

## Book I

## Proem

1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,  
 That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,<sup>1</sup>  
 In loving how his áventurés fell *fortunes*  
 From woe to weal, and after out of joy *sorrow to joy*  
 My purpose is, ere that I part from you.  
 Thesiphoné,<sup>2</sup> thou help me to endite *write*  
 These woeful verse -- that weepen as I write *verses*
2. But, you lovers, that bathen in gladness,  
 If any drop of pity in you be,  
 Remembereth you on passéd heaviness *Remember past sorrow*  
 That you have felt, and on the adversity  
 Of other folk; and thinketh how that ye  
 Have felt that Lovè durstè you displease, *made you suffer*  
 Or you have won him with too great an ease.
3. And biddeth eke for them that be at ease, *pray also*  
 That God them grant ay good perséverance, *ay = always*  
 And send them might their lovers for to please *power*

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

<sup>2</sup> 1.6: The poet calls not on God or the Virgin Mary as many makers of English romances did, nor on the pagan muse as the classical poets did, nor on the god of Love but, because his is a sad story, on a Fury, Thesiphone, the voice of all the Furies, who were agents of retribution. 6-7: It is, apparently, the verses that are weeping.

That it to Love be worship and pleasánce, *honor & pleasure*  
 For so I hope my soul best to advance,  
 To pray for them that Lovè's servants be,  
 And write their woe and live in charity;

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

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

6. Now fell it so that in the town there was *Now, it happened*  
 Dwelling a lord of great authority  
 A great divine that clepèd was Calchas, *priest who was called*  
 That in sciéce so expert was that he *in knowledge*  
 Knew well that Troyè should destroyèd be  
 By answer of his god that hightè thus: *was called*  
 Daun Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus. *Lord (god) Phoebus*

7. So when this Calchas knew by calculing *calculation*  
 And eke by answer of this Ápollo, *also*

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<sup>1</sup> 5.3-7: "And they besieged the city for a long time -- for nearly ten years -- before they stopped (*stent*); and they took all this trouble (*wroughten all their pain*) in different ways but with one intention: to avenge (*wreaken*) the abduction (*ravishing*) of Helen by Paris."

That Greekès shoulde such a people bring  
 Through which that Troyè mustè be for-do,  
 He cast anon out of the town to go.  
 For well wist he by sort that Troyè should  
 Destroyèd be, yea, whoso would or n'ould.

*destroyed  
 planned quickly  
 knew by divination  
 like it or not*

8. For which, for to departen softely  
 Took purpose full this forè-knowing wise,  
 And to the Greekès' host full privily  
 He stole anon; and they in courteous wise  
 Him diden bothè worship and service  
 In trust that he hath cunning them to redd  
 In every peril which that is to dread.

*forseeing wise man  
 secretly  
 fashion  
 gave him honor & service  
 knowledge to advise them*

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

*& living  
 (they) wanted revenge  
 skin & bones*

10. Now had this Calchas left in this mischance,  
 All únwist of his false and wicked deed,  
 His daughter which that was in great penáncè;  
 For of her life she was full sore in dread,  
 As she that n'isté what was best to redd,  
 For both a widow was she and alone  
 Of any friend to whom she durst her moan.

*difficulty  
 unaware  
 anguish  
 knew not / to do  
 and without...  
 dared confide*

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

*indeed  
 In my judgement  
 surpassing everyone*

12. This lady which that all day heard at ear  
 Her father's shame, his falseness and treason,  
 Well nigh out of her wit for sorrow and fear,  
 In widow's habit large of samite brown,  
 On knees she fell before Hector a-down <sup>1</sup>  
 With piteous voice, and tenderly weeping,  
 His mercy bade, her-selfen éxcusing.
- nearly  
long dress of b. silk  
  
begged*
13. Now was this Hector piteous of natúre  
 And saw that she was sorrowfully begone,  
 And that she was so fair a creäture.  
 Of his goodness he gladdened her anon  
 And said: "Let your father's treason gon  
 Forth with mischance; and you yourself in joy  
 Dwelleth with us while you good list in Troy.
- afflicted  
  
at once  
go ...  
...To the devil  
as long as you like*
14. And all the honour that men may do you have  
 As far forth as your father dwellèd here  
 You shall have, and your body men shall save,  
 As far as I may aught enquire or hear."  
 And she him thankèd with full humble cheer.  
 And oftener would, if it had been his will,  
 And took her leave, and home, and held her still.
- may give you  
As if  
your person / respect  
  
manner  
  
and (went) home*
15. But though that Greekès them of Troy in shut,  
 And their city besieged all about,  
 Their oldé usage wouldé they not let,  
 As for to honour their gods full devout;  
 But aldermost in honour, out of doubt,  
 They had a relic hight Palladion,  
 That was their trust aboven every one.
- would not relinquish  
devoutly  
foremost  
called*
16. And so befell, when comen was the time  
 Of April when clothèd was the mead

