully,
if it be your pleasure, how you have fared and
done in this absence. May God so increase your
welfare, dignity and health that they may ever
unceasingly grow upward. I pray God to fulfill all
your heart’s desire, my lady, and grant that you
must write me after this, so that death may end my
sorrow to write, with timid faithful heart I write to
you of my woe, increasing newly every hour, and
lament as much as I dare, or can express myself.
For what is defaced herein, you may blame the
ears that rain from my eyes, which themselves
would speak and lament if they could. 1337

And if it should please you to learn of my
condition, whose woe no wit can depict, I can say
no more but that at the writing of this letter I was
alive, filled with every woe and fully ready to let
my woeful spirit fly. This I delay to do, and hold it
yet in hand, until I see the tenor of your message to
me. My two eyes, which still have the useless
power of sight, have become founts of salt tears.
My song is turned to lamentation for my adversity;
my good into harm, my ease into hell, my joy into
woe. I can say no more, but every joy or pleasure
is turned into its contrary, for which I curse my
life. All this you can redress by coming home to
Troy, and create in me joy a thousand times more
than ever I had. For never yet was heart so blithe
to be alive as I shall be as soon as I shall see you.
1386

And if no sort of compassion may move you, yet
think on your pledge. And if my guilt has deserved
death, or if you wish never again to see me, yet in
reward of my past service I beseech you, my
heart’s lady, my true lodestar, for the love of God
to write me after this, so that death may end my
struggle. If any other cause should delay you, then
comfort me with your letter. Though your absence
would be a hell to me, I will bear my woe with
patience and amuse myself with your letter of
hope. Now, sweet one, leave me not thus
lamenting, but write, and with hope or death
deliver me from pain. I know surely, my own dear
true heart, that when you next see me Criseyde
will not be able to know me, so have I lost my
health and color. Daylight of my heart, my noble
lady, so thirsts my heart ever to behold your
beauty that I scarce hold my life. 1407

I say no more, though I have more to say to you
than I can express. Whether you bring me life or
death, I pray God send you a joys life. So
farewell, goodly fresh fair woman, who may order
me to life or death! To your faithfulness I ever
recommend me, in such a manner of health that
unless you grant me health I shall have no health.
In your power stands the day when my grave shall
wrap me, whenever you will that it be so. In you is
my life, in you is might to save me from the torture
of all grievous pains. And now farewell, my own
sweet heart. 1421

Yours,

T.

This letter was sent forth to Criseyde, and she wrote back
in effect thus; she said piteously that as soon as she could
she would come, but she knew not when. In her let-
ter she
she would indeed come and mend all that was amiss; yes,
she would come, but she knew not when. In her letter she
treated him with such kind word, and swore she love d him
in effect thus; she said piteously that as soon as she could
she would come, but she knew not when. In her letter she

Pipe it in a leaf. I.e., Troilus can do whatever he likes, but it will
make no difference.
had showed him in sleep the symbol of her unfaithfulness and his misfortune, and that this boar was the figure of that. 1449

Therefore he sent for the Sibyl his sister, who was named Cassandra, and told her all his dream and begged her to resolve for him the mystery of that strong boar with stout tushes. Within a little while Cassandra expounded his dream to him thus. She first began to smile, and said: 1456

“O brother dear, if you desire to learn the truth of this, you must learn certain old stories, how Fortune has overthrown ancient lords; by which you will shortly know this boar full well, and of what stock he is sprung, as men find in books. Diana was angered because the Greeks would not make a sacrifice to her nor set incense upon her altar, and because they so neglected her she avenged herself so cruelly. For she made a boar, as huge as a stalled ox, to devour all their corn and vines. To slay this boar all the people of the country were raised, among whom there came to see the boar a maiden, one of the most renowned of this world. And Meleager, lord of that country, so loved this noble youthful maiden that he pursued this boar until he slew it by his manhood, and sent her the head. From this, as old books tell us, there arose a strife, and great ill-will; but how this Meleager died through his mother’s deed I will not tell, for it would be too long. And from this lord was Tydeus by lineage descended, or else old books lie.” 1484

She told also how Tydeus went to the strong city of Thebes to claim dominion over the city for his fellow Polynices, whose brother Eteocles held it wrongfully; this story she told at length. She told also how Hemonuides escaped when Tydeus slew fifty stout knights. She told all the prophecies word by word, and how the seven kings with their host besieged the city; and told of the holy serpent, and the well, and the Furies; of Archemorus’ burial and funeral games, and how Amphiaraus fell through the ground, how Tydeus, lord of the Argives, was slain, how Hippomedon was drowned and Parthenopaeus died of his wounds, and how proud Cepaneus was slain also with a thunderbolt. She told him also how each of the brethren, Eteocles and Polynices, slew the other in a skirmish, and of the Argives’ weeping and woe, and how the town was burnt. And so she came down from the old histories to Diomed, and thus she spoke: “This same boar signifies the son of Tydeus, Diomed, who is descended from Meleager, who slew the boar; and wherever your lady is, in truth this Diomed has her heart, and she his. Weep if you will, or not! For surely Diomed is in and you are out!” 1519

