Book II

Proem

1. Out of these blackè wavès for to sail,
O wind, O wind, the weather 'ginneth clear,
For in this sea the boat hath such travail,
Of my cunning that unnethes I it steer.¹
This sea clepe I the tempestuous mattér
Of dis-espair that Troilus was in.
But now of hope the Kalendès begin.

2. O lady mine that callèd art Cleo,
Thou be my speed from this forth, and my muse
To rhymè well this book, till I have do.
Me needeth here no other art to use;
For-why to every lover I me excuse
That of no sentiment I this endite
But out of Latin in my tongue it write.²

3. Wherefore I will have neither thanks nor blame
Of all this work, but pray you meekëlly,
Dis-blameth me if any word be lame;
For as my author said, so say I.
Eke, though I speak of love unfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it no thing of new's:
A blind man cannot judgen well in hues.

4. You know eke that in form of speech is change
Within a thousand years, and wordès tho
That hadden price, now wonder nice and strange
Us thinketh them, and yet they spoke them so

¹ 1.4: "That my skill (cunning) is scarcely (unnethes) sufficient to steer it." that belongs syntactically at the beginning of the line.

² Chaucer’s source is, of course, Boccaccio’s Italian.
And sped as well in love as men now do.  
Eke for to winne love in sundry ages  
In sundry landës, sundry been usages.

5. And for-thy if it hap in any wyse  
That there be any lover in this place  
That hearkens, as the story will devise,  
How Troilus came to his lady’s grac;  
And thinketh: “So n’ould I nat love purchâse”,  
Or wonders on his speech and his doing,  
I n’ot; but it is me no wondering.

6. For every wight which that to Romë went  
Held not one path, or always one manner;  
Eke in some lands were all the gamen shent,  
If that they fared in love as men do here,  
As thus, in open doing or in cheer,  
In visiting, in form, or said their saws;  
For-thy, men say, each country has its laws.

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1 4.1-5: That the words of these five lines are true, not only for lovers’ customs but for English generally, is evident in the grammar and word usage of the lines themselves, even in the present version with its modern spelling and letter forms, but the fact is more dramatically illustrated from the Chaucer manuscripts. Here is the version of these lines as recorded in the Corpus Manuscript:

> 3e knowe ek that in fourme of speche is chaunge  
> With-inne a thousand 3eer and wordes tho  
> That hadden pris now wonder nyce and straunge  
> Us thenketh hem and 3et thei spake hem so  
> And spedde as wel in loue as men now do

In the Campsall MS the first and fourth lines are:

1. Ye knowe ek þat in forme of speche is chaunge  
4. Vs thenkeþ hem / and yet þay spak hem so.

It is now 600 years, not 1000, since Chaucer's time, but the reader can see how the language, not just the language of love, has changed significantly: in the use of written characters (e.g. þ and 3), in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, semantics, punctuation conventions and, less obviously, in pronunciation (notice that so and do no longer rhyme).

This edition is designed to make Chaucer's text more accessible to present-day readers, by modernizing most of the old spelling, and by adding punctuation and glosses to help readers with the syntax and obsolete words of Chaucer's language, which remains intact.
7. Eke scarcely been there in this placè three
That have in love said like and done in all;
For to thy purpose this may liken thee,
And thee right nought; yet all is said or shall.
Eke some men grave in tree, some in stone wall,
As it betides; but since I have begun,
Mine author shall I follow if I can.

End of the Proem

8. In May that mother is of monthès glad
That freshè flowers blue and white and red
Be quick again, that winter deadè made,
And full of balm is floating every mead
When Phoebus doth his brightè beamès spread
Right in the whitè bull -- it so betid
As I shall sing, on Mayè's day the third

9. That Pandarus, for all his wisè speech
Felt eke his part of Lovè's shottès keen
That, could he ne'er so well of loving preach,
It made his hue a-day full often green;
So shope it that him fell that day a teen
In love, for which in woe to bed he went,
And made, ere it was day, full many a went.

10. The swallow Procnè with a sorrowful lay,
When morrow came gan make her waymenting,
Why she forshapen was; and ever lay
Pandàre a-bed, half in a slumbering,
Till she so nigh him made her chittering
How Tereus gan forth her sister take,
That with the noise of her he gan awake.

11. And gan to call and dress him up to rise
Remembering him his errand was to do
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plight was the moon
To do viage, and took his way full soon

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1 9.3: “That no matter how good he was at talking about love...” Pandarus has his occasional bout of lovesickness, a somewhat unconvincing and unnecessary element in the story.
Unto his niece's palace there beside.
Now Janus, god of entry, thou him guide.

12. When he was come unto his niece's place,
"Where is my lady?" to her folk said he;
And they him told, and he forth in gan pace
And found two other ladies set and she
Within a pavèd parlor, and they three
Heard a maiden read to them the geste
Of the siege of Thèbes, while them lest.¹

13. Quod Pandarus: "Ma damè, God you see,
With all your book and all the company!"
"Eh, uncle mine, welcome i-wis," quod she;
And up she rose, and by the hand in hie
She took him fast, and saidè: "This night thrice —
To goodè may it turn, — of you I mett."
And with that word she down on bench him set.

14. "Yea, niecè, you shall farè well the bet,
If God will, all this year," quod Pandarus.
"But I am sorry that I have you let
To hearken of your book you praisen thus;
For God's love, what says it? Tell it us.
Is it of love? Oh, some good you me lere."
"Uncle," quod she, "your mistress is not here."

15. With that they gonnen laugh, and then she said:²
"This rômance is of Thèbes that we read;
And we have heard how that King Laius died
Through Oedipus his son, and all that deed;
And here we stenten at these letters red,³
How that the bishop (as the book can tell)
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to hell."

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¹ 12.4-8: In an age of few books it was common for one person to read to a group.

² 14.7: Troilus had remarked in Bk I that Pandarus had had no success in love. His unrequited love for some unspecified woman (your mistress) is, in spite of stanzas 9 & 10 above, something of a good-natured joke among family and friends.

³ 15.5: Red letters (rubrics) marked the beginnings of sections in many medieval MSS.
16. Quod Pandarus: "All this I know myself. And all the siege of Thebès and the care; For hereof been there makèd bookès twelve. But let this be, and tell me how you fare. Do ’way your barb, and show your facè bare; Do ’way your book, rise up and let us dance And let us do to May some óbservance."

"The Thebaid"

17. "I? God forbid," quod she. "Be you mad? Is that a widow's life, so God you save? By God, you maken me right sore a-dread, You be so wild, it seemeth that you rave. It sits me wel bet’ ay in a cave To bid, and read on holy saintès' lives. Let maidens go to dances, and young wives."

would be more suitable
To pray

18. "As ever thrive I," quod this Pandarus, "Yet could I tell a thing to do you play." "Now, uncle dear," quod she, "tell it us For God's love. Is then the siege away? I am of Greeks so fearèd that I die." "Nay, nay," quod he, "as ever may I thrive It is a thing well better than such five." 5 times better

19. "Yea, holy God!" quod she, "what thing is that? What? better than such five? Eh, nay, i-wis For all this world ne can I reden what It shouldè be: some jape, I trow, is this; And, but yourselfen tell us what it is, My wit is for t'arede it all too lean. 1 As help me God, I know not what you mean."

Oh, surely not
I guarantee you / my me

20. "And I your borrow, ne never shall, for me, This thing be told to you, as may I thrive." "And why so, uncle mine, why so?" quod she. "By God," quod he, "that will I tell as blive; For prouder woman were there none alive, An' you it wist, in all the town of Troy. 2

I guarantee you / my me
tell gladly
would be
If you knew

1 19.5-6: "Unless you yourself tell us what it is, my mind is too weak to interpret it."

2 20.5-6: Pandarus, deliberately rousing and teasing Criseyde's curiosity, tells her that if she only knew, she would be the proudest woman in Troy.
I japè not, as ever have I joy."  

21. Then gan she wonder moré than before
A thousandfold, and down her eyèn cast
For never, since the time that she was born,
To know a thing desirèd she so fast;
And with a sigh she said him at the last:
"Now, uncle mine, I will you not displease,
Nor asken more that may do you dis-ease."  

22. So after this, with many wordès glad
And friendly tales and with a merry cheer,
Of this and that they played and gonnen wade
In many an uncouth, glad, and deep mattér,
As friendès do when they be met i-fere,
Till she gan asken him how Hector fared
That was the townè's wall and Greekès' yard.  

23. "Full well, I thank it God," quod Pandarus,
"Save in his arm he hath a little wound;
And eke his freshè brother Troilus,
The wisè, worthy Hector the secónd,
In whom that every virtue list abound,
As allè truth and allè gentleness,
Wisdom, honor, freedom and worthiness."  

24. "In good faith, eme," quod she, "that liketh me;
They faren well, God save them bothè two,
For truly I hold it great dainty,
A kingè's son in armès well to do,
And be of good condition thereto;
For great power and moral virtue here
Is seldom seen in one person i-fere."  

25. "In good faith, that is sooth," quod Pandarus;
"But by my truth, the king has sons tway,
That is to mean, Hector and Troilus,
That certainly, though that I shouldè die
They been as void of vices dare I say,
As any men that live under the sun.
Their might is wide y-known, and what they can.

26. "Of Hector needeth nothing for to tell.
In all this world is not a better knight
Than he, that is of worthiness the well
And he well morë virtue has than might. 1
This knoweth many a wise and worthy wight.
The samë praise of Troilus I say.
God help me so, I know not suchè tway."  

27. "By God," quod she, "of Hector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the samë thing trow I.
For dreadless, men tellen that he doth
In armês day by day so worthily,
And bears him here at home so gentilly
To every wight, that all the praise hath he
Of them that me were levest praisèd be."

28. "You say right sooth, y-wis," quod Pandarus,
"For yesterday, whoso had with him been,
He might have wondered upon Troilus.
For never yet so thick a swarm of been
Ne flew, as Greeks from him gan fleeen.
And through the field, in every wight's ear,
There was no cry but `Troilus is there!'"  

29. "Now here, now there, he hunted them so fast
There n'as but Greekês' blood and Troilus,
Now them he hurt, and them all down he cast.
Aywhere he went it was arrayèd thus:
He was their death, and shield and life for us,
That all that day there durst him none withstand
While that he held his bloody sword in hand.