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<sup>1</sup> 12.5: Hector, son of Priam, was the greatest of the Trojan heroes. As one of the Nine Worthies of the Middle Ages he took his place among warriors like Julius Caesar and Alexander.

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

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

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

19. As was Criseyde, as folk said everyone  
 That her behelden in her blackè weed; *dress*  
 And yet she stood full low and still alone  
 Behind the other folk in little brede *space*  
 And nigh the door, ay under shamè's dread, *always fearing a slight*  
 Simple of attire and debonair of cheer *& quiet in manner*  
 With full assurèd looking and mannér.<sup>1</sup>

20. This Troilus as he was wont to guide  
 His youngè knightès, led them up and down

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

In thilkè largè temple on every side,  
 Beholding ay the ladies of the town *constantly*  
 Now here, now there, for no devotioun *attachment*  
 Had he to none to rieven him his rest, *deprive him of*  
 But gan to praise and lacken whom him lest.<sup>1</sup>

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

22. I have heard tell, pardee, of your living, *by God / way of life*  
 You lovers, and your lewèd observánces, *foolish behavior*  
 And such labóur as folk have in winning  
 Of love, and, in the keeping, which doutánces;<sup>2</sup> *what difficulties*  
 And when your prey is lost--woe and penánces!  
 Oh very foolès, nice and blind be ye. *total fools, silly & b.*  
 There is not one can 'ware by other be." *warned by the others*

23. And with that word he gan cast up the brow  
 Askances: "Lo, is not this wisely spoken?" *As if to say:*  
 At which the god of Love gan looken rough  
 Right for despite, and shope for to be wroken *prepared to be avenged*  
 He kidd anon his bowè was not broken; *showed promptly*  
 For suddenly he hit him at the full, *he = Love, him = Troilus*  
 And yet as proud a peacock can he pull. *And still (today)*

24. Within the temple he went him forth playing, *jesting*  
 This Troilus, of every wight about, *about everyone*

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<sup>1</sup> 20.6-7: Troilus, who loses no sleep over love-sickness, began to praise or to fault whomever he wanted to.

<sup>2</sup> 22.3-4: "And the trouble people have getting lovers and the problems in retaining them"

On this lady and now on that looking,  
 Whereso she were of town or of without,  
 And upon case befell that through a rout  
 His eyè piercèd, and so deep it went  
 Till on Criseyde it smote, and there it stent.

*Whether  
 by chance / a crowd*

*rested*

25. And suddenly he waxed therewith astoned  
 And gan her bet' behold in thrifty wise.  
 "Oh, mercy God!" quod he, "Where hast thou woned?  
 Thou art so fair and goodly to devise!"  
 Therewith his heart began to spread and rise,  
 And soft he sighéd, lest men might him hear,  
 And caught again his firstè playing cheer.

*became stunned  
 better / admiring way  
 lived/ thou = C.  
 to see*

*original joking manner*

26. She was not with the least of her statúre  
 But all her limbs so well answering  
 Weren to womanhood, that creäture  
 Was never lessè mannish in seeming;  
 And eke the purè wise of her moving  
 Showèd well that men might in her guess  
 Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse.

*size  
 proportioned*

*appearance  
 very manner*

*rank / nobility*

27. To Troilus right wonder well withall  
 Gan for to like her moving and her cheer,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which somdeal deynous was, for she let fall  
 Her look a little aside in such mannér  
 Askances: "What! May I not standen here?"  
 And after that, her looking gan she light,  
 That never thought him seen so good a sight.

