

BOOK V TROILUS AND CRISEYDE BOOK V

Book V

1. APPROACHEN gan the fatal destiny
That Jovè hath in disposition,
And to you, angry Parcae, sisters three, *the 3 Fates*
Committeth to do execution,¹
For which Criseydè must out of the town, *must (go)*
And Troilus shall dwellen forth in pine *in torture*
Till Lachesis his thread no longer twine.
2. The golden tressèd Phoebus high aloft *the Sun*
Thrice had allè with his beamès clean
The snows melted,² and Zephirus as oft *west wind of Spring*
Y-brought again the tender leavès green
Since that the son of Hecuba the Queen *Troilus*
Began to love her first for whom his sorrow
Was all that she departen should a-morrow. *next day*
3. Full ready was at primè Diomede³ *early in a.m.*
Criseyde unto the Greekès' host to lead;
For sorrow of which she felt her heartè bleed,
As she that n'istè what was best to rede. *didn't know / to do*
And truly, as men in bookès read,

¹ 1.1-4: "There began to approach the fatal destiny which Jove has control of, and which he delegates to the three Fates to carry out (*to do execution*).¹" The three Parcae or Fates -- Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos -- spin (*twine*) the thread of human life and decide when it is to be cut.

² 2.1-5: A roundabout way of saying that it has been three years since Troilus fell in love with Criseyde whose impending departure was causing his present pain.

³ 3.1: Diomede, a prominent Greek warrior, and the fourth major character in the story, arrives early in the morning (*at prime*) to escort Criseyde to the Greek camp.

Men wistè never woman have the care,
Nor was so loath out of a town to fare.¹

knew

4. This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
As man that hath his joyès eke forlore,
Was waiting on his lady evermore,
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of all his lust or joyès herebefore;
But Troilus, now farewell all thy joy!
For shalt thou never see her eft in Troy.

plot or plan
lost

root & branch
desire

again

5. Sooth is, that while he bode in this mannér
He gan his woe full manly for to hide,
That well unneth it seen was in his cheer,²
But at the gatè where she should out ride
With certain folk he hoved, her to abide,
So woe-begone, al would he not complain,
That on his horse unneth he sat for pain.

waited

scarcely / behavior

lingered to wait for her
although he
could barely sit

6. For ire he quoke, so gan his heartè gnaw,
When Diomedè on horse gan him to dress,
And said unto himself this ilkè saw:
"Alas! " quod he, "thus foul a wretchedness
Why suffer I it? why n'ill I it redress?
Were it not better at oncè for to die
Than evermore in languor thus to drye?

w. anger he shook
to mount

these words
he = Troilus

why don't I put it right?

to suffer

7. "Why n'ill I make at oncè rich and poor
To have enough to do ere that she go?
Why n'ill I bring all Troy upon a roar?
Why n'ill I slay this Diomedè also?
Why n'ill I rather with a man or two
Steal her away? why will I this endure?

Why don't I

¹ 3:6-7: "No one ever knew a woman who had so much sorrow (*care*) or was so reluctant to leave the town."

² 5.3: "So that it was scarcely perceptible in his behavior."

Why n'ill I helpen to mine ownè cure?"

8. But why he would not do so fell a deed
That shall I say, and why him list it spare:
He had in heart always a manner dread
Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Should have been slain. Lo! this was all his care,
And elsè, certain, as I saidè yore,
He had it done withouten wordès more.

terrible
he chose to refrain
in chaos of the disturbance
concern
otherwise / earlier
would have done

9. Criseydè, when she ready was to ride,
Full sorrowfully she sighed, and said "Alas!"
But forth she must for aught that may betide:¹
There is no other remedy in this case.
And forth she rode full sorrowfully a pace;
What wonder is though that her sorè smart
When she forgoes her ownè dearè heart.

suffers sorely
o.d. heart = Troilus

10. This Troilus in wise of courtesy,
With hawk on hand, and with a hugè rout
Of knightès, rode and did her company,
Passing all the valley far without,
And farther would have ridden out of doubt
Full fain, and woe was him to go so soon,
But turn he must, and it was eke to doon.²

by way of
crowd
kept her company
doubtless
v. gladly

11. And right with that was Antenor y-come
Out of the Greekès' host, and every wight
Was of it glad, and said he was welcome;
And Troilus, all n'ere his heartè light,
He painèd him with all his fullè might
Him to withhold of weeping at the least,
And Antenor he kissed and made great feast.

although his h. wasn't
He forced himself
keep from
made v. welcome

¹ 9.3: "But forth she must (go), no matter what happens."

² 10.5-7: "And he would very gladly (*full fain*) have ridden further -- no doubt about that -- and sad he was (*woe was him*) to go so soon, but he had to turn back; there was no way out of that."

12. And therewithal he must his leavè take,
 And cast his eye upon her piteously,
 And near he rode, his causè for to make,
 To take her by the hand all soberly;
 And Lord! so she gan weepen tenderly,
 And he full soft and slily gan her say:
 "Now hold your day, and do me not to die."

13. With that his courser turnéd he about
 With facè pale, and unto Diomede
 No word he spoke, nor none of all his rout,
 Of which the son of Tydeus took heed,
 As he that couldè morè than the creed
 In such a craft,¹ and by the rein her hent;
 And Troilus to Troy homeward he went.

his horse

i.e. Diomede

grasped

14. This Diomede, that led her by the bridle,
 When that he saw the folk of Troy away,
 Thought: "All my labour shall not be on idle
 If that I may, for somewhat shall I say,
 For at the worst it may yet short our way;
 I have heard said eke timès twicè twelve,
 He is a fool that will forget himself."

wasted

shorten

15. But natheless this thought he well enough:
 "That certainly I am abouten naught
 If that I speak of love, or make it tough,
 For doubtéless if she have in her thought
 Him that I guess, he may not be y-brought
 So soon away; but I shall find a mean
 That she not wit as yet shall what I mean."

I will get nowhere

*a method
 will not guess*

16. This Diomede, as he that could his good,
 When timè was, gan fallen forth in speech

¹ 13.5-6: "Like a man that knew (*could*) more than the elementary stages (*creed*) in this business (*craft*) [of love]."

Of this and that,¹ and asken why she stood
 In such dis-ease, and gan her eke beseech,
 That if that he increasen might or eche
 With any thing her easè, that she should
 Command it him, and said he do it would.

*or add to
 her comfort*

17. For truly he swore her as a knight
 That there n'as thing with which he might her please
 That he n'ould do his pain and all his might
 To do it, for to do her heart an ease,
 And prayed her she would her sorrow appease,
 And said: "Iwis we Greekès can have joy
 To honour you as well as folk of Troy."

*there was nothing ...
 ... he wouldn't take pains*

assuage

18. He said eke thus: "I wot you thinketh strange
 (No wonder is) for it is to you new,
 Th'acquaintance of these Trojans for to change
 For folk of Greece, which that you never knew,
 But wouldè never God, but if as true
 A Greek you should among us allè find
 As any Trojan is, and eke as kind.

I know to you it seems

God forbid

19. "And by the cause I swore you, lo! right now
 To be your friend, and help you to my might,
 And for that more acquaintance eke of you
 Have I had than another stranger wight,
 So from this forth I pray you day and night
 Commandeth me, how sore so that me smart,
 To do all that may like unto your heart:

as best I can

however it pains me

20. "And that you me would as your brother treat,
 And taketh not my friendship in despite;
 And though your sorrows be for thingès great --

¹ 16.1-3: "like a man who knew what was best for himself, when the opportunity arose, he began to chat about one thing and another."

N'ot I not why but out of more respite ¹ *don't know / high regard*
 Mine heart hath for t'amend it great delight,
 And if I may your harmès not redress *cure*
 I am right sorry for your heaviness. *sadness*

21. "For though you Trojans with us Greekès wroth *angry*
 Have many a day been, always yet pardee *by God*
 One god of Love in sooth we serven both: *in truth*
 And for the love of God, my lady free, *my gracious lady*
 Whom so you hate, as be not wroth with me, *Whomsoever / angry*
 For truly there can no wight you serve
 That half so loath your wrathè would deserve.²

22. "And n'ere it that we be so near the tent *And were it not*
 Of Calchas, which that see us bothè may,
 I would of this you tell all mine intent,
 But this ensealed is till another day.
 Give me your hand; I am and shall be ay, *always*
 God help me so, while that my life may dure, *may last*
 Your own, aboven every creäture.

