To tell the double sorrow in his love that Troilus, Son of King Priam of Troy, had, how his lot passed from woe to joy and afterwards to woe again, this is my purpose before I part from you. 5

Tisiphone, help me to compose these dolorous verses, that drop like tears from my pen; to you I call, goddess of anguish, cruel Fury, ever sorrowing in pain; help me, the sorrowful instrument, that as well as I can help lovers to wail. For a dreary comrade is fitting to a woeful creature; and a sorry manner, to a sorrowful history. For I, the servant of Love’s servants, dare not beg Love to assist me, though I may die, so unpleasing am I, so far in the dark distance from him. But if my verse may bring gladness to any lover and assist him with his lady, may the labor go to me and the thanks to Love. 21

But you lovers who bathe in bliss, if there is any drop of pity in you, remember your own past heaviness, and other people’s adversity, and think how you too have felt Love’s displeasure (or you have won him too easily), and pray for those who are in the case of Troilus, as you shall hear, that Love may bring them to the heaven of fruition; and pray also for me to dear God that I may have strength to show in Troilus’ luckless lot some of the pain and woe as Love’s people endure. And pray also for those who are in despair and may never be healed, and for those who are hurt by slanderous tongues, pray God of His mercy to grant them soon to pass out of this world that are in despair of Love’s grace. And pray also for those in joy, that God may grant them always good continuance and might do so to please their ladies that it may be honor and pleasure to Love’s deity. 46

For so I hope best to profit my soul, praying for Love’s servants, writing their woe and living in charity, and having pity of them as if I were their own brother. Now listen with good will, for now I go straight to my matter, where you may hear the double sorrows of Troilus’ love for Criseyde, and how she forsook him before she died. 56

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 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 Dictys. 1 147

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.

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 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.

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!”

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 horn, 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 Crisyede, 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 dwell 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.

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

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he 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 confused, 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 servants, saying, “Lord! How joyously you lovers live! It

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, unwearied, 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  
Bewail my case; thus rolled and shaken sore  
Amid the sea and out of sight of shore,  
Two winds contrary evermore.  
Alas, what is this wonderful malady?  
Rejoicing, why to tears do I return?  
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 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

How it was I cannot say, whether his lady did not understood 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 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. 749

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.” 760

“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?” 769

“Why, no,” he said, “by my faith!” 770

“What!” said Pandarus, “even though I did it as earnestly as if I thought my own life lay at stake?” 772

“No, brother, surely,” said Troilus. 773

“And why? Because you should never succeed.” 774

“Know you that well?” 775

“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.” 777

“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. 790

“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!’ 805

“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 un kissed, 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.” 819

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?” 828

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!” 833

“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.” 840

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? 855

“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.” 864
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 very 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 lie and tell how they had kept awake when in truth they had slept sweeetly. 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.