*bearing  
 somewhat haughty*

*As if to say:  
 her looks brightened  
 It seemed he'd never*

28. And, of her look, in him there gan to quick  
 So great desire and such affection,  
 That in his heartè's bottom gan to stick  
 Of her his fixed and deep impression;

*spring up*

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

And though he erst had porèd up and down, *first sized (her) up*  
 He was then glad his hornès in to shrink.  
 Unnethè wist he how to look or wink.<sup>1</sup>

29. Lo, he that let himselfen so cunning, *who had thought himself*  
 And scornèd them that Lovè's painès drye, *endure*  
 Was full unaware that Love had his dwelling  
 Within the subtle streamès of her eye,  
 That suddenly him thought he felt to die, *(So) that*  
 Right with her look, the spirit in his heart.  
 Blessèd be Love, that folk can thus convert!<sup>2</sup>

30. She, this in black, liking to Troilus *this (woman) / pleasing to*  
 Over all thing, he stood for to behold; *stopped*  
 Nor his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,  
 He neither cheerè made nor wordès told,<sup>3</sup> *openly showed nor said*  
 But from afar (his manner for to hold), *(usual) manner*  
 On other things his look sometimes he cast  
 And eft on her, while that the service last. *And sometimes*

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

32. When he was from the temple thus departed

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<sup>1</sup> 28.7: "He hardly knew whether to look or close his eyes."

<sup>2</sup> 29.7: "folk" is the grammatical object of the verb "convert": "Blessed be Love that can convert folk thus".

<sup>3</sup> 30.3-4: "Neither by overt action (*cheere*) nor by word did he show his desire nor his reason for standing that way." That is, he tried to keep up his usual (haughty) manner by pretending to look at various things from a distance to cover up the constant return of his gaze to Criseyde.

He straight anon unto his palace turneth,  
 Right with her look through-shotten and through-darted,  
 Al feigneth he in lust that he sojourneth;<sup>1</sup>  
 And all his cheer and speech also he borneth  
 And ay of Love's servants every while  
 Himself to wry, at them he gan to smile.

*Although / joy / lives  
 manner / burnishes  
 always / all time  
 to cover up*

33. And when that he in chamber was alone,  
 He down upon his bed's foot him set,  
 And first he gan to sigh, and eft to groan  
 And thought ay on her so withouten let,  
 That as he sat awake, his spirit mett  
 That he her saw at temple, and all the wise  
 Right of her look,<sup>2</sup> and gan it new avise.

*and then  
 constantly without ceasing  
 dreamed  
 ways(?)  
 think about it anew*

34. Thus gan he make a mirror of his mind  
 In which he saw all wholly her figure,  
 And that he well could in his heartè find  
 It was to him a right good aventure  
 To love such one, and if he did his cure,  
 To serven her, yet might he fall in grace  
 Or else for one of her servants pass.

*fortune  
 if he took care  
 get in her favor  
 become servant (in love)*

35. Thus took he purpose lovè's craft to sue  
 And thought that he would worken privily,  
 First to hiden his desire in mew  
 From every wight y-born, all utterly  
 But he might aught recovered be thereby,<sup>3</sup>

*to follow  
 secretly  
 in secret place  
 from everyone, totally*

---

<sup>1</sup> 32.3-7: The meaning is that, smitten as he is with her looks, he still pretends that he is amused by lovers; he goes on pretending that he is totally cheerful, and by his manner and speech mocks the "servants of love" so as to cover up (*to wry*) his actual love-struck feelings.

<sup>2</sup> 33.6-7: The precise meaning of the phrase *all the wise right of her look* is a little uncertain, but it clearly has to do with Criseyde's appearance. Perhaps he saw in his mind's eye "just exactly the way she looked."

Remembering him that love too wide y-blow *talked about*  
 Yields bitter fruit, although sweetè seed be sow.

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

CANTICUS TROILI <sup>1</sup>

37. "If no love is, O God, what feel I so?  
 And if love is, what thing and which is he?  
 If love be good, from whencè comes my woe?  
 If it be wick, a wonder thinketh me *wicked / it seems*  
 When every torment and adversity  
 That comes from him may to me savoury think, *seem sweet*  
 For ay thirst I the more that I it drink.<sup>2</sup> *ever*

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

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<sup>1</sup> "Troilus's Song" is a version of Petrarch's sonnet 132 enumerating the paradoxical feelings induced by being in love; this was a literary convention going back to the classics. Troilus's talent as a songwriter, as brief as it is sudden, is not meant to be taken too seriously.

<sup>2</sup> This stanza illustrates the unconcern in the poem about a precise distinction between the idea of love as a powerful god (he, him), and love as a natural human phenomenon (it). In stanza 23 above and 40 below the stress is on love as a god.