23. "Thus said I ne'er ere now to woman born, *never before now*
 For, God my heart as wisly gladden so,³
 I lovèd never woman herebeforn
 As paramour, ne never shall no mo'; *As sexual partner*
 And, for the love of God, be not my foe,
 Al' can I not to you, my lady dear, *Although*
 Complain aright, for I am yet to lere.⁴ *to learn*

¹ 20.4-7: "I don't know why (*N'ot I not why*), but out of high regard (*more respite*), I would be heartily pleased to improve things, and if I cannot cure your troubles, I am at least sorry for your sadness."

² 21.5-7: "And whomsoever you hate, do not be angry with me, because no one who wants to serve you would be half so unwilling as I to earn your anger."

³ 23.2: "For, as surely as I hope God may gladden my heart, ..."

⁴ 23.6-7: "although I cannot make my (love) complaint to you properly, my dear lady, because I am only a learner." Diomede, the practised seducer, pretends he is a clumsy amateur.

24. "And wonder naught, mine ownè lady bright,
 Though that I speak of love to you thus blive,
 For I have heard ere this of many a wight
 That lovèd thing he never saw his life;
 Eke I am not of power for to strive
 Against the god of Love, but him obey
 I will always, and mercy I you pray.
- so soon
 person
 (in) his life*
25. "There be so worthy knightès in this place,
 And you so fair, that ever each of them all
 Will painè him to standen in your grace;
 But might to me so fair a grace befall
 That me as for your servant you would call,
 So lowly nor so truly you serve
 Will none of them as I shall till I starve."
- so = such
 every one
 take pains / your favor
 die*
26. Criseyde unto that purpose lite answered,
 As she that was with sorrow oppressèd so,
 That in effect she naught his talès heard,
 But here and there now here a word or two;
 Her thought her sorrowful heartè burst a-two,
 For when she gan her father far espy
 Well nigh down off her horse she gan to sye.
- little
 to sink*
27. But natheless she thankèd Diomede
 Of all his trávail and of his goodè cheer,
 And that him list his friendship to her bid,
 And she accepted it in good mannér,
 And would do fain that is him lief and dear,
 And trusten him she would, and well she might,
 As saidè she, and from her horse she 'light.
- his trouble
 he wanted to offer his f.
 with good grace
 would gladly do what pleased him
 alighted, dismounted*
28. Her father hath her in his armès nome,
 And twenty times he kissed his daughter sweet,
 And said: "O dearè daughter mine, welcome."
 She said eke she was fain with him to meet,
 And stood forth mutè, mild, and mansuete.
 But here I leave her with her father dwell,
- taken
 glad
 and meek*

And forth I will of Troilus you tell.

29. To Troy is come this woeful Troilus
In sorrow aboven allè sorrows smart,
With felon look and with face despiteous,
Tho suddenly down from his horse he start,
And through his palace with a swollen heart
To chamber went; of no wight took he heed,
Ne none to him dare speak a word for dread.

*painful
scowling / angry
There*

30. And there his sorrows that he sparèd had
He gave an issue large, and "Death!" he cried,
And in his throès frènetic and mad
He curseth Jove, Apollo, and Cupid,
He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cyprid,
His birth, himself, his fate, and eke Natúre,
And, save his lady, every creäture.

*controled
gave full vent*

Cyprid = Venus

31. To bed he goes, and walloweth there and turneth
In fury as does Ixion in hell,
And in this wise he nigh till day sojourneth,
But then began his heartè a lite unswell
Through tearès which that gonnen up to well,
And piteously he cried upon Criseyde,
And to himself right thus he spoke and said:

*(chained to a wheel)
till nearly day he remains
a little*

32. "Who sees you now, my rightè lodèstar?
Who sits right now or stands in your preséncè?
Who can comforten now your heartè's war,
Now I am gone? whom give you audience?
Who speaks for me right now in my abséncè?
Alas! no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wot I, as ill as I you fare. ¹

guiding star

nobody

33. "How should I thus ten dayès full endure
When I the firstè night have all this teen?

vexation

¹ 32.7: "I know well you are as badly off as I am."

How shall she do eke, sorrowful creature,
 For tenderness how shall she eke sustain
 Such woe for me? O! piteous, pale, and green,
 Shall be your freshè womanlicè face
 For languor ere you turn unto this place."

*For = because of
 and sickly
 womanly
 From pain (of longing)*

34. This Pándare, that of all the day befor
 Ne might have comen Troilus to see,
 Although he on his head it had y-sworn,
 For with King Priam all the day was he,
 So that it lay not in his liberty
 Nowhere to go, but on the morrow he went
 To Troilus, when that he for him sent;

*could not come
 solemnly promised*

35. For in his heartè he could well divine
 That Troilus all night for sorrow woke,
 And that he wouldè tell him of his pine;
 This knew he well enough withouten book,
 For which to chamber straight the way he took,
 And Troilus then soberly he gret,
 And on the bed full soon he gan him set.

*could guess
 he wanted to / agony*

quietly greeted T

36. "My Pandarus!" quod Troilus, "the sorrow
 Which that I drye I may not long endure;
 I trow I shall not liven till to-morrow;
 For which I would always on áventure
 To thee devisen of my sépulture
 The form, and of my meuble thou dispone
 Right as thee seemeth best is for to done:

*suffer
 I think
 in preparation
 give instructions for my tomb
 my goods / dispose*

37. "But of the fire and flame funereal
 In which my body burn shall into gleed,
 And of the feast and playès palestral
 At my vigil I pray thee take good heed
 That all be well, and offer Mars my steed,
 My sword, my helm, and, levè brother dear,
 My shield to Pallas give, that shineth clear.

*coals, ashes
 funeral games*

beloved brother

38. "The powder to which my heartè burned shall turn,
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessel that men clepe an urn *call*
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus piteously I starve, *die*
So give it her, and do me this pleasánce
To pray her keep it for a rémembrance.
39. "For well I feelè by my malady,
And by my dreamès now and yore ago, *in the past*
All certainly that I must needès die;
The owl eke, which that hight Ascalapho, *which is called*
Hath after me shrieked all these nightès two.
And, god Mercury, of me now woeful wretch
The soulè guide, and when thee list, it fetch."¹ *when you please*
40. Pandare answered and said: "Troilus,
My dearè friend, as have I told thee yore *in the past*
That it is folly for to sorrow thus,
And causèless, for which I can no more.
But whoso will not trowen redde nor lore *heed advice & teaching*
I cannot see in him no remedy,
But let him worthen with his fantasy. *remain with*
41. "But, Troilus, I pray thee tell me now
If that thou trow ere this that any wight *believe that anyone*
Hath lovèd paramours as well as thou?
Yea, God wot, and from many a worthy knight
Hath his lady gone a fortènight *two weeks*
And he not yet made halvendel the fare. *half the fuss*
What need is thee to maken all this care? *this noise*
42. "How do these folk that see their lovers wedded
By friendès' might, as it betides full oft *By family pressure*
And see them in their spouses' bed y-bedded?
God wot, they take it, wisly, fair and soft. *G. knows / indeed*

¹ 39.6: Mercury assigned spirits their place after death. See below 203.7.

For-why good hope holds up their heart aloft
 And for they can a time of sorrow endure;
 As time them hurt, a timè doth them cure.

*Because
 And because*

43. "So shouldest thou endure, and letten slide
 The time, and fonden to be glad and light.
 Ten days is not so long for to abide.
 And since she thee to comen has behight
 She will her hest not broken for no wight;
 For dread thee not that she n'ill finden way
 To come again; my life that durst I lay.