30. "Thereto, he is the friendliesté man
Of great estate that e'er I saw my life
And where him list, best fellowship can
To such as him thinks able for to thrive."
And with that word then Pandarus, as blive,
He took his leave and said: "I will go henne."
"Nay, blame have I, mine uncle," quod she then.

31. "What aileth you to be thus weary soon,

1 26.4: "He has even more honor than strength."
And name, of women? Will you so? Nay, sitteth down; by God I have to do With you, to speak of wisdom ere you go. And especially person / then And every wight that was about them tho, That heard that, gan far away to stand While they two had all that them list in hand. discussed all they wished

32. When that their tale all brought was to an end Of her estate and of her governance, Quod Pandarus: "Now is it time I wend; But yet, I say, ariseth, let us dance, And cast your widow's habit to mischance: What list you thus yourself to disfigure, Since you is tid thus fair an aventure?"

business management went away
discard your w's gown Why do you want? to you has happened

33. "Ah! Well bethought, for love of God," quod she, "Shall I not witen what you mean of this?" "No. This thing asketh leisure," then quod he, "And eke me wouldé muché grieve, i-wis, If I it told and you it took amiss. Yet were it bet' my tongé for to still Than say a sooth that were against your will."

Oh, yes indeed! not know indeed better to keep quiet truth

34. "For, niecé mine, by the goddess Minerve, And Jupiter that makes the thunder ring, And by the blisfull Venus that I serve, You be the woman in this world living, (Withouten paramours) to my witting, That I best love, and loathest am to grieve; And that you witen well yourself, I 'lieve."

Except for lovers / knowledge most reluctant you know / I believe

35. "I-wis, mine uncle," quod she, "grammercy; Your friendship have I founden ever yet; I am to no man holden, truly, So much as you, and have so little quit; And, with the grace of God, emforth my wit As, in my guilt, I shall you ne'er offend, And if I have ere this, I will amend.

Indeed / many thanks benefited from repaid as far as I know how through my fault before now

36. "But for the love of God I you beseech As you be he that I most love and trust, Let be to me your freméd manner speech And say to me, your niecè, what you list."

Leave off / strange what you please
And with that word her uncle anon her kissed
And said: "Gladly, levé niecèr dear
Take it for good what I shall say you here." my beloved

37. With that she gan her eyên down to cast
And Pandarus to coughen gan a lite,
And said: "Niece, always, lo, to the last,
How it be that some men them delight
With subtle art their tales for to endite,
Yet, for all that, in their intention,
Their tale is all for some conclusion.

38. "And since the end is every talè's strength,
And this mattér is so bihovely,
What should I paint or drawen it on length
To you that be my friend so faithfully?
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and looken on her face
And said: "On such a mirror, goodè grace!"

39. Then thought he thus: "If I my tale endite
Aught hard, or make a process any while,
She shall no savor have therein but lite,
And trow I would her in my will beguile.¹
For tender wits weenen all be wile
Thereas they cannot plainly understand;
For-thy her wit to serven will I fond." ²

40. And lookéd on her in a busy wise
And she was ware that he beheld her so,
And said:  "Lord!  so fast you me avise!
Saw you me ne'er ere now?  What say you?  No?"
"Yes, yes," quod he, "and bet' will ere I go;
But by my truth, I thought now if that ye
Be fortunate, for now men shall it see.

41. "For t' every wight some goodly áventúre
Sometime is shape, if he it can receive;
And if that he will take of it no cure,

¹ 39.4-5: "And (she will) think (trow) that I deliberately (in my will) want to deceive (beguile) her."

² 39.7: "Therefore I will try (fond) to suit my message to her way of thinking."
When that it comes, but wilfully it waive.
Lo, neither case nor fortune him deceive,
But right his very sloth and wretchedness;
And such a wight is for to blame, I guess.

42. “Good aventūre, O bellé niece, have ye
Full lightly founden, an you can it take;
And, for the love of God and eke of me,
Catch it anon lest aventūrè slake
What should I longer process of it make?
Give me your hand, for in this world is none,
If that you listè, wight so well bigon. ¹

43. “And since I speak of good intention,
As I to you have told well here befor
And love as well your honour and renown
As creature in all this world y-born;
By all the oathè s that I have you sworn,
An you be wroth therfore, or weene I lie,
Ne shall I never see you eft with eye.

44. "Be not aghast, ne quaketh not. Whereto?
Ne changeth not for fearè so your hue
For hardly, the worst of this is do,
And though my tale as now be to you new
Yet trust always, you shall me findè true.
And were it thing that me thought unsitting,
To you would I no suchè thingè bring."

45. "Now, my good eme, for God's love I you pray,
Quod she: "Come off, and tell me what it is;
For I am both aghast what you will say
And eke me longeth it to wit, i-wis.
For whether it be well or be amiss,
Say on, let me not in this fearè dwell."
"So will I do; now hearken, I shall tell.

46. "Now, niecè mine, the kingè's dearè son,
The goodly, wisè, worthy, fresh and free,
Which always for to do well is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee

¹ 42.6-7: “There is nobody (none ... wight) in the whole world, if you please, who is so fortunate.”
That, but you help, it will his banè be.
Lo, here is all, what should I morè say?
Do what you list to make him live or die.

47. “But if you let him dien, I will starve:
Have here my trouthé, niece; I n’ill not lie,
Al should I with this knife my throatè carve.”
With that the tearès burst out of his eye,
And said: “ If that you do us bothè die,
Thus guiltèless, then have you fishèd fair.
What mendè you, though that we both apeyre? ¹

48. “Alas, he which that is my lord so dear,
That truè man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your friendly cheer,
I see him die there he goes upright
And hasteth him, with all his fullè might,
For to be slain, if fortune will assent.
Alas that God you such a beauty sent!

49. "If it be so that you so cruel be
That of his death you listè not to reck,
That is so true and worthy, as you see,
No more than of a japer or a wretch --
If you be such, your beauty may not stretch
To make amends of so cruèl a deed.
Avisèment is good before the need.

50. “Woe worth the fairè gemmè virtueless!
Woe worth that herb also that does no bote!
Woe worth that beauty that is ruthèless
Woe worth that wight that treads each under foot!
And you, that be of beauty crop and root,
If therewithal in you there be no ruth,
Then is it harm you liven, by my truth. ²

51. "And also think well that this is no gaude.
For me were lever thou and I and he
Were hanged, than that I should be his bawd,
As high as men might on us all y-see.
I am thine eme; the shamè were to me
As well as thee, if that I should assent
Through mine abet that he thine honor shent.

52. "Now understand, for I you not require
To binden you to him through no behest,
But only that you make him better cheer
Than you have done ere this, and morè feast,
So that his life be savèd at the least.
This all and some, and plainly our intent. ¹
God help me so, I never other meant.

53. "Lo, this request is not but skill, i-wis,
Nor doubt of reason, pardee, is there none.
I set the worst that you dreaden -- this:
Men woulden wonder see him come or gon:
There-against I answer thus anon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kind,
Will deem it love of friendship in his mind.

54. "What? Who will deemè, though he see a man
To temple go, that he th' imáges eateth?
Think, eke, how well and wisely that he can
Govern himself, that he no thing forgeteth,
That, where he comes, he praise and thanks him geteth;
And eke thereto, he shall come here so seld,
What force were it though all the town beheld?

55. "Such love of friendès reigns in all this town
And wry you in that mantle evermo';
And, God so wise be my salvatïon
As I have said, your best is to do so,
But always, goodè niece, to stint his woe,
So let your daunger sugared be a lite,²
That of his death you be not for to wite."

56. Criseydè, which that heard him in this wise

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¹ 52.6: "This is all I have to say, and that is our frank wish."

² 55.6: “Sweeten your attitude a little”. Daunger was that aspect of the medieval lady that kept men at a distance. See next footnote.
"Think, eke, how Eldé wasteth every hour
In each of you a party of beauty,
And therefore ere that Agé thee devour,
Go love; for, old, there will no wight of thee.
Let this proverb a lore unto you be:
`Too late aware,' quod Beauty, when it passed.
`And Eldé daunteth Daunger at the last.'
"Age overtakes aloofness

The king's fool is wont to cry aloud,
When that he thinks a woman bears her high:
`So longé may you liven, and all proud,
Till crowé's feet be grown under your eye,
And send you then a mirror in to pry
In which that you may see your face a-morrow.'
Niece, I bid and wish you no more sorrow." 

With this he stint, and cast a-down the head,
And she began to burst a-weep anon,
And said: "Alas for woe! why n'eere I dead?
For of this world the faith is all agone:
Alas! what should a stranger to me don,
When he that for my besté friend I wend
Redes me to love who should it me defend?

Alas! I would have trusted doubtéless
That if that I through my disaventure
Had lovéd either him or Áchilles,
Hector, or any other creature,
You would have had no mercy nor measure

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1 57.7: "Age overcomes aloofness at last." Daunger (Fr. daungier) meant literally "power", in romances the power a woman had over her lover, including the power to keep him waiting endlessly without any erotic satisfaction. If this attitude of hers prevails long enough, he says, Age will overtake it.

2 58.7: Perhaps the line should read "Niece, I bid and wish you no more sorrow", where 'bid' and 'wish' mean much the same as the modern phrase: 'I hope and pray (that your sorrow won't be any worse').
On me, but always had me in repreve.
This falsé world, alas! who may it 'lieve?

61. "What! is this all the joy and all the feast?
Is this your red——e? is this my blissful case?
Is this the very meed of your behest?
Is all this painted process said, alas,
Right for this fine? O lady mine Pallás,
Thou in this dreadful case for me purvey,
For so astonéd am I that I die."  

62. With that she gan full sorrowfully to sigh.
"Ah! may it be no bet?" quod Pandarus;
"By God I shall no more come here this week,
And God to-forn!— that am mistrusted thus;
I see full well that you set light of us
Or of our death. Alas! I, woeful wretch!
Might he yet live, of me were naught to reck.

63. "O cruel god, O despitousé Mars,
O Furies three of hell, on you I cry
So let me ne'er out of this house depart
If that I meanté harm or villainy!
But since I see my lord must needé die,
And I with him, here I me shrive and say 2
That wickedly you do us both to die.

