TROILUS AND CRISEYDE

by

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Book I
1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,
In loving how his aventure fell
From woe to weal, and after out of joy
My purpose is, ere that I part from you.
Thesiphonë, thou help me to endite
These woeful verses that weepen as I write

2. To thee clepe I, thou goddess of torment,
Thou cruel Fury sorrowing ever in pain:
Help me that am the sorrowful instrument
That helpeth lovers (as I can) to ‘plain.
For well sits it, the sooth for to sayn,
A woeful wight to have a dreary fere,
And to a sorrowful tale a sorry cheer.

3. For I, that god of Love’s servants serve
Ne dare to Love for mine unlikeliness
Prayen for speed, al should I therefore starve.
So far am I from his help in darkness.
But natheles, if this may do gladness
To any lover, and his cause avail,
Have he my thanks, and mine be this travail.

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

\[2\] 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: Grammatically it is the verses that weep (weepen), but perhaps it is really the author that is meant.

\[3\] 3.1-3: “I, who serve the servants of Love, do not dare to pray to Love for success (speed) because of my unlikeliness, even if I should die (starve).
4. But, you lovers, that bathe in gladness,
If any drop of pity in you be,
Remembereth you on passéd heaviness
That you have felt, and on th’adversity
Of other folk; and thinketh how that ye
Have felt that Lovē durstē you displease,
Or you have won him with too great an ease.²

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

6. And biddeth eke for them that be despaired
In love, that never will recovered be;
And eke for them that falsely been appaired
Through wicked tonguês, be it he or she.
Thus biddeth God, for His benignity,
And eke for them that be despairèd out of Lovē’s grace.

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

8. And for to have of them compassion
As though I were their owné 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,

² 3 - 5: Here as elsewhere in the poem there is a lack of distinction between the Christian God and a god of Love, both to be prayed to; elsewhere in the poem love seems to be a natural human phenomenon (it). 4.3: Rembereth is the imperative plur. like thinketh and prayeth later.
And how that she forsook him ere she died.

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

10. Now fell it so that in the town there was
Dwelling a lord of great authority
A great divine that clepèd was Calchas,
That in sciénce so expert was that he
Knew well that Troyè should destroyèd be
By answer of his god that hightèd thus:
Daun Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus.

11. So when this Calchas knew by calculating
And eke by answer of this Ápollo,
That Greekès shoulden 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.

12. For which, for to departen softèly
Took purpose full this foré-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.

13. 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

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

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.'

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

15. Criseydé 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 beauté,  
That like a thing immortal seeméd she,  
As doth a heavenish perfect creature  
That down were sent in scorning of Nature.

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

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

18. "And all th'honoúr that men may do you have  
As far forth as your father dwelléd here  
You shall have, and your body men shall save,  
As far as I may aught enquire or hear."

1 16.5: 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.
Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde

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.

19. And in her house she abode with such meinee
As to her honour needè was to hold
And while she dwelling was in that citý
Kept her estate, and both of young and old
Full well beloved, and well men of her told,
But whether that she children had or no,
I read it not; therefore I let it go.

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

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

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

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

2 Chaucer makes it clear that his subject (matter) is not the Trojan War (a digression ! ). Those who want that story can, he says, find it in Homer, or in Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, Latin writers who came long after Homer, but were respected in the Middle Ages for their story of Troy.
23. And so befell, when comen was the time
   Of April when clothèd was the mead
   With newè green (of lusty Ver the prime)
   And sweetè smelling flowers white and red --
   In sundry wisè showèd (as I read)
   The folk of Troy their observances old,
   Palladionè's feastè for to hold.

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

25. Among these other folk was Cressida
   In widow's habit black; but natheless,
   Right as our firstè letter is now an `A,'
   In beauty first so stood she makeless.
   Her goodly looking gladdenèd all the press.
   Was never seen thing to be praisèd dear,
   Nor under cloudè black so bright a star

26. As was Criseyde, as folk said everyone
   That her behelden in her blackè weed;
   And yet she stood full low and still alone
   Behind the other folk in little brede
   And nigh the door, ay under shamè's dread,
   Simple of attire and debonair of cheer
   With full assurèd looking and mannéër. ¹

27. This Troilus as he was wont to guide
   His youngè knightès, led them up and down
   In thilkè largè temple on every side,
   Beholding ay the ladies of the town
   Now here, now there, for no devotion
   Had he to none to rieven him his rest,

¹ 26.7: It is a little difficult to reconcile the somewhat contradictory information about attitudes in stanzas 25 & 26. Criseyde is admired by the people and yet apprehensive; shy and yet self-assured. In stanza 42 below she is even "somedal deynous", somewhat haughty.
27.6-7: Troilus, who loses no sleep over love-sickness, began to praise or to fault whomever he wanted to.