“You do not say the truth,” he said, “you sorceress, with your false spirit of prophecy. You deem yourself a great diviner. Now behold this fanciful fool, who wears herself to slander ladies! Away with you—may Jove give you sorrow! Before another day you may be proven false. You might just as well slander Alcestis, who of all creatures that ever were was the most loyal and the best, unless men lie. For when her husband was in jeopardy of death unless she would die, she chose to die in his place and go to hell; and die she did, as the books say.” 1533

Cassandra departed, and with savage heart he forgot his woe for anger at her words. He leaped from his bed, as though a doctor had cured him, and day by day sought and inquired with all diligence to learn the truth of this. And thus he endured his lot. 1540

Fortune, to whom the permutation of things is assigned by the providence of high Jove, namely, how sovereignty shall flit from person to person or when a person shall be smitten, began from day to day to pull away the bright joyous plumage of Troy until it was bare. During all this, the end of Hector’s life was approaching ever so quickly. The Fates willed that his soul should leave its body and had devised a means to drive it out, against which it helped him not to contend. On a day he went to fight, and there met his end, alas! And I think every sort of man that practices arms ought to lament the death of one who was so noble a knight. For while he was dragging a fallen king by his neck-guard, Achilles stabbed him unawares through the armor and through the body, and this was how this worthy knight brought to his death. 1561

For him, as old books tell us, such lament was made that tongue cannot tell it, and most of all was the sorrow of Troilus, next to Hector the greatest fount of valor. And in this woe he remained until, partly for sorrow and partly for love and unrest, many times a day he bade his heart break. 1568

Nevertheless, for all his despair and dread that his lady was untrue, his heart always returned to her, and, as lovers do, he sought ever freshly to recover the radiant Criseyde, and was excusing her in his heart, that it was Calchas who

80 Meleager. Son of the Calydonian king; with a band of followers he slew the boar that was menacing the country.
81 Maiden. Atalanta.
82 Meleager died. Meleager’s death was predicted by the fates to come when a certain piece of wood would be burned. After he had slain his mother, brothers for objecting to giving the head to Atalanta, his mother threw the piece of wood, which she had kept hidden all the years of his life, into the fire.
83 Tydeus. He was actually the half-brother of Meleager.
84 Troilus’ response can be expected, not only since he does not want to believe it, but also because along with the gift of prophecy Cassandra was fated not to be believed in her prophecies, though she spoke the truth.
85 Alcestis. The ideal wife, who is featured prominently in the Prologue of Chaucer’s Legend of Good Women.
86 For her virtue, she was retrieved from Hades by Hercules.
caused her delaying. Oftentimes he half resolved to disguise himself like a pilgrim, and go to see her. But he could not so transform himself as to be unknown to discerning people, nor devise an excuse to serve the purpose if he should be discovered among the Greeks; for this he often wept many tears. Oftentimes he wrote newly to her again, and piteously, for no sloth withheld him; beseeching her that, since he was true, she would return and hold her pledge to him. To all of this matter one day Criseyde replied out of pity (or so I take it), and wrote thus: 1589

Mirror of goodliness, Cupid’s son, sword of knighthood, spring of nobility! How could a creature in torment and in sickness and dread as yet send you gladness? I, without heart or health or joy, can neither send you heart nor health, since I cannot be with you87, or you with me. My heart’s pity has fully understood your letters, the paper all written over with laments and stained with tears, and how you require me to come again. As yet this may not be; but why, I make no mention now for fear lest this letter should be found. God knows how grievous to me are your unrest and your urgency. You seem not to take for the best what the gods ordain; nor is anything else, I think, in your mind but only your pleasure. But be not angered, I beg you. 1609

The cause why I delay is all wicked tongues. For I have heard much more than I deemed was known, how things have stood between us two, which I shall amend by pretending otherwise. 1614

And be not angered now. I have understood also how you are at present only deceiving me. But no matter for this now; I cannot believe anything to be in you but all truth and nobleness. Come I will; but I stand here amid such difficulties that I cannot appoint what day or what year that shall be. But at last I pray you as heartily as I can for your good word always, and for your friendship. And truly, while my life shall last, you may count me for a friend. 1624

I pray you further not to take it ill that I write you in few words. Where I am, I dare not make long letters, and I never yet could write well. Great matters are often expressed in little room. The intent is all, and not the length of the letter. And now farewell, and may God have you in His grace!