64. "But since it liketh you that I be dead
By Neptunus, that god is of the sea
From this forth shall I never eaten bread
Till I mine owné hearté's blood may see
For certain I will die as soon as he."
And up he start, and on his way he raught,
Till she again him by the lappé caught.

65. Criseydé, which that well nigh starved for fear,
So as she was the fearfulest wight
That mighté be, and heard eke with her ear

1 62.7: "If only he could live, there would be no need to care about me," i.e. I don't really matter.

2 63.6-7: Since Pandarus is neither making nor hearing a confession, but accusing someone, shrive seems to mean “I absolve myself.” Both of them are overplaying their hands.
And saw the sorrowful earnest of the knight,  
And in his prayer saw ekè no un-right,  
And for the harm that might eke fallen more,  
She gan to rue and dread her wonder sore.

66. And thoughtè thus: “Unhappès fallen thick  
Alday for love, and in such manner case  
As men be cruel in themselves and wikke.  
And if this man slay here himself, alas!  
In my présence, it will be no soláce.  
What men would of it deem I cannot say;  
It needeth me full slyly for to play.

67. And with a sorrowful sigh she saidè thrice:  
“Ah, lord! What me is tid a sorry chance  
For my estate now lies in jeopardy,  
And eke mine emè’s life lies in balánce,  
But natheless, with Goddè’s governance,  
I shall so do: mine honour shall I keep,  
And eke his life”; and stintè for to weep.

68. "Of harmès two, the less is for to choose  
Yet have I lever maken him good cheer  
In honour, than mine emè's life to lose.—  
You say you nothing else of me require?”  
"No, 'wis,” quod he, "mine owné niecè dear."  
"Now, well,” quod she, "and I will do my pain.  
I shall my heart against my lust constrain.

69. "But that I will not holden him in hand:  
Nor love a man ne can I not nor may  
Against my will; but elsé will I fond  
(Mine honour safe) please him from day to day.  
Thereto would I not once have saidè nay  
But that I dread, as in my fantasy.

1 67.2: “What a sad fortune has befallen me.”

2 68.1-4: It would appear that Criseyde is speaking stanza 67 and the first three lines of 68  to herself, the fourth line of 68 aloud to Pandarus. Criseyde’s terrified timidity of 65 seems at odds with her shrewd assessment of the situation in 66.7 and 67, and with her firm, self confident declaration of 69 and 70.
But cease the cause, ay ceaseth malady.¹

70. "And here I make a protestation:
That in this process if you deeper go,
That certainly for no salvation
Of you, though that you starven bothè two,
Though all the world on one day be my foe,
Ne shall I ne'er on him have other ruth."  
"I grant it well," quod Pandare, "by my truth.

71. "But may I trusten well thereto," quod he,
"That of this thing that you have hight me here,
You will it holdeyn truly unto me?"
"Yea, doubteless," quod she, "mine uncle dear!"
"Ne that I shall have cause in this mattër,"
Quod he, "to 'plain or after you to preach?"
"Why no, pardee; what needeth morë speech?"

72. Then fellen they in other talés glad,
Till at the last: "O good eme!" quod she tho,
"For love of God, which that us bothë made,
Tell me how first you wisten of his woe;
Wot none of it but you?" He saidë: "No."
"Can he well speak of love?" quod she: "I pray?
Tell me, for I the bet’ me shall purvey."

73. Then Pandarus a little gan to smile,
And saidë: "By my truth I shall now tell.
This other day, not gone full long a while,
Within the palace garden by a well
Gan he and I well half a day to dwell,
Right for to speaken of an ordinance
How we the Greeks might do a disadvance.

74. "Soon after that began we for to leap
And casten with our darteys to and fro,
Till at the last he said that he would sleep,
And on the grass adown he laid him tho;
And I afar gan roamen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as that I walked alone,

¹ 69.7: "When the cause of the illness is removed, the illness goes away." There is no fear when the cause of fear is removed.
How he began full woefully to groan.

75. "Tho gan I stalk full softly him behind,
And sikerly, the soothè for to sayn,
As I can clepe again now to my mind,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to 'plain.
He said: `O, Lord, have ruth upon my pain;
All have I rebel been in mine intent,
Now mea culpa, Lord, I me repent."

76. "O God! that at thy disposition
Leadest the fine by justè purveyance
Of every wight, my low confession
Accept in gree, and send me such penance
As liketh thee; but from désesperance
That may my ghost depart away from thee,
Thou be my shield for thy benignity."

77. "For certés, Lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stood in black with looking of her eye,
That to mine heartè's bottom it is sounded,
Through which I wot that I must needé die.
This is the worst: I dare me not bewray,
And well the hotter be the gleedès red
That men them wry with ashes pale and dead."

78. "With that he smote his head a-down anon,
And gan to mutter I n'ot what truly,
And I with that gan still away to gon,
And let thereof as nothing wist had I,
And came again anon and stood him by,

---

1 75.7: mea culpa, a Latin phrase meaning "through my fault", is from the Catholic confessional prayer called the "Confiteor" (I confess). Its use here is one of the more noticeable anachronisms of the poem. See also 63.6 & 72.3 above.

2 76: "Be my shield against the despair that might alienate my soul from you." This is presumably a mild parody of the Christian belief that despair of God’s mercy is the ultimate sin.

3 77.2: "in black": a reference back to the temple scene in which Troilus first saw Criseyde: "Among these other folk was Cressida / In widow's habit black". (Bk. I, 25.1-2)

4 77.5-7: "The worst part is that I cannot betray myself (by declaring my love openly). So (I am like) the red coals (gleeds) which stay hotter when one covers them with dead ashes."
And said: `Awake, you sleepen all too long;
It seems me not that Love doth you to long 1

79. " That sleepen so that no man may you wake;
Who ever saw ere this so dull a man?'
`Yea, friend,' quod he, `do you your headès ache
For love, and let me liven as I can.'
But though that he for woe was pale and wan,
Yet made he then as fresh a countenance
As though he should have led the newè dance.

80. "This passèd forth, till now, this other day,
It fell that I came roaming all alone
Into his chamber, and found how that he lay
Upon his bed; but man so sorely groan
Ne heard I ne'er, and what that was his moan
Ne wist I not, for as I was comíng
All suddenly he left his cómplaining.

81. "Of which I took somewhat suspicïon
And near I came, and found he wepté sore,
And God so wise be my salvation,
As ne'er of thing had I no ruthè more
For neither with engine nor with no lore
Unnethès might I from the death him keep,
That yet I feel my hearté for him weep.

82. "And, God wot, never since that I was born
Was I so busy no man for to preach,
Ne never was to wight so deepè sworn
Ere he me told who might have been his leech.2
But now to you rehearsen all his speech
Or all his woeful wordès for to sound
Ne bid me not but you will see me swoon.

83. "But for to save his life, and elsè nought,

________________________

1 78.7-64.1: "It does not seem to me that love causes you to yearn (long), because you sleep so soundly that one cannot wake you."  Doth you to long" (78.7) = "Causes you to long for (something)"

2 82.3-4: "No man was ever so deeply sworn to secrecy (as I was) before he told me -- the very man who might be his physician" i.e. I might be the one able to help cure him. Pandarus seems to have re-created this incident from the actual scene in Bk I where he squeezes the truth out of Troilus with difficulty.
And to no harm of you, thus am I driven;  
And for the love of God that us hath wrought  
Such cheer him do that he and I may liven.  
Now have I plat to you my heartë shriven;  
And since you wot that mine intent is clean,  
Take heed thereof, for I no evil mean.

84. "And right good thrift, I pray to God, have ye  
That have such one y-caught without a net,  
An' you be wise as you be fair to see,  
Well in the ring then is the ruby set.  
There were never two so well y-met  
When you be his all whole, as he is yours,  
There mighty God yet grant us see that hour."

85. "Nay! Thereof spoke I not, aha!" quod she,  
"As help me God, you shenden every deal."  
"Oh, mercy, dearë niece," anon quod he,  
"Whatso I spoke, I meanté not but well,  
By Mars the god, that helmé is of steel.  
Now be not wroth, my blood, my niecé dear."  
"Now, well," quod she, "forgiven be it here."

86. With this he took his leave, and home he went  
And, Lord, how he was glad and well begone!  
Criseyde arose, no longer she ne stent,  
But straight into her closet went anon,  
And set her down as still as any stone,  
And every word gan up and down to wind  
That he had said as it came to her mind.

87. And waxed some deal astonished in her thought  
Right for the newë case; but when that she  
Was full avisëd, then found she right naught  
Of peril why she ought afeard to be;  
For man may love of possibility  
A woman so his heartë may to-burst,  
And she not love again, but if her lest.  

1 84.3: "If you are as wise as you are pretty to look at."

2 87.5-7: A.C. Spearing remarks astutely of these lines: "it is as though Chaucer's thoughts and ours mingle with hers: in this early instance of style indirect libre it is unclear who is offering the
88. But as she sat alone and thoughtè thus,  
Ascry arose at skirmish all without,  
And men cried in the street: "See! Troilus  
Has right now put to flight the Greekès rout."  
With that gan all her meinee for to shout:  
"Ah! go we see; cast up the gatès wide,  
For through this street he must to palace ride,  
A cry
Greek troops
her servants

89. "For other way is from the gatè none  
Of Dardanus where open is the chain."  
With that came he and all his folk anon  
An easy pacé riding in routes twain,  
Right as his happy day was, sooth to sayn,  
For which, men say, may not disturbèd be  
What shall betiden of necessity.  
(a city gate)
two groups
truth to tell

90. This Troilus sat on his bayè steed  
All armèd save his head full richèly,  
And wounded was his horse, and gan to bleed,  
On which he rode a pace full softèly;  
But such a knightly sightè, truly  
As was on him was not, withouten fail  
To look on Mars, that god is of battaile.  
What must happen

91. So like a man of armès and a knight  
He was to see, fulfilled of high prowës,  
For both he had a body and a might  
To do that thing, as well as hardiness,  
And eke to see him in his gear him dress,  
So fresh, so young, so wieldy, seemèd he,  
It was a heaven on him for to see.  
to look at
courage
arm himself
athletic

92. His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,  
That by a tissue hung his back behind,  
His shield to-dashèd was with swords and maces,  
In which men mighten many an arrow find  
That thirlèd had the horn and nerve and rind;  
And ay the people cried: "Here comes our joy,  
And, next his brother, holder up of Troy!"  
by a sliver it hung
pierced / sinew / hide
constantly
2nd only to (Hector)

generalization." The Medieval Poet as Voyeur, p. 127.