29.3-4: "And the trouble people have getting lovers and the difficulties (doutances) in retaining them"
Then thinketh he, ‘Though I prance all befrom,\(^1\)
First in the trace, full fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but a horse, and horse’s law
I must endure, and with my fellows draw.’

33. So fared it by this fierce and proude knight,
Though he a worthy kinge’s sonne were,
And wended nothing had had suche might
Against his will that should his hearté stir,
Yet with a look his hearté waxed a-fire,
That he that now was most in pride above
Waxed suddenly most subject unto love.

34. Forthy, example taketh of this man,
You wisè, proud and worthy folkés all
To scornèn Love, which that so sooné can
The freedom of your heartés to him thrall.
For èr it was, and èr it shall befal,
That Love is he that allé thing may bind,
For may no man for-do the law of Kind

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

36. And truly well it sitteth to be so,
For alderwisest have therewith been pleased;
For they that have been aldermost in woe
With love have been most comforted and eased.
And oft it has the cruel heart appeased,
And worthy folk made worthier of name
And causeth most to dreaden vice and shame.\(^2\)

37. Now since it may not goodly be withstond,

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

\(^2\) 36: Standard notion in medieval romance of the effects of love.
And is a thing so virtuous in kind, strong (virtuous) in nature.
Refuseth not to Love for to be bound,
Since as Himselven list He may you bind.
The yard is bet that bowen will and wind, ¹
Than that that bursts; and therefore I you rede breaks; advise
To follow him that so well can you lead.

38. But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kingé’s son of which I told, And leave / on the side
And letten other things collateral:
Of him think I my talé for to hold, return
Both of his joy and of his carés cold,
And all his work as touching this mattér, jesting
For I it gan, I will thereto refer.²

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

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

41. She was not with the least of her statûre size
But all her limbs so well answering proportioned
Weren to womanhood, that créature in appearance
Was never lessé mannish in seeming;
And eke the puré wise of her moving very manner
Showéd well that men might in her guess
Honour, estate and womanly noblesse. rank / nobility

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¹ 37.5-6: “The branch that will bend and twist is better than one that breaks.”
² 38.7: “Because I began it, I will return to it.”
42. To Troilus right wonder well withall bearing
Gan for to like her moving and her cheer,\(^1\)
Which somdeal deynous was, for she let fall
Her look a little aside in such manner
Askances: "What! May I not standen here?"
And after that, her looking gan she light,
That never thought him seen so good a sight.

43. And of her look in him there gan to quick spring up
So great desire and such affection,
That in his heart's bottom gan to stick
Of her his fixed and deep impression;
And though he erst had porèd up and down,
He was then glad his hornes in to shrink.
Unneth wist he how to look or wink.\(^2\)

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

45. She, this in black, liking to Troilus this (woman) / pleasing to
Over all thing, he stood for to behold;
Nor his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,
He neither cheerè made nor wordès told,\(^4\)
But from afar (his manner for to hold),
On other things his look sometimes he cast
And eft on her, while that the service last.

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\(^1\) 42.1-2: "Her carriage (moving) and her manner (cheer) were very pleasing to Troilus." to like = to be pleasing to.

\(^2\) 43.7: "He hardly knew whether to look or close his eyes."

\(^3\) 44.5-6: “He felt the spirit of his heart die ...” 44.7: "folk" is the grammatical object of the verb "convert": "Blessed be Love that can convert folk thus".

\(^4\) 45.3-4: "Neither by overt action (cheere) nor by word did he show his desire nor his reason for standing that way." 45.4-7: That is, he tried to keep up his usual (haughty) manner by pretending to look at various things from a distance to cover up the constant return.
46. And after this, not fully all a-whaped, 
Out of the temple all easily he went, 
Repeating him that he had ever japed 
Of folk’s love, lest fully the descent 
Of scorn fall on himself; but, what he meant, 
Lest it were wist on any manner side, 
His woe he gan dissimulate and hide.