*and try to be
 has promised
 promise / nobody
 dare I bet*

44. "Thy swevens eke and all such fantasy
 Drive out, and let them faren to mischance;
 For they proceed of thy meláncholy,
 That doth thee feel in sleep all this penáncē.
 A straw for all swevens' significance!
 God help me so, I count them not a bean;
 There wot no man aright what dreamès mean.

*dreams
 go to the devil
 causes you to feel
 No man knows*

45. "For priestès of the temple tellen this,
 That dreamès be the revelatiõs
 Of gods; and as well they tell, iwis,
 That they be infernál illusïõs.
 And leeches ween that of complexïõs
 Proceeden they, or fast, or gluttony.¹
 Who wot in sooth thus what they signify?

*indeed
 doctors believe
 Who knows in truth*

46. For which with all my heart I thee beseech
 Unto thyself that all this thou forgive;
 And rise up now withouten morè speech,
 And let us cast how forth may best be drive
 This time, and eke how freshly we may live

think / spent

¹ 45: Medieval thinkers explained dreams in different ways. Clerical commentators acknowledged that dreams could be of divine origin, as with the Josephs of the Old and New Testaments, but warned that they could also be of diabolical origin. Physicians (*leeches*) held that dreams often came from the body's predominant "complexion" or "humor" of the moment, in this case melancholy; or that they came from eating or drinking too much or too little.

When that she comes, the which shall be right soon.
 God help me so, the best is thus to doon.

This is the best thing to do

47. "Now rise, my dearè brother Troilus!
 For certès it no honour is to thee
 To weep, and in thy bed to jouken thus,
 For truly of one thing trust to me,
 If thou thus lie a day or two or three,
 The folk will say that thou for cowardice
 Thee feignest sick, and that thou dar'st not rise."

to lie

48. "But whither is thy redde," quod Troilus,
 "That we may play us best in all this town?"
 "By God, my counsel is," quod Pandarus
 "To ride and play us with King Sarpedoun."
 So long of this they speaken up and down
 Till Troilus gan at the last assent
 To rise; and forth to Sarpedoun they went.

*advice
 find distraction*

49. This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
 Was e'er his life, and full of high largesse
 With all that might y-servèd be on table
 That dainty was, all cost it great richesse,
 He fed them day by day, that such noblesse --
 As saiden both the most and eke the least --
 Was ne'er ere that day wist at any feast.

*hospitality
 even if it cost
 generosity*

known

50. Nor in this world there is no instrument
 Delicious through wind or touch of chord,
 As far as any wight hath ever went,¹
 That tonguè tell or heartè may record
 But at that feast it was well heard accord;
 Nor of ladies eke so fair a company
 On dance ere then was never seen with eye.

any person ... thought

in harmony

51. These ladies eke that at this feastè be,

¹ *Went* might be the past participle of either *wenen*: think or *wenden*: go.

Since that he saw his lady was away,
 It was his sorrow on them for to see,
 Or for to hear on instruments so play;
 For she that of his heartè bore the key
 Was absent, lo! this was his fantasy,
 That no wight shouldè maken melody.¹

to look

52. The letters eke that she of oldè time
 Had him y-sent he would alonè read
 A hundred sithe atwixen noon and prime,²
 Refiguring her shape, her womanhood
 Within his heart, and every word or deed
 That passèd was; and thus he drove to an end
 The fourthè day, and said that he would wend;

100 times between

wished to leave

53. And saidè: "Levè brother, Pandarus!
 Intendest thou that we shall herè bleve
 Till Sarpedoun will forth congeyen us?
 Yet were it fairer that we took our leave;
 For God's love, let us now soon at eve
 Our leavè take, and homeward let us turn,
 For truly I will not thus sojourn."

Dear brother

stay

throw us out

54. Pandarus answered: "Be we comen hither
 To fetchen fire and runnen home again?
 God help me so I can not tellen whither
 We mighten go, if I shall soothly sayn,
 Where any wight is of us morè fain
 Than Sarpedoun; and if we hencè hie
 Thus suddenly, I hold it villainy,

more glad of us

hurry

bad manners

55. "Since that we saiden that we wouldè bleve
 With him a week, and now thus suddenly

stay

¹ 51.5-7: Since his beloved was absent, he had the idea that nobody should make music.

² 52.3: *Betwixt noon and prime* could be a kind of inversion meaning "between about 9 a.m. and noon", or it could be literally between noon one day and 9 a.m. the next day, hence most of any 24-hour day.

The fourthè day to take of him our leave!
 He wouldè wonder on it truly.
 Let us hold forth our purpose firmly,
 And since that you behighten him to bide
 Hold forward now, and after let us ride."

*promised to stay
 Keep your word now*

56. This Pandarus with allè pain and woe
 Made him to dwell; and at the weekè's end
 Of Sarpedoun they took their leavè tho,
 And on their way they speden them to wend.
 Quod Troilus: "Now, Lord, me gracè send
 That I may finden at my home-coming
 Criseyde come." And therewith gan he sing.

*made him stay
 prepared to leave*

57. "Yea, hazelwoodè!" thoughtè this Pandare,
 And to himself full soberly he said:
 "God wot, refreyden may this hot fare
 Ere Calchas send to Troilus Criseyde!"
 But natheless he japèd thus and played,
 And swore iwis his heart him well behight
 She wouldè come as soon as e'er she might.

*A likely tale!
 t. hot affair will cool
 joked
 indeed / told him*

58. When they unto the palace were y-come
 Of Troilus, they down off horse alight,
 And to the chamber their way then have they nome,
 And until time that it began to night
 They speaken of Criseyde the bright,
 And after this, when that them bothè lest,
 They speed them from the supper unto rest.

*taken
 to get dark
 "Cris-é-y-de": 4 syllables
 it pleased them both*

59. On morrow, as soon as day began to clear,
 This Troilus gan of his sleep t'abraid,
 And to Pandarus his own brother dear,
 "For love of God," full piteously he said,
 "As go we see the palace of Criseyde,
 "For since we yet may have no other feast,
 So let us see her palace at the least!"

*In the morning
 to wake*

60. And therewithal his meinie for to blind
 A cause he found into the town to go,
 And to Criseydè's palace they gan wend;
 But Lord! this silly Troilus was woe,
 Him thought his sorrowful heartè burst a-two
 For when he saw her doorès sparrèd all
 Well nigh for sorrow down he gan to fall.
- to deceive his household*

made their way

barred
61. Therewith when he was 'ware, and gan behold
 How shut was every window of the place,
 As frost him thought his heart began to cold,
 For which with changèd deadly palè face
 Withouten word he forth began to pace,
 And, as God would, he gan so fast to ride
 That no wight of his countenance espied.
- aware*

get cold
62. Then said he thus: "O palace desolate! ¹
 O house of houses whilom best y-hight!
 O palace empty and disconsolate!
 O thou lantern, of which quenched is the light!
 O palace whilom day, that now art night!
 Well oughtest thou to fall and I to die,
 Since she is went that wont was us to gie.
- once called the best*

that once was day

gone / used to guide
63. "O palace whilom crown of houses all!
 Enlumined with the sun of allè bliss,
 O ring from which the ruby is out fall!
 O cause of woe that cause hast been of liss!
 Yet since I may no bet, fain would I kiss
 Thy coldè doors, if I durst for this rout;²
 And farewell shrine of which the saint is out!"
- joy*
better

¹ 62-63: Troilus's address is known as a "paraclausithyron", a convention of classical love poetry where the desolate lover addresses the beloved's house, especially the door. It extends to other places that bring up memories of the beloved. See M. Bloomfield's article in *NM* 73 (1972), 15-24.

² 63.6: "If I dared in front of this crowd." No crowd has been mentioned. Perhaps it simply means "in public".

64. From thencè forth he rideth up and down,
 And every thing came him to rémembrance
 As he rode forth by places of the town
 In which he whilom had all his pleasáncé:
 "Lo! yonder saw I last my lady dance,
 And in that temple with her eyen clear
 Me caughtè first my rightè lady dear.¹

65. "And yonder have I heard full lustily
 My dearè heartè laugh, and yonder play
 Saw I her oncè eke full blissfully,
 And yonder oncè to me gan she say:
 `Now goodè sweetè, love me well, I pray,'
 And yon so goodly gan she me behold
 That to the death my heart is to her hold.