39. And if that I consent, I wrongfully,  
 Complain, iwis; thus possèd to and fro, *indeed / tossed*  
 All steerless within a boat am I  
 Amid the sea betwixen windès two  
 That in contráry standen evermo'. *opposite directions*  
 Alas! What is this wonder malady?  
 For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die." <sup>1</sup>

40. In him ne deignéð sparen blood royál  
 The fire of Love, wherefrom God me bless,  
 Nor him forbore in no degree, for all *did not spare him*  
 His virtue or his excellent prowess; <sup>2</sup> *achievement*  
 But held him as his thrall low in distress *his (Love's) slave*  
 And burned him so in sundry ways ay new, *always different*  
 That sixty times a day he lost his hue. *color*

41. So muchè day by day, his ownè thought  
 For lust to her gan quicken and increase, *desire / grow*  
 That every other charge he set at nought. *(So) that / duty*  
 Forthy, full oft, his hot fire to cease, *Therefore / to alleviate*  
 To see her goodly look he gan to press; *exert himself*  
 For thereby to be easèd well he wend, *he thought*  
 And ay the nearer was, the more he brend. *And always / burned*

42. But for no hate he to the Greekès had  
 Nor also for the rescue of the town  
 Ne made him there in armès for to mad, *to rage*  
 But only, lo, for this conclusion  
 To liken her the best for his renown;  
 From day to day in armès so he sped *to please h. / by his fame*  
*succeeded*

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<sup>1</sup> 39.7: "I die of heat when it is cold, of cold when it is hot."

<sup>2</sup> 40.1-7: "The fire of Love did not deign to spare his (Troilus's) royal blood (God save me from that fire). And it did not spare him because of his courage and his excellent achievements, but kept him in deep distress like a slave, and burned him in so many new and different ways, that he lost color sixty times a day."

That all the Greekès as the death him dread.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

45. "What will now every lover say of thee  
 If this be wist, but e'er in thine abséncé *known / ever*  
 Laughen in scorn and say: `Lo, there goes he  
 That is the man of so great sapience *wisdom*  
 That held us lovers least in reverence;  
 Now thanked be God he may go in the dance  
 Of them that Love list feebly to advance."  
*whom L. does not want to help*

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

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<sup>1</sup> 42. This stanza expresses the standard romance convention that love improves, among other things, a man's military prowess. See also below stanzas 96 and 97.

47. Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,  
 A friend of his that callèd was Pandaré  
 Came in once unaware, and heard him groan,  
 And saw his friend in such distress and care. *trouble*  
 "Alas!" quod he, "who causeth all this fare?  
 Oh mercy God, what unhap may this mean? *misfortune*  
 Have now, thus soon, the Greekès made you lean? *gaunt (with fear)*
48. Or hast thou some remorse of conscience  
 And art now fall in some devotion  
 And wailest for thy sin and thine offence,  
 And hast, for fearè, caught contrition?  
 God save them that besiegèd have our town,  
 And so can lay our jollity on press, *make us pack up our merriment*  
 And bring our lusty folk to holiness."
49. These wordès said he for the nonès all, *for the occasion*  
 That with such thing he might him angry make,  
 And with an anger do his sorrow fall *reduce his sorrow*  
 As for the time, and his couráge awake.  
 But well he wist as far as tonguès spake<sup>1</sup> *But he knew*  
 There n'as a man of greater hardiness *was not / courage*  
 Than he, ne more desirèd worthiness. *he = Troilus / honor*
50. "What case," quod Troilus, "what áventure *chance / accident*  
 Has guided thee to see my languishing  
 That am refused of every créature? *of = by*  
 But for the love of God, at my praying  
 Go hence away, for certès my dying *certainly*  
 Will thee dis-ease, and I must needès die. *distress*  
 Therefore go 'way; there is no more to say.
51. "But if thou ween I be thus sick for dread, *think*  
 It is not so, and therefore scornè nought. *don't mock*

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

There is another thing I take of heed  
 Well more than aught the Greekès have y-wrought,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which cause is of my death for sorrow and thought.  
 But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,  
 Be thou not wroth. I hide it for the best."