47. When he was from the temple thus departed 
He straight anon unto his palace turneth, 
Right with her look through-shotten and through-darted, 
Al feigneth he in lust that he sojourneth; 
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.

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

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

50. “But take this: what you lovers oft eschew, 
Or elsë do of good intention. 
Full oft thy lady will it misconstrue 
And deem it harm in her opinion;

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1 47.3-7: The meaning is that, smitten as he is with her looks, he still pretends that he is amused by lovers; he goes on pretending that he is totally cheerful, and by his manner and speech mocks the "servants of love" so as to cover up (to wry) his actual love-struck feelings.

2 50.1-3: Your lady will put a bad construction on (misconstrue) whatever well-meaning things you lovers do or do not do (eschew). 50.7: Well is him is sarcastic.
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, then shalt thou have a groan anon.
Lord! well is him that may be of you one.”

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

52. And when that he in chamber was alone,
He down upon his bed's foot him set,
And first he gan to sigh, and eft to groan
And thought ay on her so withouten let,
That as he sat awake, his spirit mett
Right of her look,\(^1\) and gan it new avise.

53. Thus gan he make a mirror of his mind
In which he saw all wholly her figure,
And that he well could in his heartë find
It was to him a right good adventure
To love such one, and if he did his cure,
Or else for one of her servants pass.

54. Imagining that [no] travail nor grame
Ne mightë for so goodly one be lorn
As she;\(^2\) nor he for his desire no shame,
Al were it wist, but in price and up-born
Of allë lovers well moreë than beforë;
Thus argumented he in his beginning,
Full unavisèd of his woe coming.

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

\(^2\) 54: "Imagining that no labor or pain endured for one so good as she would be lost; nor would he feel any shame because of his desire, if it became known, but he would be held in esteem by lovers and regarded more highly than before.”
Thus took he purpose lovës craft to sue
And thought that he would worken privily,
First to hiden his desire in mew
From every wight y-born, all utterly
But he might aught recovered be thereby,
Remembering him that love too wide y-blow
Yields bitter fruit, although sweet seed be sow.

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

And of his song not only the senténce,
As writ mine author callëd Lollius,¹
But plainly, save our tonguë’s difference,
I dare well say, in all that Troilus
Saïd in his song, lo! every word right thus
As I shall say; and whoso list it hear,
Lo, next this verse, he may it finden here.

"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 whencë comes my woe?
If it be wick’d, a wonder thinketh me

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

² "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.
When every torment and adversity
That comes from him may to me savoury think,
For ay thirst I the more that I it drink.  

59. “And if that at my owne lust I burn,
From whencé comes my wailing and my 'plaint?
If harm agree me, whereto 'plain I then?
I n'ot ne why unweary that I faint.
O quické death, O sweeté harm so quaint,
How may of thee in me such quantity
But if that I consent that it so be ?

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

61. And to the god of Lové thus said he
With piteous voice: “O lord, now yourès is
My spirit, which that oughté yourès be.
You thank I, lord, that have me brought to this;
But whether goddess or woman, y-wis,
She be, I n’ot., which that you do me serve,”
But as her man I will ay live and starve.

62. “You standen in her eyen mightily,
As in a place unto your virtue digne
Wherefore, Lord, if my service or I
May likè you, so be to me benign;

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

2 60.7: ”I die of heat when it is cold, of cold when it is hot.”

3 61.5-6: “But whether the one you make me serve (do me serve) is woman or goddess I do not know (I n’ot)

4 This seems to mean that Love has his home in Criseyde’s eyes, a place worthy of him.
For mine estate royál I here resign
Into her hand, and with full humble cheer
Become her man, as to my lady dear.”

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

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

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

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

67. All other dreadès weren from him fled
Both of the siege and his salvatïon
N’ in his desire no other fawnès bred

¹ 63.1-7: “The fire of Love did not deign to spare his (Troilus's) royal blood (God save me from that fire). Nor did it spare him because of his courage and his excellent achievements, but kept him in deep distress like a slave, and burned him in so many new and different ways, that he lost color sixty times a day.”
68. The showers sharpè fell of armès proof
That Hector or his other brethren did,
Ne made him only therefore oncè move,
And yet was he, where so men went or rid,
Found one the best, and longest time abode
Where peril was; and eke did such travail
In armès that to think it was marvail.

69. But for no hate he to the Greekès had
Nor also for the rescue of the town
Ne made him there in armès for to mad,
But only, lo, for this conclusion
To liken her the best for his renown;
From day to day in armès so he sped
That all the Greekès as the death him dread.