1 90.6-7: He was better to look at than Mars, the god of war.
93. For which he waxed a little red for shame
When he the people heard upon him cry,
That, to behold, it was a noble game
How soberly he cast adown his eye.
Criseyde anon gan all his cheer espy,
And let so soft it in her heartē sink
That to herself she said: "Who gave me drink?"

94. For of her ownē thought she waxed all red,
Remembering her right thus: "Lo! this is he
Which that mine uncle swears he must be dead
But I on him have mercy and pity."
And with that thought for pure ashamē she
Gan in her head to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the people forth by passed.

95. And gan to cast and rollen up and down
Within her thought his excellent prowēss,
And his estate, and also his renown,
His wit, his shape, and eke his gentleness;
But most her favour was, for his distress
Was all for her, and thought it was a ruth
To slay such one, if that he meantē truth.

96. Now mighten some envious jangle thus:
`This was a sudden love; how might it be
That she so lightly lovēd Troilus?'
Right for the firstē sightē, yea, pardee! '
Now whoso says so, may he never thee,1
For everything beginning has it need
Ere all be wrought withouten any dread.

97. For I say not that she so suddenly
Gave him her love, but that she gan incline
To like him first, and I have told you why;
And after that, his manhood and his pain
Made love within her heartē for to mine
For which, by process and by good service
He got her love, and in no sudden wise.

1 96.5: "Now, whoever says so, may he never prosper." *thee* is the verb "to prosper", not a pronoun.
98. And also blissful Venus, well arrayed, \(^1\)
Sat in her seventh house of heaven tho,
Disposèd well, and with aspectès paid,
To helpen sely Troilus of his woe.
And, sooth to say, she n’as not all a foe
To Troilus in his nativity.
God wot that well the sooner speddè he.

99. Now let us stint of Troilus a throw,
That rideth forth, and let us turnen fast
Unto Criseyde that hung her head full low
There as she sat alone, and ’gan to cast
Whereon she would appoint her at the last,
If it so were her eme ne wouldè cease
For Troilus upon her for to press.

100. And, Lord! So she gan in her thought argúe
In this mattér of which I have you told,
And what to do best were, and what eschew,
That pleated she full oft in many folds;
Now was her heartè warm, now was it cold;
And what she thought of, somewhat shall I write
As to mine author listeth to indite.

101. She thoughtè well that Troilus’ person
She knew by sight, and eke his gentleness,
And thus she said: "All were it naught to do
To grant him love, yet for his worthiness
It were honoúr with play and with gladness \(^2\)
In honesty with such a lord to deal
For mine estate, and also for his heal.

102. "Eke well wot I my kingè’s son is he,
And since he has to see me such delight,
If I would utterly his sightè flee,
Paraunter he might have me in despite,
Through which I mightè standen in worse plight.

---

\(^1\) 98: The planet Venus was in favorable position (for lovers). And her disposition at his birth (nativity) was also not bad. Hence he succeeded (spedde) sooner.

\(^2\) 101.5-7: "It would be an honor for me to associate with such a lord, cheerfully and pleasantly and decently; and it would be for my good and for his health."
103. "In every thing I wot there lies measure; For though a man forbiddeth drunkenness, He naught forbids that every creature Be drinkless for always, as I guess; Eke, since I wot for me is his distress, I ne ought not for that thing him despise, Since it is so he meaneth in good wise.

104. "And eke I know of longè time agone His thewès good, and that he n’is not nice, No vaunter, say men, certain he is none; Too wise is he to do so great a vice. Ne als’ I n’ill him never so cherice That he shall make avaunt by justè cause; 
He shall me never bind in such a clause.

105. "Now set a case, the hardest is i-wis, Men mighten deemen that he loveth me; What dishonour were it to me this? May I him let of that? Why nay, pardee; I know also, and alday hear and see, Men loven women all this town about. Be they the worse? Why nay, without a doubt.

106. "I think eke, how he able is to have Of all this noble town the thriftiest To be his love so she her honour save; For, out and out, he is the worthiest, Save only Hector, which that is the best; And yet his life lies all now in my cure, But such is love, and eke mine aventure.

107. "Nor me to love a wonder is it naught,

---

1 102.6-7: "Would I be wise to invite hate needlessly, when I could have favor?"

2 104: “He won’t have any genuine reason to boast (about his conquest); I won’t give him the excuse.” Notice the triple negative in line 5: Ne, n’ill, never.

3 106.3: so she ...: "provided that she keep her reputation intact."
For well wot I myself (so God me speed, Al' would I that none wisten of this thought),
I am one the fairest, out of dread,
And goodliest, whoso that taketh heed,
And so men say in all the town of Troy;
What wonder is though he of me have joy?

108. "I am mine own woman, well at ease,
I thank it God, as after mine estate,
Right young, and stand untied in lushy leas,
Withouten jealousy or such debate.
Shall no husband say to me `Checkmate!'
For either they be full of jealousy,
Or masterfull, or loven novelty.

109. "What shall I do? To what fine live I thus?
Shall I not love in case if that me lest?
What! pardee, I am not religious;
And though that I mine heartè set at rest
Upon this knight that is the worthiest,
And keep always mine honour and my name,
By all rights it may do me no shame."

110. But right as when the sunnè shineth bright
In March, that changeth oftentimes his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flight
Which overspread the sun as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan through her soulé pace,
That overspread her brightè thoughtès all
So that for fear almost she gan to fall.

111. That thought was this: "Alas! since I am free,
Should I now love and put in jeopardy
My sikerness, and thrallen liberty?
Alas! how durst I thinken that folly?
May I not well in other folk espy
Their dreadful joy, their constraint and their pain?
There loveth none that she n'as why to 'plain."

112. "For love is yet the mostè stormy life

---

1 111.5-7: "Can't I see in others the joy mixed with dread, their distress and pain? There is no woman in love who does not also have cause (that she n'as why) to complain."
Right of himself that ever was begun,
For ever some mistrust or nicé strife
There is in love; some cloud is o'er that sun;
Thereto we wretched women nothing can,
When us is woe, but weep, and sit, and think.
Our wrecche is this, our owné woe to drink.

113. "Also these wicked tonguës be so prest
To speak us harm; eke men be so untrue,
That right anon as ceaséd is their lust
So ceaseth love, and forth to love anew:
But harm y-done is done, whoso it rue;
For though these men for love them first to-rend,
Full sharp beginning breaketh oft at end.

114. "How often times hath it y-knowen be
The treason that to women has been done!
To what fine is such love I cannot see,
Or where becometh it when it is gone.
There is no wight that wot — I trow —
Where it becomes. Lo! No wight on it spurneth; ¹
What erst was nothing, into nought it turneth.

115. "How busy, if I love, eke must I be
To pleasen them that jangle of love and deem,
And coy them, that they say no harm of me!
For though there be no cause, yet them can seem
Al’ be for harm that folk their friendês queme.²
And who may stoppen every wicked tongue,
Or sound of bellês while that they be rung?"

116. And after that her thought gan for to clear,
And said: "He which that nothing undertaketh
Nothing achieveth, be him loth or dear;
And with another thought her hearté quaketh;
Then sleepteth hope, and after dread awaketh;
Now hot, now cold; but thus betwixen tway,
She rose her up and went her for to play.

¹ 114.6: "Nobody falls over it." That is, it is not lying around in an obvious place.

² 115.4-5: "It can seem suspicious to them even when people are just doing something to please their friends."
117. Adown the stair anon right then she went
Into her garden with her nieces three,
And up and down they madè many a went,
Flexippè, she, Tharbe and Antigone
To playen, that it was joy to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her followed in the garden all about.

118. This yard was large, and railèd all the alleys,
And shadowed well with blossomy boughs green,
And benchèd new, and sanded all the ways,
In which she walketh arm in arm between,
Till at the last Antigone the sheen
Gan on a Trojan song to singen clear,
That it a heaven was her voice to hear.

Antigone's Song

119. She said: "O Love, to whom I have and shall
Be humble subject, true in my intent,
As I best can, to you, lord, give I all
For evermore, my hearté's lust to rent.
For never yet thy gracè no wight sent
So blissful cause as me, my life to lead
In allè joy and surety, out of dread.

120. "You, blissful god, have me so well beset
In love, i-wis, that all that beareth life
Imaginen ne could how to be bet.
For, lord, withouten jealousy or strife
I love one which that is most ententife
To serven well, unweary or unfeigned
That ever was, and least with harm distrained.\(^2\)

121. "As he that is the well of worthiness
Of truth the ground, mirror of goodlihead,
Of wit Apollo, stone of sikerness

---

1 Antigone's Song is a literary device which articulates what Criseyde is beginning to feel.

2 120.7: Distrained: variously glossed by editors and lexicographers: "stained, sullied, misled, overcome, oppressed."
Of virtue root, of lust finder and head, 
Through which is allé sorrow from me dead. 
I-wis, I love him best, so does he me; 
Now good thrift have he, whereso that he be. 

122. "Whom should I thank but you, O god of love, 
Of all this bliss in which to bathe I 'gin 
And thankèd be you, lord, for that I love. 
This is the rightè life that I am in 
To flemen allè manner vice and sin. 
This does me so to virtue for t'intend 
That day by day I in my will amend. 

123. "And whoso says that for to love is vice 
Or thralldom, though he feel in it distress, 
He either is envious or right nice. 
Or is unmighty for his shrewèdness 
To lovè, for such manner folk, I guess, 
Defamen Love, as nothing of him know; 
They speaken, but they never bent his bow. 

124. "What is the sunnè worse, of kindè right, 
Though that a man for feebleness of eye 
May not endure on it to see for bright? 
Or love the worse, though wretches on it cry? 
No weal is worth that may no sorrow dry.¹ 
And therefore who that has a head of ver 
From cast of stones beware him in the war. 