*sweet(heart)
 yon(der) so lovingly
 bound*

66. "And at the corner in the yonder house
 Heard I mine alderlevest lady dear
 So womanly with voice melodious
 Singen so well, so goodly and so clear,
 That in my soul methinketh yet I hear
 The blissful sound. And in that yonder place
 My lady first me took unto her grace."

dearest lady of all

her favor

67. Then thought he thus: "O blissful lord, Cupid,
 When I the process have in memory
 How thou me hast werreyed on every side,
 Men might a book make of it like a story.
 What need is thee to seek on me victory,
 Since I am thine and wholly at thy will?
 What joy hast thou thine ownè folk to spill?"

attacked

victory over me

destroy

68. "Well hast thou, lord, y-wroke on me thine ire,
 Thou mighty God, and dreadful for to grieve,
 Now mercy, lord, thou wost well I desire

*wreaked your anger
 offend
 knowest well*

¹ 64.6-7: "My very dear lady first caught me with her bright eyes."

Thy gracè most of allè lustès leve.¹
 And live and die I will in thy belief;
 For which I n'axe in guerdon but a boon,
 That thou me send again Criseyde soon."

*ask in return only one favor
 send C. to me*

69. And after this he to the gatès went
 There as Criseyde out rode a full good pace,
 And up and down there made he many a went,
 And to himself full oft he said: "Alas!
 From hencè rode my bliss and my solace;
 As wouldè blissful God now for his joy
 I might her see again come into Troy!

(city) gates

a turn

I wish to God

70. "And to the yonder hill I gan her guide,
 Alas! and there I took of her my leave,
 And yond I saw her to her father ride,
 For sorrow of which my heartè shall to-cleave,
 And hither home I came when it was eve,
 And here I dwell, out cast from every joy,
 And shall, till I may see her eft in Troy."

escorted her

*yonder
 split apart*

again

71. Another time imaginen he would
 That every wight that wentè by the way
 Had of him ruth, and that they sayen should:
 "I am right sorry Troilus will die;"
 And thus he drove a day yet forth or tway,
 As you have heard; such life right gan he lead
 As he that stood betwixen hope and dread;

every person

Had pity

day or two

72. For which he likèd in his songs to show
 Th' encheason of his woe as he best might,
 And made a song of wordès but a few,
 Somewhat his woeful heartè for to light,
 And when he was from every mannè's sight,
 With softè voice he of his lady dear,

The reason

lighten

¹ 68.3-4: *thou wost ... leve*: "You know well that of all my deepest desires (*lustès leve*) I want thy favor most."

That absent was, gan sing as you may hear:

Canticus Troili II¹

73. "O star! of which I lost have all the light,
With heartè sore well ought I to bewail
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Toward my death with wind in steer I sail,
For which the tenthè night, if that I fail
The guiding to thy beamès bright an hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour." ²

wind astern

*by an hour
(whirlpool)*

74. This song when he thus sungen haddè, soon
He fell again into his sighès old,
And every night, as was his wont to do,
He stood the brightè moon for to behold,
And all his sorrow to the moon he told,
And said: "Iwis, when thou art hornèd new ³
I shall be glad, if all the world be true.

In truth

75. "I saw thine hornès old eke by that morrow
When hencè rode my rightè lady dear,
That cause is of my torment and my sorrow,
For which, O brightè Lucina the clear !
For love of God run fast about thy sphere,
For when thine hornès new begin to spring,
Then shall she come that may my blissè bring."

*before that morning
my v. dear lady*

O moon bright

76. Upon the wallès fast eke would he walk,
And on the Greekès' host eke would he see,
And to himself right thus then would he talk:

look

¹ "Song of Troilus": For Troilus's earlier songwriting see Bk. I, 37 ff

² 73.7: Charybdis was the name of a monster and her whirlpool that Odysseus's ship had to avoid in order to survive.

³ 74.6: "In truth, when there is a new moon". The crescent moon, waxing or waning, is thought of as having horns. See also two references in the next stanza.

"Lo! yonder is mine ownè lady free." *gracious lady*
 Or elsè: "Yonder there the tentès be, *tents*
 And thencè comes this air that is so soot, *sweet*
 That in my soul I feel it does me boote. *good*

77. "And hardily this wind that more and more *surely*
 Thus stoundèmeal increaseth in my face *hour by hour*
 Is of my lady's deepè sighès sore;
 I prove it thus: for in no other space
 Of all this town, save only in this place,
 Feel I no wind that soundeth so like pain.
 It says: `Alas! why twinnèd be we twain?' " *separated are we two*

78. This longè time he driveth forth right thus,
 Till fully passèd was the ninthè night,
 And ay beside him was this Pandarus, *And always*
 That busily did all his fullè might
 Him to comfòrt and make his heartè light,
 Giving him hope always the tenthè morrow *day*
 That she shall come and stinten all his sorrow. *stop*

79. Upon that other side eke was Criseyde
 With women few among the Greekes strong,
 For which full oft a-day "Alas!" she said,
 "That I was born! Well may mine heartè long *`long' is a verb*
 After my death, for now live I too long; *For death*
 Alas! and I ne may it not amend,
 For now is worse than ever yet I wend. *I thought (it would be)*

80. "My father n'ill for nothing do me grace *won't allow me*
 To go again for aught I can him queme, *do to please him*
 And if so be that I my termè pace *miss the agreed day*
 My Troilus shall in his heartè deem *think*
 That I am false, and so it may well seem;
 Thus shall I have unthank on every side. *blame*
 That I was born so welaway the tide! *alas the hour!*

81. "And if that I me put in jeopardy *me = myself*

To steal away by night, and it befall
 That I be caught, I shall be held a spy,
 Or elsè, lo! this dread I most of all,
 If in the handès of some wretch I fall
 I n'am but lost, al' be mine heartè true.
 Now mighty God thou on my sorrow rue!"

some ruffian
I'm as good as lost, although
take pity

82. Full pale y-waxen was her brightè face,
 Her limbs lean, as she that all the day
 Stood when she durst, and lookèd on the place
 Where she was born, and where she dwelled had ay;
 And all the night weeping, alas! she lay.
 And thus despairèd out of allè cure,
 She led her life, this woeful creäture.

had become v. pale

dared
always

83. Full ruefully she lookèd upon Troy,
 Beheld the towers high and eke the halls;
 "Alas!" quod she, "the pleasance and the joy,
 The which that now all turnèd into gall's,
 Have I had often within yonder walls!¹
 O Troilus! what dost thou now?" she said;
 "Lord, whether thou yet think upon Criseyde?"

into bitterness

do you think?

84. "Alas! I ne had trowèd on your lore,
 And went with you, as you me redde ere this,
 Then had I now not sighèd half so sore:
 Who might have said that I had done amiss
 To steal away with such one as he is?
 But all too late cometh the letuary
 When men the corpse unto the gravè carry.

trusted your judgement
advised

medicine

85. "Too late is now to speak of this mattér.
 Prudence, alas, one of thine eyen three

3 eyes

¹ 83.2-5: The original rhyming forms are: *hallès / gall is / wallès*.

Me lackèd always ere that I came here;¹
 On time y-passéd, well remembered me;
 And present time eke could I well y-see;
 But future time, ere I was in the snare,
 Could I not see. That causeth all my care.