*don't wish to tell you  
angry*

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

*nearly melts / pity  
  
between  
  
Know you*

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

*share  
  
truth  
To share woe as well as joy  
  
at once*

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

*God grant  
since it pleases you  
  
well I know  
you think  
Now, listen*

55. "Love, (against the which whoso defendeth  
 Himselfen most, him alderleast availeth)  
 With disespair so sorrowful me offendeth

*whoever  
least of all  
despair*

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<sup>1</sup> 51.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."

That straight unto the death my heartè saileth.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thereto, desire so burning me assaileth,  
 That to be slain it were a greater joy  
 To me than king of Greece to be or Troy.

56. "Sufficeth this, my fullè friend Pandaré,  
 What I have said, for now wost thou my woe,  
 And for the love of God, my coldè care  
 So hide it well, I tell it ne'er to mo' ;  
 For harmès mighten follow more than two  
 If it were wist; but be thou in gladness.  
 And let me starve, unknown, of my distress."

*now you know*  
  
*more (than you)*  
*more than two = many*  
*known*  
*let me die*

57. "How hast thou thus unkindèly and long  
 Hid this from me, thou fool?" quod Pándarus;  
 "Paraunter, thou might after such one long  
 That my advice anon may helpen us."<sup>2</sup>  
 "This were a wonder thing," quod Troilus;  
 "Thou never could'st in love thyselfen wiss;  
 How devil mayst thou bringen *me* to bliss?"

*Perhaps*  
  
  
*succeed*  
*How the devil?*

58. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandaré,  
 "Though I be nice; it happeth often so  
 That one that excess doth full evil fare<sup>3</sup>  
 By good counsel can keep his friend therefro.  
 I have myself eke seen a blind man go  
 There as he fell that couldè looken wide;<sup>4</sup>  
 A fool may eke a wise man often guide.

*unsuccessful*  
*causes to do badly*  
  
  
  
*see all around*  
*also*

---

<sup>1</sup> 55.1-4: "Love (against which he who tries to defend himself, does least well) has so overwhelmed me with despair that my heart is sailing straight to death."

<sup>2</sup> 57.3-4: "Perhaps you are longing for someone with whom I can be of help."

<sup>3</sup> 58.2-4: "It often happens that one who fares badly because of excess ... " It is not clear what "excess" Pandarus is referring to.

<sup>4</sup> 58.5-6: "I have seen a blind man walk safely where a man who could see all round him fell down."

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

*perhaps / can advise*

*wants to*

60. "And of one thing right siker mayst thou be  
 That certain, for to dien in the pain,  
 That I shall never more discover thee.  
 Nor, by my truth, I keep not to restrain  
 Thee from thy love, though that it were Elaine  
 That is thy brother's wife, if I it wist.  
 Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

*quite sure  
 die under torture  
 give you away  
 I care not  
 Helen of Troy  
 knew  
 as you please*

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

*confide  
 plainly / reason*

*rebuke  
 nobody can prevent  
 till he wants to*

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

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

*thou knowest*

63. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said,  
 But long he lay as still as he dead were.  
 And after this with sighing he abrayd,  
 And to Pandárus' voice he lent his ear.  
 And up his eyen cast he, that in fear

*came to*

*eyes / (so) that*

Was Pándarus lest that in frenzy *a fit*  
 He shouldè fall or elsè soonè die,

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

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

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

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

---

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

68. "Now know I that there reason in thee failleth.  
 But tell me: if I wistè what she were  
 For whom that thee all this misaunter aileth,  
 Durst thou that I told her in her ear  
 Thy woe (since thou dar'st not thyself for fear)  
 And her besought on thee to have some ruth?"  
 "Why, nay," quod he, "by God and by my truth."

*if I knew who  
 this distress ails you  
 Would you prefer if I told  
 pity*

69. "What? Not as busily," quod Pándarus  
 As though my own life lay upon this need?"  
 "No, certès, brother," quod this Troilus.  
 "And why?" "For thou shouldest never speed."  
 "Wost thou that well?" "Yea, that is out of dread,"  
 Quod Troilus, "for all that e'er you can,  
 She will to no such wretch as I be won."

*Not (if I worked) as hard  
 certainly  
 succeed  
 Do you know? / certain  
 whatever you do*

70. "What may she deemen other of thy death  
 (If thou thus die and she n'ot why it is),  
 But that for fear is yieliden up thy breath  
 For Greekès have besieged us iwis?<sup>1</sup>  
 Lord, what a thank then shalt thou have of this!  
 This will she say, and all the town at once:  
 `The wretch is dead. The devil have his bones.'