70. And from this forth then reft him love his sleep,
And made his meat his foe; and eke his sorrow
'Gan multiply, that whoso tookè keep,
It showèd in his hue both eve and morrow,
Therefore a title he ’gan him for to borrow,
Of other sickness, lest men of him wend
That the hot fire of love him sorè brend;

71. And said he had a fever and fared amiss
And how it was, certáin I cannot say,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feignèd her she n’ist, one of the tway,
But well rede I, that by no manner way
Ne seemèd it as if she on him raught,

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

2  69.7: This stanza again expresses the standard romance convention that love improves, among other things, a man’s military prowess. See also below stanzas 154-5.
Or of his pain, nor whatsoe’er he thought.

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

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

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

75. “But O, thou woeful Troilus, God would
(Since thou must loven through thy destiny)
Thou beset were on such one that should
Know all thy woe, al’ lackéd her pity.
But all so cold in love towardés thee
Thy lady is, as frost in winter moon,
And thou fordone, as snow in fire is soon.¹

76. “God would I were arrivèd in the port
Of death, to which my sorrow will me lead!
Ah, Lord, it were to me a great comfórt
Then were I quit of languishing in dread.
For be my hidden sorrow y-blow abroad
I shall bejapéd be a thousand time

¹ The self pity of Troilus, who has not even spoken to Criseyde, is already in full bloom.
More than that fool of whose folly men rhyme.

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

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

79. Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his that calléd was Pandáre
Came in once unaware, and heard him groan,
And saw his friend in such distress and care.
"Alas!" quod he, "who causeth all this fare?
Oh mercy God, what unhap may this mean?
Have now, thus soon, the Greekês made you lean?

80. “Or hast thou some remorse of conscïence
And art now fall in some devotion
And waillest for thy sin and thine offence,
And hast, for fearé, caught contrition?
God save them that besiegéd have our town,
And so can lay our jollity on press,
And bring our lusty folk to holiness.”

81. These wordês said he for the nonès all,
That with such thing he might him angry make,
And with an anger do his sorrow fall
As for the time, and his couráge awake.
But well he wist as far as tongüs spake ¹
There n'as a man of greater hardiness

¹ 81.5-6: He knew (wist) that everybody agreed (as far as tongues spoke) that Troilus was a man of the greatest courage and honor.
Than he, ne more desirèd worthiness.  

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

83. "But if thou ween I be thus sick for dread,  
It is not so, and therefore scornè nought.  
There is another thing I take of heed  
Well more than aught the Greekès have y-wrought, ¹  
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."  

84. 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 hidè from thy friend so great a care.  
Wost thou not well that it am I, Pandáre?  

85. "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."  

86. 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.  

¹ 83.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."
87. "Love, (against which whoso defendeth whoever
Himselfen most, him alderleast availeth) least of all
With disespair so sorrowful me offendeth despair
That straight unto the death my hearté saileth.¹
Thereto, desire so burning me assaileth,
That to be slain it were a greater joy
To me than king of Greece to be or Troy.

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

89. "How hast thou thus unkindély and long Perhaps
Hid this from me, thou fool?" quod Pándarus;
"Paraunter, thou might after such one long succeed
That my advice anon may helpen us." ²
"This were a wonder thing," quod Troilus;
"Thou never could'is in love thyselfen wiss; How the devil?
How devil mayst thou bringen me to bliss?"

90. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandáre, unsuccesful
"Though I be nice; it happeth often so causes to do badly
That one that excess doth full evil fare ³
By good counsel can keep his friend therefro.
I have myself eke seen a blind man go see all around
There as he fell that couldé looken wide;⁴ also
A fool may eke a wise man often guide.

91."A whetstone is no carving instrument,

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

² 89.3-4: "Perhaps you are longing for someone with whom I can be of help."

³ 90.2-4: "It often happens that one who fares badly because of excess ..." It is not clear what "excess" Pandarus is referring to.

⁴ 90.5-6: "I have seen a blind man walk safely where a man who could see all round him fell down."
And yet it maketh sharpè carving tools;
And where thou wost that I have aught miswent
Eschew thou that, for such thing to thee school is.¹
Thus often wisè men been ware by fools,
If thou do so, thy wit is well beware.
By his contraire is everything declared.