I could r. the past

before / trap

86. "But natheless, betide what may betide,
 I shall to-morrow at night, by east or west,
 Out of this host steal on some manner side,
 And go with Troilus where as him lest;
 This purpose will I hold, and this is best;
 No force of wicked tonguès' janglery,
 For e'er on love have wretches had envy:²

happen what may

*at some point
 where he pleases*

No matter about

87. "For which, withouten any wordes mo'
 To Troy I will, as for conclusion."
 But God it wot, ere fully monthès two
 She was full far from that intention,
 For bothè Troilus and Troyè town
 Shall knotèless throughout her heartè slide,³
 For she will take a purpose to abide.

will (go)

G. knows, before

smoothly

88. This Diomede of whom you tell I 'gan,
 Goes now within himself ay arguing,
 With all the sleight and all that e'er he can,
 How he may best with shortest tarrying
 Into his net Criseydè's heartè bring;
 To this intent he couldè never fine;
 To fishen her he laid out hook and line.

began

constantly

cunning

with least delay

never give up

89. But natheless well in his heartè he thought
 That she was not without a love in Troy,

lover

¹ 85.2-3: Prudence has an eye on the future as well as the past and present. Criseyde has always lacked the ability to look at the future, she says.

² 86.7: "For wretched people have always shown envy of lovers."

³ 87.6: *knotless*: like a thread that has no knot, and so slips out of a needle.

For never sithen he her thencè brought,
 Ne could he see her laugh or maken joy;
 He n'ist how best her heart for to accoy;
 "But for t' essay," he said, "naught it ne grieveth.¹
 "For he that naught assayeth, naught achieveth."

since
didn't know / to comfort
nothing venture, n. gain

90. Yet said he to himself upon a night:
 "Now, am I not a fool, that wot well how
 Her woe for love is of another wight,
 And hereupon to go essay her now?
 I may well wit it will not be my prow,²
 For wisè folk in bookès it express:
 `Men shall not woo a wight in heaviness.'

knows
for another man
try her
my good, advantage
a person in grief

91. "But whoso mightè winnen such a flower
 From him for whom she mourneth night and day,
 He might well say he were a conqueror";
 And right anon, as he that bold was ay,
 Thought in his heart: "Happen what happen may,
 Al' should I die, I will her heartè seek,
 I shall no morè losen but my speech."

always
Whatever happens
Even if

92. This Diomede, as bookès us declare,
 Was in his needès prest and courageous,
 With sternè voice, and mighty limbs square,
 Hardy and testive, strong and chivalrous
 Of deedès like his father Tydeus;
 And some men say he was of tonguè large,
 And heir he was of Calydon and Arge.

ready
brave & headstrong
was eloquent

93. Criseydè meanè was of her statúre.
 Thereto so shaped of face, and eke of cheer,
 There mighten be no fairer creäture;
 And often timès this was her mannér

of average height
manner

¹ 89.6-7: "It doesn't hurt to try (*to essay*); he who attempts nothing achieves nothing."

² 90.5: "I have good reason to think that it will not do me any good."

To go y-tressèd with her hairès clear
 Down by her collar, at her back behind,
 Which, with a thread of goldè, she would bind.

94. And, save her browès joinèden ifere,¹
 There was no lack in aught I can espy;
 But for to speaken of her eyen clear,
 Lo! truly, they written that her saw,
 That paradise stood formèd in her eye,
 And with her richè beauty evermore
 Strove love in her ay which of them was more.

together

always / greater

95. She sober was, simple, and wise withal,
 The best y-nourishèd eke that might be,
 And goodly of her speech in general,
 Charitable, stately, lusty, free,²
 Ne nevermore ne lackèd her pity,
 Tender-heartèd, sliding of couráge;
 But truly, I cannot tell her age.

*was serious / also
 well bred, well mannered*

96. But for to tellen forth of Diomede,
 It fell that after on the tenthè day
 Since that Criseyde out of the city yede,
 This Diomede, as fresh as branch in May,
 Came to the tentè there as Calchas lay,
 And feignèd him with Calchas have to doon,
 But what he meant I shall you tellen soon.

*it happened
 went*

pretended he has business

97. Criseyde, at shortè wordès for to tell,
 Welcomed him, and down him by her set,
 As he was ethe enough to maken dwell,³
 And after this, withouten longer let,

in short

*easy / stay
 delay*

¹ 94.1: "And, except that her eyebrows were joined together" -- presumably a feature considered less than perfect.

² 95.4: "Loving (?), dignified, cheerful, generous."

³ 97.3: "It was easy enough to get him to stay."

The spices and the wine men forth them fet,
 And forth they speak of this and that y-fere,
 As friendès do, of which some shall you hear.

*fetched
 together*

98. He gan first fallen of the war in speech
 Betwixen them and folk of Troyè town,
 And of the siege he gan eke her besech
 To tell him what was her opiniõn;
 From that demand he so descended down
 To asken her if that her strange thought
 The Greekès' guise and workès that they wrought,

talk about

*she thought it strange
 custom / did*

99. And why her father tarrieth so long
 To wedden her unto some worthy wight.
 Criseydè, that was in her painès strong
 For love of Troilus her ownè knight,
 So farforth as she cunning had or might,
 Answered him then, but as of his intent
 It seemèd that she wist not what he meant.

as best she could

knew

100. But natheless this ilkè Diomedè
 Gan in himself assure, and thus he said:
 "If I aright have taken on you heed,¹
 Me thinketh thus, O lady mine Criseyde,
 That, since I first hand on your bridle laid,
 When I came out of Troyè by the morrow,
 Ne might I never see you but in sorrow.

*same
 Grew confident*

101. "I can not say what may the causè be,
 But if for love of some Trojan it were,
 The which right sorè would a-thinken me,
 That you for any wight that dwelleth there
 Shoulden spill a quarter of a tear,
 Or piteously your selfen so beguile,
 For dreadèless it is not worth the while.

*Unless
 trouble me deeply
 person*

*deceive
 without doubt*

¹ 100.3: "If I have read you correctly."

102. "The folk of Troy, as who saith all and some,
 In prison be, as you your selfen see,
 From thencè shall not one alivè come
 For all the gold atwixen sun and sea;
 Trusteth well this, and understandeth me,
 There shall not one to mercy go alive,
 Al' were he lord of worldès twicè five.¹

as all agree

between

Even if

103. "Such wreak on them, for fetching of Elaine,
 There shall be take, ere that we hencè wend,
 That Manes, which that goddès be of pain,
 Shall be aghast that Greekes will them shend;
 And men shall dread unto the worldè's end
 From hencèforth to ravish any queen,
 So cruel shall our wreak on them be seen.

vengeance
before we go
gods of underworld
G. w. put them to shame

carry off
vengeance

104. "And, but if Calchas lead us with ambáges,
 That is to say, with double wordès sly,
 Such as men clepe a word with two viságes,
 You shall well knowen that I naught ne lie,
 And all this thing right see it with your eye,
 And that anon, you will not trow how soon;
 Now taketh heed, for it is for to doon.

unless / ambiguities

call / faces

shortly / believe
to be done

105. "What! weenen you that your wise father would
 Have given Antenor for you anon,
 If he ne wistè that the city should
 Destroyèd be? Why, nay, so may I gon.
 He knew full well there shall not 'scapen one
 That Trojan is, and for the greatè fear,
 He durst not that you dwellèd longer there.

I assure you
escape

dared not (allow)

106. "What will you more, O lovesome lady dear!
 Let Troy and Trojans from your heartè pace;

¹ 101-107: "Even if he were master of ten worlds." In this speech Diomedè makes at greater length and much more forcefully Troilus's point of IV, st. 136-7, but the effect that Diomedè's speech has on Criseyde is strikingly different.

Drive out the bitter hope, and make good cheer,
 And clepe again the beauty of your face *call back*
 That you with saltè tearès so deface,
 For Troy is brought in such a jeopardy
 That it to save is now no remedy.