*think  
 does not know  
 Just because Greeks*

71. "Thou mayst alone here weep and cry and kneel,  
 But, love a woman that she wot it not!  
 And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel,  
 Unknown, unkissed, and lost that is unsought."<sup>2</sup>

*knows it not  
 requite*

---

<sup>1</sup> 70: "What else is she to think of your death, if you die without telling her, but that you died out of fear of the Greeks who have besieged us? And the thanks you will get from her and all the town is: The coward is dead; to hell with him."

<sup>2</sup> 71.2-7: "But if you love a woman who does not know it [because you have not told her], she will return your love in a way you cannot feel [i.e. not at all]. The woman who does not know you love her, who remains unkissed and unpursued, is lost [as a lover]. Many a man has loved a lady who has known about his love, for 20 years, and has remained unrewarded even by a kiss from her mouth."

What! Many a man has love full dear y-bought  
 Twenty winters that his lady wist, *knew it*  
 And never yet his lady's mouth he kissed.

72. "What! Should he therefore fallen in despair  
 Or be recreant for his ownè teen, *give in to grief*  
 Or slay himself al be his lady fair? *even if his lady*  
 Nay, nay, but e'er in one be fresh and green *but constantly be eager*  
 To serve and love his dearè heartè's queen,  
 And think it is a guerdon her to serve,-- *privilege*  
 A thousandfold more than he can deserve."

73. And of that word took heedè Troilus,  
 And thought anon what folly he was in  
 And how that sooth to him said Pándarus *truth*  
 That for to slay himself might he not win, *profit*  
 But bothè do unmanhood and a sin  
 And of his death his lady not to wite, *blame*  
 For of his woe, God wot, she knew full lite. *G. knows / little*

74. And with that thought he gan full sorely sigh  
 And said: "Alas! What is me best to do?"  
 To whom Pandárus answered: "If thee like,  
 The best is that thou tell to me thy woe  
 And have my truth: but thou find it so *my word / unless you*  
 I be thy boote ere that it be full long, *that I cure you before long*  
 To pieces do me draw and sithen hang." *have me drawn & hanged*

75. "Yea, so thou sayst," quod Troilus then. "Alas!  
 But God wot, it is not the rather so. *that does not make it so*  
 Full hard were it to helpen in this case  
 For well find I that Fortune is my foe,  
 Nor all the men that riden can or go *or walk*  
 May of her cruel wheel the harm withstand,

For as she list she plays with free and bond." <sup>1</sup> *she pleases / & slave*

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

77. "For if her wheel stints anything to turn, *ceases at all*  
 Then ceases she Fortuna for to be.  
 Now since the wheel by no way may sojourn, *pause*  
 What wost thou if her mutability *How do you know*  
 Right as thyselfen list will do by thee,<sup>2</sup> *Just as you wish*  
 Or that she be not far from thy helping?  
 Paraunter thou hast cause for to sing. *Perhaps*

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

79. "Look up, I say, and tell us what she is  
 Anon, that I may go about thy need. *At once*  
 Know I her aught? For my love tell me this. *for love of me*  
 Then would I hopen rather for to speed." *to succeed quicker*  
 Then gan the vein of Troilus to bleed

---

<sup>1</sup> 75-77: One of the standard ways of portraying Fortune was as a woman, sometimes with a blindfold, who spun a wheel at her whim. On the wheel were people, who went to the top or were thrown down as it turned.

<sup>2</sup> 77.4-5: "How do you know whether her changeableness may not do for you just what you want?"

For he was hit, and waxed all red for shame. *and blushed*  
 "Aha!" quod Pándare. "Here beginneth game"

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

81. And when that Pandare heard her namé neven, *named*  
 Lord! he was glad, and saidé: "Friend so dear,  
 Now fare aright, for Jové's name in heaven,  
 Love hath beset thee right. Be of good cheer, *Love has blessed you*  
 For of good name and wisdom and mannér  
 She hath enough, and eke of gentleness. *of good breeding*  
 If she be fair, thou wost thyself, I guess. *beautiful / you know*

82. "And also think, and therewith gladden thee,  
 That since thy lady virtuous is all,  
 So follows it that there is some pity  
 Amongst all these others in general. *her other virtues*  
 And forthy see that thou, in special,  
 Requiré naught that is against her name, *And therefore*  
 For virtue stretcheth not itself to shame. *nothing / reputation*