Your C. 1631

This letter Troilus thought altogether cold, when he read it, and he sighed sorrowfully. It seemed to him to signify the beginning of change. But finally he could not believe that she would not keep what she had promised him, for he who loves well is loath to give up love, even though it may grieve him. Nevertheless some say that at last, in spite of anything, one must see the truth. And soon such a case occurred, so that Troilus well perceived that she was not so loyal as she ought to be; and at last he knew certainly that all that he had cared about was now lost. 1645

Troilus was standing one day in his melancholy, full of suspicion of her for whose love he felt himself dying. And so it happened that a sort of tunic, emblazoned with a coat of arms, was being borne up and down throughout Troy, as was the custom, before Deiphobus as a token of his victory. This tunic, as my author Lollius tells, he had torn the same day off Diomed. When Troilus saw it he began to take heed, observing the length and breadth and all the workmanship. As he beheld it, suddenly his heart grew cold; for he had found within on the collar a brooch which he had given Criseyde that morning when she had by force left Troy, in remembrance of him and of his grief, and which she had pledged him her faith to keep. Now he knew full well that his lady was no longer to be trusted. 1666

He went home and sent speedily after Pandarus, and told him beginning and end of this new chance and all about the brooch, complaining of her fickleness of heart, and of his long love and faithfulness and suffering. He cried aloud upon death to restore his peace to him. “O Criseyde,” he cried, “beautiful lady, where is your pledge, where is your promise, where is your love, and your faithfulness? Is Diomed now so dear to you? Alas! If you would not stand firm in faith to me, I had trusted that at the least you would not thus have deceived me. Who now will ever believe oaths? I would never have believed before now that you, Criseyde, could so have changed, nor that, unless I had done wrong to you, your heart was so cruel as to slay me thus. Alas, your reputation for faithfulness is now blotted out, and that is all my sorrow! 1687

“Was there no other brooch that you cared to endow your new love with, but that very brooch that I wet with my tears and gave you for a remembrance of me? You gave it, alas, for no other cause but scorn, and because you would thus show utterly you meaning. I see that you have cast me clean out of your mind. And yet for the whole world I cannot find it in my heart to cease loving you for an hour. Alack, in a cursed time I was born! I love you best in the entire world, you who have given me all this woe! 1701

“Now God send me the grace to meet with this Diomed! Truly if I have power and opportunity I shall yet make his sides bloody, I hope. O God, Who ought to take heed to advance fidelity and punish wrong, why will you not wreak vengeance on this crime? Ah Pandarus, you who blamed me for trusting dreams and were accustomed to upbraid me, now if you will you may see yourself how true is your beautiful niece! In various forms, God knows, the gods

87 Be with you. Chaucer uses the term “dele," here translated as “be.” The term often has intimate connotations of being with someone.
show joy and grief in sleep, and by my dream this is proved. And certainly, for final resolution, henceforth as I can I will seek my own death upon the field, and care not how soon be the day. But truly, Criseyde, sweet maiden, whom I have always loved with all my might, I have not deserved that you should do thus!”  1722

Pandarus, hearing all this and knowing that he spoke the truth, answered him not a word, sorry for his friend’s sorrow and shamed for his niece. Bewildered by these two causes, he stood speechless, as still as a stone. But at last he spoke: “Dear brother, I can do no more for you. What should I say? Indeed I hate Criseyde! God knows, I shall hate her evermore. What you once asked me to do I did, having no regard to my honor nor to my peace. If I did anything to your pleasure, I am glad. And for this betrayal now, God knows it is a sorrow to me! Surely, to ease your heart I would gladly amend this, if I knew how. I pray almighty God to deliver her soon out of this world! I can say no more.”  1743

However great the sorrow and lamentation of Troilus, Fortune held ever on her course; Criseyde loved the son of Tydeus, and Troilus must weep in cold cares. Such is this world! In any station of life is but little heart’s ease, whoever will look to it. God grant us to make the best of it!  1750

In many cruel battles was seen the knighthood and mighty strength of the noble Troilus, as men may read in these old books, and day and night the Greeks must pay for his wrath cruelly. Most of all he sought after Diomed, and oftentimes I find they came together with bloody strokes and huge words, assaying how their spears were sharpened. Often in savage fury, God knows, Troilus beat upon Diomed’s helmet. Nevertheless Fortune willed not that either should die by the other’s hand.  1764