107. "And thinketh well you shall in Greekès find
 A morè perfect love, ere it be night, *lover*
 Than any Trojan is, and morè kind,
 And bet to serven you will do his might; *better*
 And if that you vouchsafe, my lady bright, *if you allow (it)*
 I will be he to serven you myself,
 Yea, lever than be king of Greeces twelve." *rather*

108. And with that word he gan to waxen red, *to blush*
 And in his speech a little while he quoke, *shook*
 And cast aside a little with his head,
 And stint a while, and afterwards he woke, *paused / opened his eyes*
 And soberly on her he threw his look, *seriously*
 And said: "I am, al' be it you no joy,
 As gentle man as any wight in Troy. *although it is not*
As well born as any person

109. "For if my father, Tydeus," he said,
 Y-livèd had, then I had been ere this
 Of Calydon and Arge a king, Criseyde,
 And so I hope that I shall yet, y-wis
 But he was slain, alas! the more harm is,
 Unhappily at Thebès all too rathe,
 Polynices and many a man to scathe. ¹ *early*
to the harm of

110. "But heartè mine! since that I am your man,
 And be the first of whom I seekè grace *And (you) are (?)*
 To serven you as heartily as I can,
 And ever shall while I to live have space,
 So that, ere I depart out of this place,

¹ 109: Tydeus supported the cause of Polynices against his brother Eteocles for control of Thebes. His death was a blow (*scathe*) to Polynices and many another man.

You will me granten that I may to-morrow
At better leisure tell you of my sorrow."

111. How should I tell his wordes that he said?
He spoke enough for one day at the most;
It provèd well he spoke so that Criseyde
Granted on the morrow at his request
For to spoken with him at the least,
So that he would not speak of such mattér;
And thus she to him said, as you may hear,

Provided that

112. As she that had her heart on Troilus
So fast y-set that none might it arace,
And strangèly she spoke, and saidè thus:
"O Diomedè! I love that ilkè place
Where I was born, and Jovè, of thy grace
Deliver it soon of all that doth it care!
God, for thy might so leave it well to fare!

uproot

*all that troubles it
grant it do well*

113. "That Greekès would their wrath on Troyè wreak,
If that they might, I know it well iwis;
But it shall not befallen as you speak,
And God toforn! And further over this
I wot my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as you me told,
So dear I am the more unto him hold.

indeed

*If it please God
I know*

deeply beholden

114. "That Greekès be of high condition
I wot eke well, but certain, men shall find
As worthy folk withinnè Troyè town,
As cunning, and as perfect, and as kind,
As be betwixen Orcades and Inde;
And that you couldè well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thanks for to deserve.

rank

I know well also

Orkneys & India

I believe also

115. "But as to speak of love, iwis," she said,
"I had a lord to whom I wedded was,
The whose mine heart was all till that he died;

indeed

And other love, as help me now Pallas,
 There in my heartè n'is ne never was;
 And that you be of noble and high kindred
 I have well heard it tellen, out of dread.

*Athene
 isn't & never was
 without doubt*

116. "And that doth me to have so great a wonder
 That you will scornen any woman so;
 Eke, God wot, love and I be far asunder;
 I am disposèd bet, so may I go,
 Unto my death to 'plain and maken woe:¹
 What I shall after do I cannot say,
 But truly, as yet me list not play.

*And, God knows
 more disposed, I declare
 I don't want to flirt*

117. "My heart is now in tribulation,
 And you in armès busy day by day;
 Hereafter, when you wonnen have the town,
 Paraunter then so it happen may
 That when I see what never yet I saw,
 Then will I workè what I never wrought;
 This word to you enough sufficen ought.

*Perhaps
 did*

118. "To-morrow eke will I speaken with you fain,
 So that you touchen naught of this mattér,
 And when you list you may come here again;
 And ere you go, thus much I say you here,
 As help me Pallas with her hairès clear,
 If that I should of any Greek have ruth,
 It shouldè be your selfen by my truth.

*gladly
 Provided that
 you please
 pity*

119. "I say not therefore that I will you love,
 Ne say not nay, but, in conclusion,
 I meanè well, by God that sits above."
 And therewithal she cast her eyen down,
 And gan to sigh, and said: "O Troyè town!
 Yet bid I God in quiet and in rest
 I may thee see, or do my heartè burst."

*eyes
 pray I
 make my h. burst*

¹ 116.4-5: "I am more disposed, I promise you, to complain and lament until my dying day."

120. But in effect, and shortly for to say,
 This Diomedé all freshly new again
 Gan pressen on, and fast her mercy pray;
 And after this--the soothè for to say--
 Her glove he took, of which he was full fain,
 And, finally, when it was waxen eve,
 And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

begged her favor
truth
very glad
evening came

121. Returning in her soul ay up and down
 The wordes of this sudden Diomedé,
 His great estate, and peril of the town,
 And that she was alone, and haddè need
 Of friendè's help, and thus began to breed
 The causes why--the soothè for to tell--
 That she took fully purpose for to dwell.

Turning / constantly

His high rank

truth
decision to remain

122. The morrow came, and ghostly for to speak,¹
 This Diomedé is come unto Criseyde;
 And, shortly, lest that ye my talè break,
 So well he for himselfen spoke and said,
 That all her sorè sighs adown he laid;
 And, finally, the soothè for to sayn,
 He reft her of the greatest of her pain.

truly

laid (to rest)

relieved her

123. And after this the story telleth us
 That she unto him gave the fair bay steed
 The which he once had won of Troilus,²
 And eke a brooch (and that was little need)
 That Troilus' was, she gave this Diomedé,³

¹ 122.1: *ghostly for to speak*: Different editors and glossators explain this phrase with differences in detail but agreeing that it seems to mean "to tell the truth".

² 123.3: According to Benoit, Diomedé had captured a horse from Troilus in battle, had presented it to Briseyda / Criseyde, and had asked for it back when he in turn lost his own horse.

³ 123.5: The brooch is, presumably, the one mentioned below (V, St. 190) where we are told that Troilus had given it to her on the morning she left Troy. Earlier, there is mention of a brooch which Criseyde gave to Troilus on their last night together. (III, , st. 136 .

And eke the bet from sorrow him to relieve,
She made him wear a pencil of her sleeve.

*the better
a pennant (made) from*

124. I find eke in the stories elsèwhere,
When through the body hurt was Diomedè
Of Troilus, then wept she many a tear
When that she saw his widè woundès bleed,
And that she took to keepen him good heed,
And for to heal him of his woundès smart,
Men say -- I n'ot -- that she gave him her heart.

Of = By

to nurse

I don't know

125. But truly the story telleth us
There madè never woman morè woe
Than she when that she falsèd Troilus;
She said: "Alas ! for now is clean y-go
My name in truth of love for evermo',
For I have falsèd one the gentilest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

completely gone

126. "Alas! of me unto the worldè's end
Shall neither be y-written nor y-sung
No goodè word, for these books will me shend;
O rollèd shall I be on many a tongue;
Throughout the worldè shall my bell be rung,¹
And women most will haten me of all;
Alas, that such a case me should befall!

attack

127. "They will say, inasmuch as in me is,
I have them done dishonour, welaway!
Al' be I not the first that did amiss,
What helpeth that to do my blame away?
But since I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,

alas!

Although

repent

¹ 126.1: The meaning of the line seems clear enough, even if it is hard to translate into modern English. The ringing of the bell may signify a number of negative things: the knell for one who has died or the bell rung to excommunicate by "bell, book and candle", or, stretching a little more, even the outcast leper's bell, which figures so strongly in Henryson's sequel.

To Diomedes algate I will be true.

at least

128. "But Troilus, since I no better may,
And since that thus departen you and I,
Yet pray I God so give you right good day,
As for the gentilestè -- truly --
That e'er I saw to serven faithfully,
And best can ay his lady's honour keep,"
(And with that word she burst anon to weep).

you & I separate

always

129. "And certès you ne haten shall I never,¹
And friendè's love that shall you have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever;
And, truly, I would right sorry be
For to see you in adversity;
And guiltèless I wot well I you leave,²
And all shall pass, and thus I take my leave."

certainly

if I should

I know

130. But truly how long it was between
That she forsook him for this Diomedes,
There is no author telleth it I ween,
Take every man now to his bookès heed,
He shall no termè finden, out of dread,
For though that he began to woo her soon,
Ere he her won yet was there more to doon.

I think

*time period
he = Diomedes
to be done*

131. Ne me not list this silly woman chide,
Farther than that the story will devise;
Her name, alas! is published so wide,
That for her guilt it ought enough suffice;
And if I might excuse her in some wise,
For she so sorry was for her untruth,
Iwis, I would excuse her yet for ruth.