83. "But well is me that ever I was born, *But I'm glad*  
 That thou beset art in so good a place; *you have settled*  
 For by my truth in love I durst have sworn  
 Thee never should have tid thus fair a grace.<sup>1</sup> *I dared swear*  
 And wost thou why? For thou wert wont to chase *to thee / happened*  
 At Love in scorn, and for despite him call  
 `Saint Idiot, lord of these foolès all.' *know you? / used to sneer*

---

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

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

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

86. "And wost thou why I am the less afearèd *do you know?*  
 Of this mattèrè with my niece to treat? <sup>2</sup> *to take up this matter*  
 For this have I heard said of wise y-lered *from learned wise men*  
 `Was never man nor woman yet begot *begotten*  
 That was unapt to suffer lovè's heat  
 Celestial, or elsè love of kind.' <sup>3</sup> *Divine or human*  
 Forthy some grace I hope in her to find. *Therefore*

87. "And for to speak of her in special:  
 Her beauty to bethinken and her youth *to consider*  
 It sits her not to be celestial *It's not time for her*  
 As yet, though that her listè both and couth. *even if she wanted & could*  
 But truly, it sits her well right nouth *now*  
 A worthy knight to loven and to cherish

---

<sup>1</sup> 84: This stanza and part of the next one contain a parody of Catholic sacramental confession with Pandarus the "priest" giving instructions on contrition to the "penitent" Troilus, who obediently complies.

<sup>2</sup> 86.2: Chaucer or Pandarus drops the news of this crucial relationship very casually.

<sup>3</sup> 86.4-6: "No man ever born has been incapable of love, either human or divine."

And but she do, I hold it for a vice. *And unless*

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

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

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

91. Quod Pandarus: "Thou hast a full great care  
 Lest that the churl may fall out of the moon! *man*  
 Why, Lord! I hate of thee thy nicè fare! *silly behavior*

---

<sup>1</sup> 89.3: "Became, shall we say, `untormented' by woe."

<sup>2</sup> 90.6-7: *for the manner / Of thee ...* : The meaning of this difficult phrase may be that because of her relationship to Pandarus she will be embarrassed and so will not listen to love overtures from him on Troilus's behalf.

Why intermit of what thou'st not to do? <sup>1</sup>  
 For God's love I biddè thee a boon: *ask a favor*  
 So let me alone and it shall be the best."  
 "Why, friend," quod he "now do right as thee lest." *as you please*

92. "But hearken, Pándare, one word. <sup>2</sup> For I n'ould *I don't want*  
 That thou in me wendest so great folly, *imagine*  
 That to my lady I desiren should  
 What toucheth harm or any villainy  
 For dreadéless me werè lever die *certainly I'd rather die*  
 That she of me aught elsè understood  
 But what that mightè sounen unto good." *be honorably intended*

93. Then laughed this Pandare, and anon answered:  
 "And I thy borrow? Fie! no wight does but so;  
 I roughtè not though that she stood and heard *I don't care*  
 How that thou sayst; <sup>3</sup> but farewell I will go.  
 Adieu! Be glad! God speed us bothè two. *May God favor*  
 Give me this labour and this busyness  
 And of my speed be thine all the sweetness." *of my success*

94. "Now, Pandarus, I can no morè say  
 But thou wise, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all! *knowest*  
 My life, my death whole in thine hand I lay.  
 Help now." Quod he: "Yes, by my truth, I shall." *"he" = P.*  
 "God yield thee, friend, and thus in special," *God reward*

---

<sup>1</sup> 91.4: "Why interfere with what you are not concerned with? [since you have handed the matter over to me]." Thou'st not = "thou hast not".

<sup>2</sup> 92: Troilus does not want Pandarus to think that he, Troilus, is so insensitive that he wants anything wrong or unbecoming from Criseyde, asserting that he would rather die than have her think his intentions dishonorable.

<sup>3</sup> 93.1-4: The lines seems to mean: "Pandarus laughed and answered: `With me as your surety! (chaperone?). Oh, nobody says anything else. I wouldn't mind if she stood here and heard what you say.' This seems sardonic in Pandarus, but if so, it is at odds with his concern expressed earlier that Troilus should not do anything to dishonor Criseyde (82.6-7) and similar concerns later. *And I your borrow* occurs again in Pandarus's mouth at II.17.1 where it seems to mean "I assure you."