125. "But I with all my heart and all my might, 
As I have said, will love unto my last 
My dearè heart, and all my ownè knight, 
In which my heartè growèn is so fast, 
And his in me that it shall ever last. 
Al' dread I first to love him to begin, 
Now wot I well there is no peril in." 

126. And of her song right with that word she stent, 
And therewithal: "Now niecè," quod Criseyde, 
"Who made this song now with so good intent?" 
Antigone answered anon, and said:

¹ 124.5: "No happiness (or good fortune) is worth anything that has not cost some sorrow."
"Madame, i-wis the goodliest maid
Of great estate in all the town of Troy,
And leads her life in most honour and joy."

127. "Forsooth so it seemeth by her song,"  
Quod then Criseyde, and gan therewith to sigh,
And saidè: "Lord! is there such bliss among
These lovers, as they can fair endite?"
"Yea, 'wis," quod fresh Antigone the white,
For all the folk that have or be alive
Ne could not well the bliss of love describe.

128. "But weenen you that every wretchè wot
The perfect bliss of love?  Why nay, i-wis.
They weenen all be love if one be hot;
Do 'way, do 'way! they wot nothing of this:
Men must ask at saintès if it is
Aught fair in heaven.  And why? For they can tell;
And asken fiends if it be foul in hell"

129. Criseyde unto the purpose naught answered,
But said: "I-wis it will be night as fast."
But every word which that she of her heard
She gan to printen in her heart fast,
And ay gan love her less for to aghast
Than it did erst, ¹ and sinken in her heart,
That she waxed somewhat able to convert.

130. The day’s honour and the heaven’s eye,
The nightè’s foe, — all this clepe I the sun,
’Gan western fast, and downward for to wrie,
As he that had his dayè’s course y-run,
And whitè thingès waxen dim and dun
For lack of light, and stars for to appear,
That she and all her folk in went i-fere.

131. So when it likèd her to go to rest,
And voided weren they that voiden ought,
She saidè that to sleepen well her lest;
Her women soon unto her bed her brought.

¹ 129.5-6: The syntactic word order is "and ay love gan to aghast her less than it did erst," meaning "And always (i.e. more and more) love began to terrify her less than it had at first."
When all was hushed, then lay she still and thought
Of all this thing the manner and the wise;
Rehearse it needeth not, for you be wise. Repeat

132. A nightingale upon a cedar green
Under the chamber wall there as she lay,
Full loudē sang against the moonē sheen,
Paraunter, in his birdē's wise, a lay 1
Of love, that made her heartē fresh and gay;
That hearkened she so long in good intent
Till at the last the deadē sleep her hent.
bright

133. And as she slept, anon right then she mett
How that an eagle, feathered white as bone,
Under her breast his longé clawēs set,
And out her heart he rent, and that anon;
And did his heart into her breast to gon.
Of which she naught agrose, ne nothing smart,
And forth he flew, with heartē left for heart.

took

she dreamt

he tore at once

and caused

wasn't afraid or hurt

134. Now let her sleep, and we our talē hold
Of Troilus, that is to palace riden
From the skirmish of the which I told,
And in his chamber sat and hath abiden
Till two or three of his messengers yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast
Till they him found, and brought him at the last.

went

135. This Pandarus came leaping in at once,
And saidē thus: "Who hath been well y-beat
Today with swordēs and with slingē-stones
But Troilus, that hath caught him a heat?"
And gan to jape, and said: "Lord so you sweat!
But rise and let us sup and go to rest,"
And he him answered: "Do we as thee lest."

as you please

fever

joke

136. With all the hastē goodly that they might,
They sped them from the supper unto bed;
And every wight out at the door him dight,
And where him list upon his way he sped;
But Troilus thought that his heartē bled

mannerly

person / went

where he pleased

1 132.4: "By chance, in his bird's fashion, a song of love."
For woe till that he heardé some tiding.
He saidé: "Friend, shall I now weep or sing?"

137. Quod Pandarus: "Lie still, and let me sleep,
And don thy hood; thy needés spedde be,¹
And choose if thou wilt sing or dance or leap:
At shorté wordés, thou shalt trowen me,
Sir, my niecē will do well by thee
And love thee best, by God and by my troth,
But lack of pursuit mar it in thy sloth.²

138. "For thus far forth I have thy work begun
From day to day, till this day by the morrow
Her love of friendship have I to thee won,
And thereto has she laid her faith to borrow;
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorrow.³
What should I longer sermon of it hold?
As you have heard before, all he him told.

139. But right as flowers, through the cold of night
Y-closéd, stoopen in their stalkés low,
Redressen them against the sunnē bright,
And spreaden, in their kindé, course by row,
Right so gan then his eyén up to throw
This Troilus, and said: "O Venus dear!
Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here."

140 And to Pandáre he held up both his hands,
And said: "Lord, all thine be that I have,
For I am whole; all bursten be my bands,
A thousand Troyés whoso that me gave
Each after other (God so wise me save)

¹ 137.2: *don thy hood; thy needes spedde be* may mean: “put your hat back on, i.e. you don't have to beg any more; your wishes have been met.” Or "keep your hat on" i.e. “don't get excited; your wishes have been met.”

² 137.7: The meaning seems to be: “Unless your lazy failure to pursue the matter spoils things.”

³ 138.5: An odd expression which appears to say: "At least one foot of your sorrow is lamed,” and therefore sorrow will not be able to pursue you so fast. Hence: your problem is half solved.
Ne might not me so gladden. ¹  Lo! my heart
It spreadeth so for joy it will to-start.

141. "But, Lord, how shall I do? How shall I liven?
When shall I next my dearè heartè see?
How shall this longè time away be driven
Till that thou be again at her from me?
Thou mayst answer: ‘Abide, abide’; but he
That hangeth by the neck, the sooth to sayn,
In great dis-ease abideth for the pain."

142. "All easily now, for the love of Mart,"
Quod Pandarus, "for everything hath time;
So long abide till that the night depart.
For all so siker as thou liest here by me,
And, God to-forn, I will be there at prime,
And forthy, work somewhat as I shall say,
Or on some other wight this chargè lay.

143. “For pardee, God wot, I have ever yet
Been ready thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought feignèd, but emforth my wit
Done all thy lust, and shall with all my might.
Do now as I shall say and fare aright;
But if thou n’ilt, wite all thyself thy care, ²
On me is not along thine evil fare.

144. "I wot well that thou wiser art than I
A thousand fold; but if I were as thou,
God help me so, as I would utterly
Of mine own hand write her right now
A letter, in which I would her tellen how
I fared amiss, and her beseech of ruth.
Now help thyself, and leave it not for sloth.

145. "And I myself shall therewith to her go
And when thou wost that I am with her there,
Worth thou upon a courser right anon

¹ 140.4-6: "Anyone giving me a thousand Troys one after the other, I declare to God, could not make me so glad."

² 143: “But if you won’t do so, blame yourself for your problems; your failure will not be my fault.”
Be-blot it with thy tears also a lite; And if thou write a goodly word all soft, Though it be good, rehearse it not too oft.

148. “For though the bestè harper upon live Would, on the bestè sounèd jolly harp That ever was, with all his fingers five, Touch ay one string or ay one warble harp, Were his nailès pointed ne’er so sharp, It shouldè maken every wight to dull, To hear his glee, and of his strokès full.

149. “Nor jumper no discordant thing i-fere, As thus, to usen termès of physic In lovè’s termès. Hold of thy mattér The form always, and do that it be like; For if a painter wouldè paint a pike With ass’s feet, and head it as an ape, It ’cordeth not, so n’ere it but a jape.”

---

1 147.2: "I know you will not write it over-elaborately."

2 149: “Don’t jumble discordant things together, like using medical terms to make love; keep to the point of your subject; and keep it consistent (do that it be like). It would be incongruous for a painter to put a donkey’s feet or an ape’s head on a fish; it would not fit (’cordeth not); it would be nothing (n’ere it) but a joke.”
150. This counsel lik’d well to Troilus, But, as a dreadful lover, said he this: "Alas! my dearé brother Pandarus! I am ashamèd for to write i-wis, Lest of mine innocence I said amiss, Or that she n’ould it for despite receive; Then were I dead, there might it nothing waive."

151. To that Pandárus answered: "If thee lest, Do what I say, and let me therewith gon, For by that Lord that formèd east and west, I hope of it to bring answer anon Right of her hand; and if that thou wilt none, Let be, and sorry may he be his life, Against thy lust that helpeth thee to thrive." ¹

152. Quod Troilus: "Depardieu, I assent; Since that thee list, I will arise and write, And, blissful God, I pray with good intent The voyage and the letter I shall endite So speed it; and thou Minerva white, Give thou me wit my letter to devise." And set him down, and wrote right in this wise.

153. First he gan her his righté lady call, His hearté’s life, his lust, his sorrow's leech, His bliss, and eke those other termès all That in such cases all these lovers seek, And in full humble wise, as in his speech, He gan him recommend unto her grace. To tell all how, it asketh muchel space.

154. And after this full lowly he her prayed To be not wroth though he of his folly So hardy was to write to her and said That love it made, or elsé must he die, And piteously gan mercy for to cry; And after that he said ( and lied full loud), Himself was little worth, and less he could,

¹ 151.5-7: And if ....: "But if you want none of my advice, forget it, and may anyone who helps you to succeed be sorry as long as he lives."
155. And that she would have his cunning excused,
That little was; and eke he dread her so,
And his unworthiness ay he accused;
And after that then gan he tell his woe;
But that was endèless withouten ho;
And said he would in truth always him hold;
And read it o'er and gan the letter fold.

156. And with his saltè tearês gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it set
Upon the wax deliverly and rathe,
Therewith a thousand times ere he let
He kisséd then the letter that he shut,
And said: "Letter, a blissful destiny
Thee shapen is: my lady shall thee see!"