I don't want to rebuke

*her unfaithfulness
Indeed / pity*

¹ 129.1: "And certainly I shall never hate you."

² 129.6: Presumably *guiltless* applies to Troilus, though its placing makes that uncertain.

132. This Troilus, as I before have told,
 Thus driveth forth as well as he hath might, *manages*
 But often was his heartè hot and cold,
 And namely that ilkè ninthè night *that very*
 Which on the morrow she had him beight *promised*
 To come again; God wot full little rest *God knows*
 Had he that night; nothing to sleep him lest. *cared*

133. The laurel-crownèd Phoebus with his heat *God of sun*
 Gan in his course, ay upward as he went, *ever higher*
 To warm of the east sea the wavès wet,
 And Nisus' daughter sung with fresh intent,¹
 When Troilus his Pandare after sent, *sent for*
 And on the wallès of the town they played, *passed the time*
 To look if they can see aught of Criseyde.

134. Till it was noon they stooden for to see
 Who that there came; and every manner wight *every person*
 That came from far they saiden it was she,
 Till that they couldè knowen him aright:²
 Now was his heartè dull, now was it light;
 And thus bejapéd, stooden for to stare *deluded*
 Aboutè naught, this Troilus and Pandare. *for nothing*

135. To Pandarus this Troilus then said:
 "For aught I wot before noon sikerly *I know / certainly*
 Into this town ne cometh not Criseyde,
 She hath enough to do hardily
 To twinnen from her father, so trow I; *to escape / I guess*
 Her oldè father will yet make her dine *eat midday meal*
 Ere that she go; God give his heartè pine!" *misery*

¹ 133.4: The allusion is apt: the daughter of Nisus looking down from the walls of her father's fortress, fell in love with the enemy Minos, and betrayed the city to him. She was turned into the bird here mentioned. A version of the story is in Chaucer's **Legend of Good Women**, 1894 ff.

² 134: They think that everyone they see moving is Criseyde until they can see the person more closely. Troilus's spirits go up and down with every hope and disappointment.

136. Pandare answered: "It may well be, certáin,
 And forthy let us dine, I thee beseech,
 And after noon then may'st thou come again."
 And home they go withouten morè speech,
 And came again; but longè may they seek
 Ere that they finden what they after gape;
 Fortune them both y-thinketh for to jape.

And therefore

intends to make fools of

137. Quod Troilus: "I see well now that she
 Is tarried with her oldè father so
 That ere she come it will nigh even be.
 Come forth, I will unto the gatè go;
 These porters be uncunning evermo',
 And I will do them holden up the gate
 As naught ne were, although that she come late."¹

evening

*gatekeepers are stupid
 make them keep open*

138. The day goes fast, and after that came eve,
 And yet came not to Troilus Criseyde.
 He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,
 And far his head over the wall he laid,
 And at the last he turned him, and said:
 "By God I wot her meaning now, Pandare;
 Almost iwis all newè was my care."²

grove

I know

139. "Now doubtèless this lady can her good;
 I wot she means to riden privily;
 I commend her wisdom, by my hood;
 She will not maken people nicèly
 Gaure on her when she comes, but softèly
 By night into the town she thinketh ride;
 And, dear brother! think not long t'abide.

*knows what is right
 I realize / incognito*

*foolishly
 Gape
 intends to
 to wait*

140. "We have naught elsè for to do iwis;

indeed

¹ 137.7: *As naught ne were*: A difficult phrase which may mean "as if there were no reason not to keep it open," or "as if there were no war on." Neither seems altogether satisfactory.

² 138.7: "Indeed my worries almost came back."

And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen me,
 Have here my truth, I see her! Yond she is!
 Heave up thine eyen man. May'st thou not see?"
 Pandarus answered: "Nay, so may I thee;
 All wrong by God: what say'st thou man, where art?
 What I see yond afar is but a cart."

believe me

*No, as I live!
 art (thou)*

141. "Alas ! thou sayst right sooth," quod Troilus,
 "But hardily it is not all for naught
 That in mine heart I now rejoicè thus;
 It is against some good, I have a thought,
 Wot I not how, but since that I was wrought
 Ne felt I such a comfort dare I say.
 She comes to-night, my life that durst I lay."

surely

*It's a good sign, I think
 was born*

I dare bet

142. Pandarus answered: "It may be, well enough."
 And held with him of all that e'er he said,
 But in his heart he thought, and soft he laughed,
 And to himself full soberly he said:
 "From hazelwood, where Jolly Robin played
 Shall come all that that thou abidest here;
 Yea, farewell all the snow of fernè year."

And agreed

*From never-never land
 all you wait for
 yesteryear*

143. The warden of the gates began to call
 The folk which that without the gatès were,
 And bade them driven in their beastès all,
 Or all the night they must bileven there;
 And far within the night, with many a tear,
 This Troilus gan homeward for to ride,
 For well he sees it helpeth not t' abide.

stay

And late in

to wait

144. But natheless he gladded him in this:
 He thought he mis-accounted had his day,
 And said: "I understood have all amiss,
 For thilkè night I last Criseyde saw
 She said: `I shall be here, if that I may,
 Ere that the moon, O my dear heartè sweet,

*took comfort
 miscalculated*

The Lion pass out of this Ariete,¹

145. "For which she may yet hold all her behest."
 And on the morrow to the gate he went,
 And up and down, by east and eke by west,
 Upon the wallès made he many a went;
 But all for naught; his hope always him blent,
 For which at night in sorrow and sighs sore
 He went him home withouten any more.

keep her promise

*a turn
 blinded*

146. His hope all clean out of his heartè fled,
 He n'as whereon now longer for to hang,
 But for the pain him thought his heartè bled,
 So were his throès sharp and wonder strong;
 For when he saw that she abode so long
 He wist not what he judgen of it might,
 Since she hath broken what she him behight.

has nothing

*his pangs
 stayed
 he didn't know
 promised*

147. The third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixthè day
 After those dayès ten of which I told,
 Betwixen hope and dread his heartè lay,
 Yet somewhat trusting on her hestès old;
 But when he saw she would her term not hold,²
 He can now see no other remedy
 But for to shape him soonè for to die.

promises

prepare himself

148. He so defet was that no manner man
 Unnethès might him knowen where he went,
 So was he lean and thereto pale and wan,
 And feeble, that he walkèd by potent,
 And with his ire he thus himselfen shent;
 But whoso askèd him whereof him smart,
 He said his harm was all about his heart.

*disfigured
 Scarcely
 and also
 with help
 disappointment / tortured
 what ailed him*

¹ 144.6-7: "Before the moon, leaving Aries, passes into Leo." These were in fact her words in IV, st 152. He thinks he might have miscalculated by a day.

² 147.5: "But when he saw she was not going to keep her promise."

149. Priam full oft,¹ and eke his mother dear,
 His brethren and his sisters, gan him frayn *ask*
 Why he so woeful was in all his cheer, *behavior*
 And what thing was the cause of all his pain.
 But all for naught; he n'ould his cause explain,
 But said he felt a grievous malady
 About his heart, and fainè would he die. *would gladly*
150. So, on a day he laid him down to sleep, *one day*
 And so befell it that in sleep him thought
 That in a forest fast he walked to weep
 For love of her that him those painès wrought, *caused*
 And up and down as he that forest sought,
 He mett he saw a boar with tuskès great *He dreamed*
 That slept against the brightè sunnè's heat; *slept in*
151. And by this boar, fast in her armès fold,
 Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde, *constantly*
 For sorrow of which, when he it gan behold,
 And for despite, out of his sleep he braid, *rage / he woke*
 And loud he cried on Pandarus, and said:
 "O Pandarus! now know I crop and root;
 I n'am but dead; there is no other boote. *top to bottom*
as good as dead / cure
152. "My lady bright, Criseyde, has me betrayed,
 In whom I trusted most of any wight; *person*
 She elsèwhere hath now her heart apaid; *set*
 The blissful goddès thorough their greatè might
 Have in my dream y-showèd it full right:
 Thus in my dream Criseyde have I behold;"
 And all this thing to Pandarus he told.
153. "O my Criseyde! alas! what subtlety,
 What newè lust, what beauty, what science, *trickery*
 What wrath, of justè cause, have you to me? *knowledge*
 What guilt of me, what fell experience, *just anger*
bad

¹ 149.1: Priam, king of Troy, was Troilus's father.