91. “For how might ever sweetness have been know
To him that never tasted bitterness?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trow,
That never was in sorrow or some distress.
Eke white by black, by shame eke worthiness,
Each set by other, more for other seemeth,
As men may see; and so the wisè deemeth.

92. “Since thus of two contráries is a lore,
I, that have in love so oft assayed
Grievances, oughté can, and well the more,
Counsel thee of that thou art amayed.
Eke thee ne oughté not been evil apayed,
Though I desirè with thee for to bear
Thy heavy charge; it shall thee lesse dere.

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Grievances, oughté can, and well the more,
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Eke thee ne oughté not been evil apayed,
Though I desirè with thee for to bear
Thy heavy charge; it shall thee lesse dere.

94. “I wot well that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Paris an herdess,
Which that y-clepèd was Oenone,
Wrote in a cómplaint of her heaviness.
You saw the letter that she wrote, I guess.”
“Nay never yet, y-wis,” quod Troilus.
“Now,” quod Pandare, “hearken; it was thus:

95. “Phoebus, that first found art of medicine,”
Quod she, ‘and could, in every wighté’s care,
Remede and rede by herbes he knew fine;
Yet to himself his cunning was full bare;
For love had him so bounden in a snares,
All for the daughter of the King Admete,
That all his craft ne could his sorrow beat”²

¹ 91.3-4: “And where you know me to have gone wrong, avoid that; it should be a lesson to you.”
² 95: The point is that even the inventor of medicine could not cure himself of love sickness.
96. "Right so fare I, unhappily for me.
I love one best and that me smarteth sore.
And yet, paraunter, can I reddenn 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.

97. "And of one thing right siker mayst thou be
That certain, for to dien in the pain,
That I shall never more discover thee.
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.

98. "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.

99. “And witeth well, that bothé two been vices—
Mistrusten all or elsé all believe,—
But well I wot, the mean of it no vice is,
For for to trusten some wight is a proof
Of truth, and forthy would I fain remove.
Thy wrong conceit, and do thee some wight trist
Thy woe to tell; and tell me, if thee list.

100. “The wisé saith, ‘Woe him that is alone,
For, an he fall, he has no help to rise.’
And since thou hast a fellow, tell thy moan.
For this is not, certáin, the nextè wise
To winnen love, as teachen us the wise,
To wallow and weep as Niobè the queen,
Whose tearès yet in marble been y-seen.

101. “Let be thy weeping and thy dreariness,
And let us lessen woe with other speech:
So may thy woeful timé seemé less;
Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde

Delighté not in woe thy woe to seek,
As do these foolês that their sorrows eke
With sorrow, when they have misáventure,
And listé not to seek  them other cure.

102. “Men say, ‘To wretched is consolation
To have another fellow in his pain.’
That oughté well be our opinïon,
For, bothe thou and I, of love we ’plain.
So full of sorrow am I, sooth to sayn,
That certainly no moré hardé grace
May sit on me. For-why? There is no space.

103. "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."

104. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said,
But long he lay as still as he dead were.
And after this with sighing he abrayed,
And to Pandárus' voice he lent his ear.
And up his eyen cast he, that in fear
Was Pándarus lest that in frenzy
He shouldé fall or elsé soonè die,

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

106. And with that Pándare of his wordês stent,
But Troilus yet him no word answéred,
For why to tellen was not his intent
Never to no man, for whom that so he fared.  
For it is said: ‘Man maketh oft a yard  
With which the maker is himself y-beat  
In sundry manner,’ as these wise men treat.

107. And namely in his counsel telling  
What toucheth love that ought to be secreè  
For of itself it would enough outspring  
But if that it the better governed be;  
Eke sometimes it is craft to seem to flee  
From things which in effect men hunten fast.  
All this gan Troilus in his hearté cast.

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

109. “Nor other curè can’st thou none for me:  
Eke, I will not be curèd, I will die.  
What know I of the Queenè Niobe?  
Let be thine old examples, I thee pray.”  
“No,” quod Pandarus, “therefore I say.  
Such is delight of foolès to beweep  
Their woe, but seeken botè they ne keepe.

110. "Now know I that there reason in thee faileth.  
But tell me: if I wisté 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."

111. "What? Not as busily,” quod Pándarus  
As though my own life lay upon this need?"

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¹ 106.3-4: "It was his intention never to tell anyone [the name of the woman] for whom he was behaving in this manner."
"No, certés, brother," quod this Troilus.
"And why?" "For thou should'st 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."