157. This Pandare took the letter, and betime
A-morrow to his niece's palace start,
And fast he swore that it was passèd prime,
And gan to jape, and said: "I-wis mine heart
So fresh it is (although it sorè smart)
I may not sleepè never a May's morrow,
I have a jolly woe, a lusty sorrow." ¹

158. Criseydé, when that she her uncle heard,
With dreadful heart, and désirous to hear ²
The cause of his coming, right thus answered;
"Now by your faith, mine uncle," quod she, "dear!
What manner windë guideth you now here?
Tell us your jolly woe and your penánce;
How far forth be you put in lovë's dance?"
"By God," quod he, "I hop always behind."
And she to-laughed it thought her heartè burst. ³

¹ 157.7: These are the oxymorons of love applied jokingly by Pandarus to himself.

² 158.2: Dreadful cannot here mean "filled with dread" in our sense of the word "dread." The tag phrase without dread generally means “without doubt” so here dreadful would mean “filled with doubt,” or, in view of the self-mockery of Pandarus's opening remark and Criseyde's own lighthearted response, something more like "bursting with curiosity."

³ 159.2: "until she thought her heart would burst."
Quod Pandarus: “Look always that you find
Game in my hood, but hearken if you lest;
There is right now come to the town a guest,
A Greek espy, and telleth newè things,
For which I come to tellen you tidings.

160. "Into the garden go we, and you'll hear
All privily of this a long sermón."
With that they wenten arm in arm i-fere
Into the garden from the chamber down;
And when that he so far was, that the sound
Of what he spoke no man it hearen might,
He said her thus, and out the letter plight:

161. "Lo! he that is all wholly yourès free,
Him recommedeth lowly to your grace,
And sends to you this letter here by me;
Aviseth you on it when you have space,
And of some goodly answer you purcháse,
Or, help me God so, plainly for to sayn,
He may not longé liven for his pain."

162. Full dreadfully then gan she standen still,¹
And took it not, but all her humble cheer
Gan for to change, and saidé: "Scrip nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such mattér,
Ne bring me none; and also, uncle dear!
To mine estate have more regard, I pray,
Than to his lust: what should I moré say?

163. “And looketh now if this be reasonáble,
And letteth not for favour nor for sloth:
To say a sooth. Now is it covenâble
To mine estate, by God and by my truth,
To take it, or of him to havé ruth
In harming of myself or in repreve?
Bear it again for him that you on 'lieve.” ²

¹ 162.1: As with 158.2, *dreadfully* here can hardly mean "full of dread", but neither can it mean "full of curiosity" in the context. "With uncertainty? apprehension? offended modesty? "

² 163: “Take it back to him you believe in ” (to him you represent?).
164. This Pandarus gan on her for to stare,
And said: "Now is this the greatest wonder
That e'er I saw; let be this nicè fare;
To deathè may I smitten be with thunder
If for the city which that standeth yonder
Would I a letter to you bring or take
To harm of you! What list you thus it make?

stop this foolishness
to gain the city
why do you take it so?

165. "But thus you faren — well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him you reckon least where he become,
And whether that he live or elsè starve;
But for all that, that e'er I may deserve,
Refuse it not," quod he, and hent her fast,
And in her bosom down the letter thrust,

you = women
care least what happens
die
grabbed her hard

166. And said [to] her: "Now cast it away anon
That folk may see and garen on us tway."
Quod she: "I can abide till they be gone,"
And gan to smile, and said him: "Eme, I pray,
Such answer as you list, yourself purvey,
For truly I will no letter write."
"No! then will I," quod he, "so you endite."

stare at us both
I can wait
Uncle
as you please, carry
provided you dictate

167. Therewith she laughed, and saidè: "Go we dine;"
And he gan at himself to japen fast,
And said: "Niece, I have so great a pine
For love, that every other day I fast;"
And gan his bestè japès forth to cast,
And made her so to laugh at his follý
That she for laughter weenèd for to die.

have lunch
to joke
pining
jokes
expected

168. And when that she was come into the hall,
"Now eme," quod she, "we will go dine anon
And gan some of her women to her call,
And straight into her chamber gan she gon;
But of her busynesses this was one
Amongést other thingèses, out of dread,
Full privily this letter for to read.

uncle
proceeded to go
without question

169. Avisèd word by word in every line,
And found no lack, she thought he couldè good;
And put it up, and went her in to dine;

having read
knew how to act properly
to lunch
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Ere he was 'ware she took him by the hood,
And saide: "You were caught ere that you wist."
"I vouchsafe," quod he; "do what you list."

170. Then washen they, and set them down to eat;
And after noon full sily Pandarus
Gan draw him to the window nigh the street,
And saide: "Niece, who hath array'd thus
The yonder house that stands afore-gainst us?"
"Which house?" quod she, and gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told.

171. And fallen forth in speech of thingès small,
And saten in the window bothè tway.
When Pandarus saw time unto his tale,
And saw well that her folk were all away,
"Now, niece mine, tell on," quod he, "I pray;
How liketh you the letter that you wot?
Can he thereon? for by my truth I n'ot."  

172. Therewith all rosy hued then woxéd she,
And gan to hum, and saide: "So I trow."
"Acquit him well for God's love," quod he,
Myself to-mee'd will the letter sew;"
And held his handés up, and fell on knee.
"Now, goodे niece, be it ne'er so lite,
Give me the labor it to sew and plite."  

173. "Yea, for I can so writè," quod she tho,
"And eke I n'ot what I should to him say."
"Nay, niece," quod Pandarus, "say you not so,
Yet, at the leastè, thanketh him I pray
Of his good will. O do him not to die!
Now for the love of me, my niece dear
Refuseth not at this time my prayèr."

174. "Depardieu!" quod she, "God leve all be well;
God help me so, this is the firstè letter

1 171.7: "Does he know how to write well, for, on my word, I don't know".

2 172.7: A parchment letter would have been sewn shut.
That e'er I wrote, yea all or any deal,"
And into a closet for t'avise her better
She went alone, and gan her heart unfetter
Out of Dísdain's prison but a lite,
And set her down and gan a letter write.

175. Of which to tell in short is mine intent
Th' effect as far as I can understand:
She thankèd him of all that he well meant
Towardès her, but holden him in hand
She would not, ne make herselfen bound
In love, but as his sister him to please
She would ay fain, to do his heart an ease.

176. She shut it, and to Pandare in gan gon
There as he sat and looked into the street,
And down she sat by him on a stone
Of jasper on a cushion gold y-beat,
And said: "As wisly help me God the great,
I never did a thing with morè pain
Than writè this, to the which you me constrain."

177. And took it him. He thankèd her and said:
"God wot, of thing full often loth begun
Cometh end good; and, niecè mine, Crisèyde,
That you to him of hard now been y-won¹
Ought he be glad, by God and yonder sun!
For-why men say, impressionès light
Full lightly been ay ready to the flight.

178. "But you have played the tyrant nigh too long,
And hard was it your heartè for to grave.
Now stint, that you no longer on it hong, ²
Al wouldè you the form of daunger save.
But hasteth you to do him joyè have;
For trusteth well, too long y-done hardness

¹ 177. 4-7: He ought to be glad that it was difficult for him to win you. Because, they say, impressions easily made just as easily take flight.

² 178.3-4: “Now cease and do not persist in it any longer -- even if you want to keep up the appearance of “daunger” (see above 57.7).
Cauðeth despite full often, for distress."  

179. And right as they declarèd this mattèr, Lo! Troilus right at the streetè's end Came riding with his tenthè some i-fere  
All softly, and thitherward gan bend There as they sat, as was his way to wend To palace-ward, and Pandare him espied, And said: "Niece! See who comes herè ride!

180. "O fly not in! He sees us, I suppose, Lest he may thinken that you him eschew." "Nay, nay," quod she, and waxed as red as rose. With that he gan her humbly to salute With dreadful cheer, and oft his huè mue,  
And up his look he debonairly cast, And beckèd on Pandáre, and forth he passed.

181. God wot if he sat on his horse aright, Or goodly was beseen that ilkè day! God wot whe'r he were like a manly knight! What should I dretch, or tell of his array? Criseydè, which that all these thingès saw, To tell in short, her likèd all i-fere, His person, his array, his look, his cheer,  

182. His goodly manner and his gentleness, So well, that never since that she was born Ne haddè she such ruth of his distress; And how so she had hard been here-beforn, To God hope I she hath now caught a thorn She shall not pull it out this nextè week; God send her more such thornès on to pick!

---

1 178.6-7: Hardness persisted in too long induces contempt because of the pain (it causes).

2 179.3: *with his tenthe sum i-fere*: *tenthe sum* is probably a relic of an OE idiom meaning "one of ten," i.e. he and nine others.

3 180.5: Once again the precise connotation of *dreadful* is difficult to pin down. (See 158 & 162 above). It might have a range of meaning from ‘courteous’ to ‘apprehensive’. *and oft his hues (gan) mue*: ‘and his color changed often’ implies shyness and apprehension.
183. Pandárus, which that stood her fastè by,
    Felt iron hot, and he began to smite,
    And saidè: "Niece, I pray you heartily
    Tell me what I shall asken you a lite;
    A woman that were of his death to wite,
    Without his guilt, but for her lack of ruth,
    Were it well done?" Quod she: "Nay, by my truth."

184. "God help me so," quod he, "you say me sooth,
    You feelen well yourself that I naught lie.
    Lo! yond he rides." Quod she: "Yea, so he doth."
    "Well," quod Pandáre, "as I have told you thrice,
    Let be your nicèty and your follý,
    And speak with him in easing of his heart:
    Let nicèty not do you both to smart."

185. But thereon was to heaven and to don,
    "Considering all things, it may not be."
    "And why?" "For shame. And it were eke too soon
    To granted him so great a liberty."
    For plainly her intent, as saidè she,
    Was, for to love him unwis if she might,
    And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.¹

186. But Pandarus thought: "It shall not be so;
    If that I may, this nice opinïon
    Shall not be holden fully yearel two."
    What should I make of this a long sermóin?
    He must assent on that conclusïon
    As for the time, and when that it was eve,
    And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

187. And on his way full fast he homeward sped,
    And right for joy he felt his hearté dance,
    And Troilus he found alone a-bed,

¹ 185: Many editions have no quotation marks in this stanza. They would seem to regard it all as authorial comment. If they are right, the stanza is an interesting example of a technique many of us regard as very modern, especially joycean, where the narrator is "speaking" in the "voice" of one or more of his characters, the style indirect libre referred to by Spearing in an earlier passage. (See above, II.87.5-7). My quotation marks and punctuation could easily be changed in a number of ways. In 185.3 Riverside has speche for shame, and glosses it as (fear of) malicious speech.'
That lay, as do those lovers, in a trance,
Betwixen hope and dark dis-ésperance.
But Pandarus right at his in-coming
He sang, as who saith: "Lo! somewhat I bring."