If I had undertaken to write of the prowess of this valiant knight, I would tell now of his battles. But since I began first to write of his love, I have told of that as well as I could. Whoevers wishes to hear of his noble deeds, let him read Dares88; he can tell them everything. And I beseech every fair-faced lady, and every noble dame, whosoever she may be, that they be not angered with me for Criseyde’s guilt, though she had been untrue. You may see her guilt in other books before mine; and more gladly I will write, if you please to have me, of the faithfulness of Penelope89 and good Alcestis. Nor write I thus of faith and falsehood only for the sake of men, but most of all for those women who are betrayed through false people. Those who through great subtlety and wit betray you, God give them sorrow, amen. This has moved me to write; and, at last, I pray you all beware of men and listen to what I say. 1785

Go, my little book! Go, my little tragedy! Be not a rival of other poems, but be humble among them all, and kiss their steps wherever you see Vergil and Ovid go, and Homer, Statius, and Lucan.90 May God yet send your maker power, before he die, to use his pen in some comedy! And because there is such great diversity in English and in the writing of our speech, pray also to God that none copy you inaccurately nor mar your meter through defect of his tongue. Wherever you be sung or read, beseech God that you be understood. But now back again to my story.  1799

The Greeks paid dearly, as I began to tell you, for the wrath of Troilus, who was without any peer in his day save Hector, so far as I can learn. His hand slew thousands. But alack and alack—save that it was God’s will! The fierce Achilles mercilessly slew him.  1806

And when he was slain thus, his freed spirit went blissfully up into the eighth sphere of heaven, leaving all the elements in their spheres below him. From there he gazed long upon the wandering stars, listening to the harmony of sounds full of heavenly melody, and then down upon this little spot of earth embraced by the sea. And then he began utterly to despise this wretched world, and held all to be vanity in comparison to the full felicity of heaven above.  1819

At length he cast his eyes down upon the spot where he was slain, and laughed within himself at the grief of those who wept so for his death, and condemned all our deeds who follow so hard after blind pleasures which cannot endure, when we should cast our whole heart on heaven. So on he went to the place where Mercury91 allotted him a dwelling. Thus ended Troilus for love, thus ended his worth and his royal station, thus ended his joyousness and his nobility; to such an end leads this false world’s instability. Thus, as I have told, began his loving of Criseyde; and in this way he died.  1834

O young joyous people, youths and maidens, in whom love ever grows up with your age, get yourself home from worldly vanity. Cast up the eyes of your heart to that God that made you after His image, and think that all this world is but a temporary amusement and passes as soon as the sweet flowers. And love Him who for pure love, to redeem

88 Dares. See note to Book 1, line 147.
89 Penelope. Faithful long-suffering wife of Ulysses. Alcestis. See note to Book 5, line 1527.
90 Vergil, Ovid, Homer, Statius, and Lucan. Vergil, Roman poet and author of the Aeneid, which recounts the destruction of Troy. Ovid, Roman poet and author of the Metamorphoses as well as books on the art of love. Homer, author of the Iliad, the story of the Trojan war(to the point of Hector’s death) and the Odyssey, the story of Odysseus wandering voyage to his home in Ithaca. Statius. Roman poet and author of the Thebaid, indirectly one of Chaucer’s primary sources for Troilus and Criseyde. Lucan. Roman poet and author of Bellum Civile, also know as Pharsalia, on the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. These are the same poets that Dante meets in the Inferno before entering Hell proper. 91 Mercury. Ushered souls to their proper places in the afterlife.
our souls, first died upon the cross, and rose again, and now sits on high in heaven. He will fail no creature (of that be sure) who will set his heart wholly on Him. And since He is most gentle and best to love, what need to seek feigned loves? 1848

Here in this book you may see the pagans’ cursed old rites, and how little their gods help. See here the end of this wretched world’s desires! See here the end and reward for toil given by Jove, Apollo, Mars, and such rabble! And likewise you may see here the manner of old scholars’ speech in poetry. O moral Gower, I address this book to you, and to you, philosophical Strode, that you may promise to correct it, where need is, of your righteous zeal and benignity. 1859

And now to that true Christ who died on the cross I pray with all my heart for mercy, and to the Lord I say this: Thou One, Two, Three, eternally alive, that ever in Three, Two, One reigns uncircumscribed, yet circumscribes all, defend us from our foes, visible and invisible. And make us, Jesus, worthy of Your mercy, for the love of Your kind maiden and mother. 1869

Here Ends The Book
Of Troilus and Criseyde.

Translated and Edited by Gerard NeCastro
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Citation. Chaucer, Geoffrey. Troilus and Criseyde. NeCastro, Gerard, ed. and trans. eChaucer:
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93 Strode. The reference is not certain. Some have named this as Rudulphus Strode.