112. Quod Pandarus: "Alas! what may this be,
That thou despairèd art thus causèless?
What? liveth not thy lady? Ben’ citee
How wost thou so that thou art gracèless?
Such evil is not always bootèless
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Since thing to come is oft in aventure.

113. “I grantè well that thou endurest woe
As sharp as doth he, Tityrus, in Hell,
Whose stomach fowlès tearen evermo’
That hight vulture, as [the] bookès tell.
But I may not endurè that thou dwell
In so unskilful an opinion,
That of thy woe is no curacènion.

114. “But oncè n’ilt thou -- for thy coward heart,
And for thine ire and foolish wilfulness,
For wan-trust -- tellen of thy sorrows smart?;
Ne to thine ownè help do busyness,
As much as speak a reason more or less,
But lie as he that list of nothing recche?
What woman couldè lovè such a wretch?

115. "What may she deemen other of thy death
(If thou thus die and she n’ot why is),
But that for fear is yielden up thy breath
For Greekès have besieged us iwis? ¹
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.’

¹ 115: "What else is she to think of your death, if you die without telling her, but that you died out of fear of the Greeks who have besieged us? And the thanks you will get from her and all the town is: The coward is dead; to hell with him."
116. "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.  
What! Many a man has love full dear y-bought  
Twenty winters that his lady wist,  
And never yet his lady's mouth he kissed.

117. "What! Should he therefore fallen in despair  
Or be recréant for his owné teen,  
Or slay himself al be his lady fair?  
Nay, nay, but e'er in one be fresh and green  
To serve and love his dearé hearté's queen,  
And think it is a guerdon her to serve  
A thousandfold more than he can deserve."

118. And of that word took heedé Troilus,  
And thought anon what folly he was in  
And how that sooth to him said Pándarus  
That for to slay himself might he not win,  
But bothé do unmanhood and a sin  
And of his death his lady not to wite,  
For of his woe, God wot, she knew full lite.

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

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

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

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

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

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

125. And with that word he gan him for to shake

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

² 122.4-5: "How do you know whether her changeableness may not do for you just what you want?"
And said: "Thief, thou shalt her name tell."
But then gan silly Troilus to quake
As though men should have led him into Hell
And said: "Alas! of all my woe the well!
Then is my sweete foe callèd -- Criseyde."
And well nigh with that word for fear he died.

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

127. “Ne never saw I a more bounteous
Of her estate, nor gladder, nor of speech
A friendlier, nor none more gracious
For to do well, nor less had need to seek
What for to do, and all this bet to eke
In honour, to as far as she may stretch:
A kingēs heart seemeth by hers a wretch

128. “And forthy look of good comfort thou be
For certainly the firste point is this
Of noble courage, and well ordaineed ¹
A man t’have peace with himself i-wis ;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To love well and in a worthy place ;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

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

130. "But well is me that ever I was born,

¹ "The first point of noble courage, rightly understood (or well ordered), is for a man to have peace with himself indeed"
That thou beset art in so good a place;  
For by my truth in love I durst have sworn  
Thee never should have tid thus fair a grace. ¹  
And wost thou why? For thou wert wont to chase  
At Love in scorn, and for despite him call  
`Saint Idiot, lord of these foolés all.

131. “How often hast thou made thy nicé japes  
And said that Lovés servants, every one  
Of nicéty be very Godés apes  
And somé wouldé munch their meat alone  
Lying abed, and make them for to groan,  
And some, thou saidest, had a blanché fever  
And praydest God he shouldé ne’er recover;

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

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

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

¹ 130:3-4: "On my word, I would have sworn that such good fortune in love would never have happened to you."
And I shall nevermore, while that I live." 1

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

136. “For thilkè ground that bears the weedès wick
Bears eke those wholesome herbès, as full oft
Next the foul nettle rough and thick
The rosë waxeth sweet and smooth and soft,
And next the valley is the hill aloft,
And next the darkè night the gladdè morrow
And also joy is next the fine of sorrow.

137. “Now lookè that attemper be thy bridle,
And for the best, ay suffer to the tide,
Or elsè all our labour is on idle:
He hastens well who wisely can abide.
Be diligent and true and ay well hide.
Be lusty, free, perséver in thy service
And all is well, if thou work in this wise.