188. And said: "Who is in his bed so soon
Y-buried thus?" "It am I, friend," quod he.
"Who? Troilus! nay, help me so the moon,"
Quod Pandarus, "Thou shalt up rise and see
A charm that was y-sent right now to thee,
The which can healen thee of thine access,
If thou forthwith do all thy busyness."

189. "Yea, through the might of God," quod Troilus.
And said Pandarus gan him the letter take,
And said: "Pardee, God hath holpen us.
Have here a light, and look on all these black."
But often gan the hearté glad and quake
Of Troilus while he it gan to read,
So as the wordés gave him hope or dread.

190. But, finally, he took all for the best
That she him wrote, for somewhat he beheld
On which he thought he might his hearté rest,
Al’ covered she the wordés under shield; ¹
Thus to the moré worthy part he held,
That what for hope, and Pandarus’ behest,
His greaté woe foryede he at the least.

191. But, as we may all day ourselven see,
Through moré wood or coal, the moré fire;
Right so increase of hope of what it be,
Therewith full oft encreaseth eke desire;
Or, as an oak comes of a little spire,
So through this letter which that she him sent
Increasen ’gan desire, of which he brent.

192. Wherefore I say always, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he did erst through hope, and did his might
To pressen on, as by Pandárus' lore,

¹ 190. 4-5: She disguised her feelings somewhat; but he concentrated on the more hopeful parts.
And adapted his pace to his resting spots. i.e. presumably, he didn’t rush things, but accepted what he could get as it came.

194.2-3: "And [Troilus] constantly to him [Pandarus] made his complaint and begged him for advice and help."

...
197. “Paraunter thinkest thou: ¹ ‘though it be so
That Kinde wouldè do her to begin
To have a manner ruth upon my woe,
Says Daunger: ‘Nay, thou shalt me never win’
So ruleth her her hearté’s ghost within,
That, though she bendè, yet she stands on root;
What in effect is this unto my boote?’

198. “Think here-against, when that the sturdy oak,
On which men hacketh often for the nones,
Receivèd hath the happy falling stroke,
The greaté sway doth it come all at once,
As do these rockès or these millè-stones.
For swifter course comes thing that is of weight
When it descendeth, than do thingès light.

199. “And reed that boweth down for every blast,
Full lightly, ceasè wind, it will arise;
But so n’ill not an oak when it is cast;
It needs me not thee longè to forbyse.
Men shall rejoicen of a great emprise
Achievèd well that stands withouten doubt,
Al’ have men been the longer thereabout.

200. "But, Troilus, yet tell me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shall asken thee:
Which is the brother that thou lovest best,
As in thy very hearté’s privity?"
"I-wis my brother Deiphebe," quod he.
"Now," quod Pandáre, "ere hourès twicè twelve
He shall thee ease, unwist of it himself.

201. "Now let me alone and worken as I may,"
Quod he, and to Deiphebus went he tho,
Which had his lord and greatè friend been ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovèd so.
To tell in short, withouten wordès mo’,
Quod Pandarus: "I pray you that you be
Friend to a causè which that toucheth me."

¹ 197: There are three “voices” in this stanza: 1. Pandarus, who says it all : “Paraunter thinkest thou ...
2. conjectered Troilus: ‘though it ..’ to the end 3. Daunger : ‘Nay ...win ’ within Troilus’s imagined speech.
202. "Yes, pardee," quod Deiphebus, "well thou wost, you know
In all that e'er I may, and God to-fore, before God
Al' n'ere it but for the man that I love most,
My brother Troilus. ¹ But say wherefore
It is; for since that I was bore,
I n'as, ne nevermore to be, I think,²
Against a thing that mighté thee for-think."
displease you

203. Pandárus gan him thank, and to him said: as a stranger
"Lo, sir, I have a lady in this town,
That is my niece and callèd is Criseyde,
Which some men woulden do oppression,
And wrongfully have her possessions.
Wherefore I of your lordship you beseech
To be our friend, withouten moré speech."

204. Deiphebus answered him: "Oh, is not this
That thou speak'st of to me thus strangély,
Criséydé, my friend?" He saidé: "Yes."
"Then needeth," quod Deiphebus, "hardily,
"No more to speak; for trusteth well that I
Will be her champion with spur and yard:
I roughté not though all her foes it heard.
whip

205. "But tell me, thou that wost all this mattér,
How I might best availen." "Now let's see,"
Quod Pandarus. "If you, my lord so dear,
Would as now do this honoúr unto me,
To prayen her to-morrow, lo, that she
come unto you her 'plaintés to devise,
Her adversaries would of it agrise.
complaints to tell

206. "And if I moré dursté pray as now,
dare ask at present
And chargen you to have so great travil,
ask you / trouble
To have some of your brothers here with you,
That mighten to her causé bet’ avail,
better
Then wot I well she mighté never fail
For to be helpèd, what at your instànce, support
What with her other friendés’ governance.” management

207.  Deiphebus, which that comen was of kind was by nature inclined...
To all honoûr and bounty to consent, ... to consent to
Answered: "It shall be done, and I can find
Yet greater help to this in mine intent.
What wilt thou say if I for Helen sent
To speak of this? I trow it be the best, I think
For she may leaden Paris as her lest.

208.  "Of Hector, which that is my lord, my brother, more than once
It needeth not to pray him friend to be;
For I have heard him, one time and eke other, better / favor with him
Speak of Criseydè honour such that he
May say no bet’, such hap to him has she.
It needeth not his helpè for to crave;
He shall be such right as we will him have.

209.  "Speak thou thyself also to Troilus stop
On my behalf, and pray him with us dine.” risen f. her meal
"Sir, all this shall be done," quod Pandarus, more than once
And took his leave, and never gan to fine,
But to his niece’s house as straight as line
He came, and found her from the meat arise,
And set him down, and spoke right in this wise.

210.  He said: "O very God! so have I run, don’t know
Lo! niecè mine, see you not how I sweat?
I n’ot whether you morè thank me can;
Be you not ‘ware how falsè Poliphet immediately
Is now about eftsoonës for to plead,
And bringen on you advocacies new?” legal claims
"I? No," quod she, and changèd all her hue.

211.  "What! Is he more about me for to dretch, 1 to vex
And do me wrong? What shall I do? alas!
Yet of himselfen nothing would I reck wouldn’t care
N’ere it for Antenor and Aeneas, Were it not

" 211.1:  "Is he about to annoy me again?"
That be his friends in such a manner case;¹
But for the love of God, mine uncle dear!
No force of that, let him have all i-fere;

212. "Withouten that I have enough for us."
"Nay," quod Pandare, "it shall be no thing so,
For I have been right now at Deiphibus,
At Hector, and mine other lordés mo',
And shortly maken each of them his foe,
That, by my thrift, he shall it never win
For aught he can, when so that he begin."

213. And as they casten what was best to don,
Deiphebus, of his owné courtesy,
Came her to pray — in his proper persón —
To hold him on the morrow company
At dinner, which she wouldé not deny,
But goodly gan his prayer to obey.
He thankéd her, and went upon his way.

214. When this was done this Pándare up anon,
(To tell in short) and forth gan for to wend
To Troilus as still as any stone,
And all this thing he told him ord and end,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blend,
And said him: "Now is time, if that you can,
To bear thee well to-morrow, and all is won.

215. "Now speak, now pray, now piteously complain:
Let not for nicé shame or dread or sloth.
Some time a man must tell his owné pain:
Believe it, and she shall have on thee ruth;
Thou shalt be savéd by thy faith, in truth.
But well wot I, thou art now in a dread,
And what it is I lay I can arede.

216. "Thou thinkest now, ‘How should I do all this?"

¹ 211.4-5: Benoit de Saint-Maure and Guido delle Colonne (sources for Chaucer's story) wrote that
Antenor and Aeneas were both involved in the treacherous act of removing the Palladium, a holy relic on
which depended the safety of Troy. As we shall see later in this poem, Antenor, taken prisoner by the
Greeks, is exchanged for Criseyde, and then betrays Troy. See Bk IV, st. 19-31 below.
For by my cheeré muste folk espy
That for her love is that I fare amiss;
Yet had I lever unwist for sorrow die,’
Now think not so, for thou dost great folly.
For right now have I founden a mannér
Of sleighté for to cover all thy cheer.

217. "Thou shalt go overnight, and that as blive,
To Deiphebus' house, as thee to play,
Thy malady away the bet’ to drive;
For why thou seemest sick, the sooth to say;
Soon after that, down in thy bed thee lay,
And say thou may' st no longer up endure,
And lie right there and bide thine áventure.

218. “Say that the fever is wont thee for to take
The samé time, and lasten till a-morrow;
And let see now how well thou canst it make,
For pardee, sick is he that is in sorrow:
Go now, farewell, and Venus here to borrow,
I hope, an’ thou this purpose hold
Thy gracé shall she fully there confirm.”

219. Quod Troilus: "I-wis, thou need'less
Counselest me that sickly I me feign,
For I am sick in earnest, doubtéless,
So that well nigh I starv for the pain."
Quod Pandarus: "Thou shalt thee better 'plain,
And hast the lessé need to counterfeit,
For him men deemen hot that men see sweat.

220. "Lo, hold thee at thy tristé close, and I
Shall well the deer unto thy bowé drive."
Therewith he took his leave all softély,
And Troilus to palace wenté blive.
So glad ne was he never in all his life,
And to Pandárus’ redde gan all assent,
And to Deiphebus' house at night he went.

221. What needeth it to tellen all the cheer
That Deiphebus to his brother made,
Or his access, or his sickly mannér,
How men go him with clothés for to lade,
When he was laid, and how men would him glad?
But all for naught; he held forth ay the wise
That you have heard Pandáre ere this devise.

222. But certain is ere Troilus him laid,
Deiphebus had him prayéd overnight
To be a friend and helping to Criseyde
God wot that he it granted anonright
To be her fullé friend with all his might:
But such a need was it to pray him then
As for to bid a wood man for to run.