Quod Troilus, "that thou me recommend  
To her that to the death me may command."

95. This Pandare then, desirous for to serve  
His fullè friend, then said in this mannér: *dear*  
"Farewell, and think I will thy thanks deserve.  
Have here my truth, and that thou shalt well hear."  
And went his way, thinking on this mattér  
And how he best might her beseech of grace,  
And find a timè thereto, and a place.

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

97. For he became the friendliestè wight *person*  
The gentilest and eke the mostè free, *most generous*  
The thriftiest and one the bestè knight<sup>2</sup> *worthiest*  
That in his timè was, or mightè be.  
Dead were his japès and his cruelty, *jibes*  
His highè port and his mannér estrange, *haughty & scornful manner*  
And each of them gan for a virtue change.<sup>3</sup> *each of these (faults)*

98. Now let us stint of Troilus a stound *stop (talking) / a while*  
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore, *acts*

---

<sup>1</sup> 96.2: "he mounted" is understood after *bay*. Stanzas 96 and 97 expand on the medieval romance convention mentioned earlier that falling in love improved a man's military prowess and his social grace. See again later III, st. 186.

<sup>2</sup> 97.2-3: *gentilest* means something more than modern "gentlest" and closer to "most noble"; *one the beste* generally means the very best, rather than "one of the best".

<sup>3</sup> 97.7: "And began to exchange each of them (i.e. those faults) for a virtue."

And is somedeal of aching of his wound	<i>somewhat</i>
Y-lisséd well, but healéd no deal more.	<i>Much relieved but not healed</i>
And as an easy patiënt, the lore	<i>the instructions</i>
Abides of him that goes about his cure, <sup>1</sup>	
And thus he dryeth forth his áventure.	<i>endures his fortune</i>

Here ends Book I

---

<sup>1</sup> 98.5-6: "Like a good patient, he pays attention to the instructions (*lore*) of him (i.e. the physician) who is trying to cure him."

Love is central to Chaucer's tale, and Troilus and Criseyde's love affair follows many conventions of the medieval concept of "courtly love." This includes worship of the maiden from afar (Book 1), rejection of the male by the virtuous lady (Book 2), and the ultimate betrayal of the male by the female (Book 5). Troilus and Criseyde literature essays are academic essays for citation. These papers were written primarily by students and provide critical analysis of Troilus and Criseyde. Why Don't We Like Troilus? Chaucer's Troilus & Criseyde: The Frivolity of Femininity. Chaucer's Use of "Tender" in Troilus and Criseyde. Fortune in Troilus and Criseyde. Inevitability of Criseyde's Choice. View our essays for Troilus and Criseyde; E-Text of Troilus and Criseyde.

Troilus and Criseyde is Chaucer's longest complete work and in many ways his most polished; he wrote it at the peak of his creative powers and may well have expected it to endure as his most important literary achievement. Indeed, it has only been in the last century or two that readers have come to rank it a step beneath the incomplete and somewhat experimental *The Canterbury Tales*. His combining of the conventional setting and plot of medieval romance with realistic insights into character and motivation have led critics to debate whether it is more properly considered a sophisticated medieval romance. *Troilus and Criseyde* is a romance story set in Ancient Greece and written by Geoffrey Chaucer between 1382-1386. It is broken up into 5 books which chart the rise and fall of the characters' love affair. *Troilus and Criseyde* begins during the Trojan War. The Trojan maiden Criseyde has been abandoned by her father, Calchas, who committed treachery and has went to live with the Greeks. Chaucer's version contains longer verses dedicated to emotion and deliberation and a more merciful approach to Criseyde's betrayal. Most importantly, Chaucer follows the romance from the very beginning, rather than focusing on only the consummation of their love, as Boccaccio does. Whilst not completely original, the book was extremely popular in medieval England. Chaucer: *Troilus and Criseyde*. A new complete, downloadable English modernisation. This version aims to provide a readable and accessible modernisation of the poem while preserving Chaucer's rhymes and diction wherever possible, at the same time eliminating all archaic words which would require marginal notes to explain. Copyright © 2001 A. S. Kline, All Rights Reserved This work MAY be FREELY reproduced, stored and transmitted, electronically or otherwise, for any NON-COMMERCIAL purpose. Last Modified June 2001. Support Us. \$ → £.