138. “But he that parted is in every place
Is nowhere whole, as writen clerkès wise;
What wonder is though such one have no grace?
Eke wost thou how it fares of some service?
As plant a tree or herb in sundry wise
And on the morrow pull it up as blive,
No wonder is though it may never thrive.

139. “And since that God of Love has thee bestowed
In placè digne unto thy worthiness,
Stand fastè, for to good port hast thou rowed.

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

2 135.5: “May god want nothing except to see you relieved”
And of thyself, for any heaviness  
Hope always well, for but if dreariness  
Or over-hast, both our labour shend,  
I hope of this to make a good end.

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

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

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

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

144. "Example why ? See how these wisé clerks  
That erren aldermost against a law

---

1 140.2: Chaucer or Pandarus drops the news of this crucial relationship very casually.

2 140.4-6: "No man ever born has been incapable of love, either human or divine (celestial)."
And be converted from their wicked works  
Through grace of God, that list them to Him draw.  
Then are they folk that have most God in awe  
And strongest faithèd be, I understand,  
And can an error alderbest withstand.”  

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

146. "But dearé friend, how shall my woe be less  
Till this be done? And good, eke tell me this  
How wilt thou say of me and my distress  
Lest she be wroth? -- This dread I most, iwis --  
Or will not hear or trowen how it is.  
All this dread I, and eke for the mannér  
Of thee, her eem, she will no such thing hear.”

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

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1 145.3: "Became, shall we say, `untertormende' by woe."

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

3 147.4: "Why interfere with what you are not concerned with? [since you have handed the matter over to me]." Thou'st not = "thou hast not".
148. "But hearken, Pandare, one word. I don't want
    I don't want
That thou in me wendest so great folly, imagine
That to my lady I desiren should
certainly I'd rather die
What toucheth harm or any villainy
be honorably intended
For dreadeless me werè lever die
And I your borrow
But what that mighte sounen unto good."

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

150. Then Troilus gan down on knees to fall
And Pandar in his arms he hent fast
And said: "Now fie on Greekès all!
I swear to God
Yet, pardee, God shall help us at the last;
And dreadeless, if that my life may last,
And God toforn, lo, some of them shall smart
And yet m'athinks that this avaunt m' astart.

151. "Now, Pandarus, I can no morè say
But thou wise, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all!
knowest
My life, my death whole in thine hand I lay.
"he" = P.
Help now." Quod he: "Yes, by my truth, I shall."
God reward
"God yield thee, friend, and thus in specïal,"
Quod Troilus, "that thou me recommend
To her that to the death me may command."

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1 148.2: Troilus does not want Pandarus to think that he, Troilus, is so insensitive that he wants anything wrong or unbecoming from Crisseyde, asserting that he would rather die than have her think his intentions dishonorable.

2 149.1-4: The lines seems to mean: "Pandarus laughed and answered: `With me as your surety! (chaperone?) Oh, nobody says anything else. I wouldn't mind if she stood here and heard what you say.' ”
This seems sardonic in Pandarus, but if so, it is at odds with his concern expressed earlier that Troilus should not do anything to dishonor Crisseyde (129.6-7) and similar concerns later. And I your borrow occurs again in Pandarus's mouth at II.20.1, where it seems to mean "I assure you."

3 “And yet I am sorry (me athinks) that this boast (avaunt) escaped me (m’astart)."
152. This Pandare then, desirous for to serve
His fullé friend, then said in this manner:
"Farewell, and think I will thy thanks deservé.
Have here my truth, and that thou shalt well hear."
And went his way, thinking on this matter
And how he best might her beseech of grace,
And find a time thereto, and a place.

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

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

155. For he became the friendliest wight
The gentilest ² and eke the mosté free,
The thritfiest and one the besté knight
That in his timé was, or mighté be.
Dead were his japés and his cruelty,
His highé port and his mannér estrange,
And each of them gan for a virtue change.³

156. Now let us stint of Troilus a stound
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is some deal of aching of his wound

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

² 155.2-3: gentilest means something more than modern "gentlest" and closer to "most noble".

³ 155.7: "And began to exchange each of them (i.e. those faults) for a virtue."
Y-lissèd well, but healèd no deal more. Much relieved but not healed
And as an easy patient, the lore the instructions
Abides of him that goes about his cure, ¹
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure. accepts his fortune

Here ends Book I

¹ 156.5-6: "Like a good patient, he pays attention to the instructions (lore) of him (i.e. the physician) who is trying to cure him."