223. The morrow came, and nighen gan the time
Of mealtide, that the fairé Queen Elaine
Shope her to be an hour after prime
With Deiphebe, to whom she would not feign,
But as his sister, homely, sooth to sayn,
She came to dinner in her plain intent;
But God and Pándare wist all what this meant.

224. Came eke Criseyde all innocent of this,
Antigone her niece and Tarbe also:
But fly we now prolixity best is,¹
For love of God, and let us fast y-go
Right to th' effect withouten talès mo',
Why all this folk assembled in this place,
And let us of their saluing s pace.

225. Great honour did them Deíphebe certáin,
And fed them well with all that might them like,
But evermore, "Alas!" was his refrain:
"My goodè brother, Troilus the sick,
Lies yet;" and therewithal he gan to sigh,
And after that he painéd him to glad
Them as he might, and cheeré good he made.

226. Complainèd eke Elaine of his sickness
So faithfully, that pity was to hear,
And every wight gan waxen for access
A leech anon, and said: "In this manñér

¹ 224.3: "The best thing for us now is to avoid wordiness."

laid (on bed) / cheer up
he held to the plan
lay down
at once
madman
approach
Helen
Prepared / about 10 a.m.
like family, to tell truth
knew
to the point / words
pass up their greetings
Is confined to bed
took pains to entertain
physician
Men curen folk; this charm I will thee lere." ¹
But there sat one, al list her not to teach,
That thought: "Best could I be his leech."

227. After complaint, him 'gonnen they to praise,
As folk do yet when some wight has begun
To praise a man, and up with praise him raise
A thousand fold yet higher than the sun;
"He is, he can, what fewe lordes can;"
And Pandarus, of that they would affirm,
He naught forgot their praising to confirm.

228. Heard all this thing Criseydé well enough,
And every word gan for to notify,
For which with sober cheer her hearté laughed;
For who is that ne would her glorify
To mowen such a knight do live or die? ²
But all pass I, lest you too longé dwell;
But for one fine is all that e'er I tell.

229. The timé came from dinner for to rise,
And as them ought, arisen every one,
And gan awhile of this and that devise;
But Pandarus broke all this speech anon,
And said to Deiphebus: "Will you go on,
If it your will be, as I you prayed,
To speak here of the needés of Criseyde?"

230  Elainé, which that by the hand her held,
Took first the tale, and saidé: "Go we blive;
And goodly on Criseydé she beheld,
And saidé: "Jové never let him thrive
That does you harm, and bring him soon of live,

¹ 226.3-5: "Everyone began to turn into a doctor (leech) of fevers: 'This is the way to cure people. I'll show you a charm.' " Access is fever or sudden illness.

² 228.4-5: "Who is [she] who would not glorify her[self] to be able to make (mowen ... do) such a knight live or die?" i.e. What woman would not be proud to be in a position to decide whether such a knight live or die?" 228.6: But all ... dwell : "But I pass over this lest you be delayed too long."
And give me sorrow but he shall it rue
If that I may, and allè folk be true.”

231. "Tell thou thy niece's case," quod Deiphbus
To Pandarus, "for thou canst best it tell."
"My lordès and my ladies, it stands thus;
What should I longer," quod he, "do you dwell?"
He rung them out a process like a bell
Upon her foe that hight was Polyphete,
So heinous that men mighten on it spit.

232. Answered of this each worse of them than other,
And Polyphete they gannen thus to wary,
“A-hanged be such one, were he my brother,
And so he shall, for it ne may not vary.”
What should I longer in this talé tarry?
Plainly all at oncè they her hight
To be her help in all that e’er they might.

233. Spoke then Elaine, and said to Pandarus:
"Wot aught my lord my brother of this mattér,
I mean Hectór, or wot it Troilus?"
He said: "Yea, but will you now me hear?
Methinketh this, since Troilus is here,
It werè good, if that you would assent,
She told herself him all this ere she went;

234. "For he will have the more her grief at heart,
Because, lo! she a worthy lady is;
And by your leave I will but in right start,
And do you wit, and that anon i-wis.
If that he sleep or will aught hear of this;"
And in he leaped and said him in his ear:
"God have thy soul!  for brought have I thy bier."

235. To smilen of this then gan Troilus;
And Pandarus, withouten reckoning,

1 230: “May God punish me, if I don’t make him regret it, if I can help it and if everyone is loyal.”

2 232.3: “for it (the law) cannot vary for anyone” (?).

3 234.4: “And let you know (do you wit), and that promptly indeed.”
Out wenté to Elaine and Deiphebus,  
And said them: "So there be no tarrying,  
No moré press, he will well that you bring  
Criséydé, my lady that is here,  
And as he may endure, he will hear.

236. "But well you wot the chamber is but lité,  
And fewé folk may lightly make it warm;  
Now looketh ye — for I will have no wite  
To bring in press that mighté do him harm,  
Or him dis-easen, (for my better arm!) —  
Whe’er it be best she bidé till eftsoonés,  
Now looketh you, that knowen what to do is.

237. "I say for me, best is as I can know,  
That no wight in ne wenté but you tway,  
But it were I, for I can in a throw  
Rehearse her case unlike what she can say,  
And after this she may him oncé pray  
To be good lord, in short, and take her leave;  
This may not muchel of his ease him rieve.

238. "And eke, for she is strange, he will forbear  
His easé, which that him thar not for you;  
Eke other thing that toucheth not to hear  
He will it tell, I wot it well right now,  
That secret is, and for the towné's prow."  
And they, that nothing knew of his intent,  
Withouten more to Troilus in they went.

239. Elaine in all her goodly softé wise  
Gan him salute and womanly to play,  
And said: "I-wis you must algate arise;  
Now, fairé brother, be all whole I pray;"  
And gan her arm right o'er his shoulder lay,

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1 236: "Now take heed whether (looketh ...whe’er) it may be better for her to wait until later (eftsoonés), for I will not take the blame for bringing in a crowd that may harm him or distress (dis-ease) him, not for my right arm! Take heed you who know what to do." Pandarus the puppet master is pretending to defer to the opinions of others while in the very act of manipulating them.

2 238.3-5: "Other things that should not be discussed publicly (toucheth not to hear) he wants to talk about (I know that well) -- state secrets that are for the city's welfare."
And him with all her wit to recomfór;
As she best could, she gan him to disport.

240. So after this quod she: "We you beseech,
My dearé brother Deíphebe and I,
For love of God, and so does Pándare eke,
To be good lord and friend right heartily
Unto Criseyd, which that certainly
Receivèd wrong, as wot well here Pandáre,
That can her case well bet’ than I declare."

241. This Pándarus gan new his tongue affile
And all her case rehearse, and that anon.
When it was said, soon after in a while
Quod Troilus: "As soon as I may gon,
I will right fain with all my might be one,
(Have God my truth), her caus to sustain."
"Good thrift have you," then quod the Queen Elaine.

242. Quod Pandarus: "An' it your will be
That she may take her leave ere that she go?"
"O, elsè God forbid it," then quod he,
"If that she vouchsafe for to do so."
And with that word quod Troilus: "You two,
Deiphebus and my sister lief and dear,
To you have I to speak of one mattér,

243. "To be avisèd by your redde the better;
And found, as hap was, at his bed's head
The copy of a treatise and a letter
That Hector had him sent to asken redde
If such a man was worthy to be dead.
Wot I not who, but in a grisly wise
He prayèd them anon on it avise.

244. Deiphebus gan this letter to unfold
In earnest great, so did Elaine the Queen,
And roaming outward fast it gan behold,
Downward a stair, into an arbour green;
This ilké thing they readen them between,
And largely the mountance of an hour
They gan on it to readen and to pore.
245. Now let them read, and turnè we anon
To Pandarus, that gan full fast to pry
That all was well, and out he gan to gon
Into the greatè chamber, and that in hie,
And said: "God save all this company!
Come, niecè mine, my lady Queen Elaine
Abideth you, and eke my lordès twain.

246. "Rise. Take with you yourè niece Antigone,
Or whom you list, or, no force hardily; ¹
The lessè press the better. Come forth with me,
And looketh that you thanken humbly
Them allè three, and when you may goodly
Your time y-see, taketh of them your leave,
Lest we too long him of his rest bereave."

247. All innocent of Pandarus' intent
Quod then Criseydè: "Go we, uncle dear!"
And arm in arm inward with him she went,
Avising well her wordês and her cheer;
And Pandarus in earnestful mannér
Said: "Allè folk, for God's love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softèly you play. ²

248. "Aviseth you what folk be here within,
And in what plight one is, God him amend!"'
And inward thus: "Full softèly begin,
Niece, I conjúre and highly you defend,
On his behalf which that soul all us sends,
And in the virtue of the crowns twain, ³
Slay not this man that has for you this pain.

249. "Fie on the devil! Think which one he is,
And in what plight he lies; come off anon;
Think all such tarried tide but lost it n'is,

¹ 246.2: "Or whomever you want. Oh, it doesn't matter really."

² 247.7: "Stay right here and entertain yourselves quietly."

³ 248.6: All annotators agree that the phrase in virtue of the crowns twain is obscure and not adequately explained. I add one more guess to the others: "for the sake of two heads," i.e. two lives, his and mine. Pandarus had said earlier that her obdurate refusal would kill both of them.
That will you bothè say when you be one;
And secondly, there yet divineth none
Upon you two; come off now, if you con.
While folk is blent, lo! all the time is won.

w. you’re united
nobody guesses yet
if y. know (what’s best)
blinded

250. “In teetering and pursuit and delays
The folk divine at wagging of a stree,
And though you would have after merry days,
Then dare you not. And why? For she and she
Spoke such a word; thus lookèd he and he:
Lest time be lost I dare not with you deal,
Come off therefore, and bringeth him to heal.”

people guess / straw
afterwards
deal (at length)
to health

251. But now to you, you lovers that be here,
Was Troilus not in a cankédort,
That lay and might the whispering of them hear?
And thought: “O Lord! right now runneth my sort
Fully to die or have anon comfort;”
And was the firsté time he should her pray
Of love; O mighty God! what shall he say?

on the spot
approaches my fate
or promptly have
ask her ...
... For her love

Here ends Book II