Hath from me reft, alas! thine advertence?¹
 O trust! O faith! O deep assurance!
 Who hath me reft Criseyde, all my pleasance?

robbed / love

154. "Alas! why let I you from hence go?
 For which well nigh out of my wit I braid;
 Who shall now trow on any oaths mo"?
 God wot I weened, O lady bright Criseyde,
 That every word was gospel that you said:
 But who may bet beguile, if that him list,
 Than he on whom men weenen best to trist?"²

*went
 trust any oaths more
 God knows I thought*

*better / he chooses
 think most trustworthy*

155. Pandarus answered and said: "Alas the while
 That I was born! Have I not said ere this
 That dreams may many a manner man beguile?
 And why? For folk expounden them amiss.
 How dar'st thou say that false thy lady is
 For any dream, right for thine own dread?
 Let be this thought, thou cans't no dreames read."

156. "How mighte I then do," quod Troilus,
 "To know of this, yea, were it ne'er so lite?"³
 "Now says't thou wisely," quod this Pandarus.
 "My redde is this, since thou cans't well endite,
 That hastily a letter thou her write,
 Through which thou shalt well bringen it about
 To know a sooth of what thou art in doubt."

little

advice / write

the truth

157. Accorded be to this conclusion

Agreed

¹ 153: The syntax of this stanza is a little confusing. The first two lines "O my Criseyde ... science" and line 4 go with line 5 thus: "O my Criseyde! Alas! what subtlety / What new lust, what beauty, what knowledge (*science*) / ... What guilt of mine, what bad experience, / Has robbed (*reft*) me alas! of thy loving attention (*advertence*)?" Line 3 interrupts the normal order; it means "What real cause have you to be angry with me?"

² 154.6-7: "Who can better betray people, if he wants, than the one whom people think most trustworthy?"

³ 156.1-2: "What can I do, then, to find out even a little about this?"

(And that anon) these ilk lordès two,
 And hastily sits Troilus adown
 And rolleth in his heartè to and fro
 How he may best describen her his woe,
 And to Criseydè, his owne lady dear,
 He wrote right thus and said as you may hear.

promptly / same 2

TROILUS'S LETTER

158. "Right freshè flower, whose I have been and shall
 Withouten part of elsèwhere service,¹
 With heart and body, life, lust, thought, and all,
 I woeful wight, in every humble wise
 That tongue can tell or heartè may devise,
 As oft as matter occupieth place,
 Me recommend unto your noble grace.

*i.e. eternally
 (I) recommend myself*

159. "If any servant dares or ought of right
 Upon his lady piteously complain,
 Then ween I that I ought to be that wight,
 Considered this, that you these monthès twain
 Have tarried where you saidè, sooth to sayn,
 But ten days that you would in host sojourn.
 But in two monthès yet you not return.

*can rightly
 I think / that man
 Considering / two
 stay among the enemy
 you have not r.*

160. "But for as much as me must needès like
 All that you list,² I dare not 'plain no more,
 But humbly, with sorrowful sighès sick,
 You write I mine unresty sorrows sore,
 From day to day desiring evermore
 To knowen fully, if your will it were,

(To) you I write / restless

¹ 158.2: "Without serving any other lady."

² 160.1-2: "But because I am obliged to be pleased by (*me must needs like*) all that you like (*list*)..."

How you have fared and done while you be there.

161. "Mine eyen two, in vain with which I see,
 Of sorrowful tearès salt are waxen wells; *have become*
 My song in 'plaint of mine adversity,
 My good in harm, mine ease eke waxen hell's, *in(to) / has become a hell*
 My joy in woe, I can say now naught else; *in(to)*
 But turned is (for which my life I wary) *I curse*
 Every joy or ease in his contráry. ¹ *in = into*

162. "And if so be my guilt has death deserved,
 Or if you list no more upon me see, *if you wish*
 In guerdon yet of that I have you served *In return*
 Beseech I you, mine ownè lady free, *noble*
 That hereupon you wouldè write to me
 For love of God, my rightè lodè-star, *guiding star*
 That death may make an end of all my war.

163. "If other cause aught doth you for to dwell,
 That with your letter you me recomfort,²
 For though to me your absence is a hell,
 With patience I will my woe comport, *endure*
 And with your letter of hope I will disport: *take comfort*
 Now writeth, sweet! and let me thus not 'plain;
 With hope or death deliver me from pain.

164. "I say no more, al have I for to say *although*
 To you well morè than I tellen may;
 But whether that you do me live or die, *you make me*
 Yet pray I God as give you right good day.
 And fareth well, O goodly fair fresh May! ³

¹ 161.4-7: "My good (is turned) into harm, my ease into hell.....Every joy and ease is turned into its opposite--for which I curse my life." The original rhyme words for lines 2, 4, 5 are: *welles, helle is, ellis*

² 163.1-2: "If any other reason makes you stay, assure me in your letter."

³ 164.5: *may*: perhaps here means "maiden", hardly appropriate in any strict sense for a widow who has also been Troilus's lover for three years. It may mean just "young woman" or possibly the month of May, a

As you that life or death me may command,
 And to your truth ay I me recommend.
 le vostre T."

*I always
 Yours, Troilus*

165. This letter forth was sent unto Criseyde,
 Of which her answer in effect was this:
 Full piteously she wrote again, and said
 That all so soon as that she might iwis
 She wouldé come, and mend what was amiss;
 And, finally, she wrote and said him then
 She wouldé come, yes, but she n'isté when.

indeed

knew not

166. But in her letter maden she such feast
 That wonder was, and swore she loved him best,
 Of which he found but bottomless behests.
 But, Troilus, thou may'st now east and west
 Pipe in an ivy leaf if that thee lest:
 Thus goes the world. God shield us from mischance,
 And every wight that meaneth truth advance! ¹

protestations

empty promises

whistle in the wind

167. Inceasen gan the woe from day to night
 Of Troilus for tarrying of Criseyde,
 And lessen gan his hope and eke his might,
 For which all down he in his bed him laid;
 He n'ate, nor drank, nor slept, nor word he said,
 Imagining ay that she was unkind,
 For which well nigh he waxed out of his mind.

*Thinking always / unfaithful
 nearly went mad*

168. This dream, of which I told have eke befor,
 May never come out of his rémembrance;
 He thought ay well he had his lady lorn,
 And that Jove of his highé purveyance
 Him showéd had in sleep the significance
 Of her untruth and his disáventure,

*had indeed lost his l.
 providence*

bad fortune

metaphor for her youthful freshness.

¹ 166.7 "And every person who wishes to advance the truth."

And that the boar was shown him in figure;

as metaphor

169. For which he for his sister Sibyl sent,
That calléd was Cassandra all about,
And all his dream he told her ere he stent,
And her besought assoilen him the doubt
Of the strong boar with tuskès stout;
And, finally, within a little stound
Cassandra gan him thus his dream expound.

S = the prophetess

*finished
asked her to resolve*

time

170. "This ilkè boar betokens Diomedé,
Tydeus' son, that down descended is
From Meleager, that made the boar to bleed,
And thy lady, where so she be iwis,
This Diomedé her heart has and she his.
Weep if thou wilt, or leave, for out of doubt,
This Diomedé is in and thou art out."

wherever / indeed

171. "Thou sayst not sooth," quod he, "thou sorceress,
With all thy falsè ghost of prophesy!
Thou weenest been a great divineress;
Now see'st thou not this fool of fantasy
Paineth her on ladies for to lie? ¹
Away!" quod he, "there Jové give thee sorrow!
Thou shalt be false, paraunter, yet to-morrow. ²

truth

spirit

You think you're

fanciful fool

exerts herself

may Jove

172. Cassandra goes; and he with cruel heart
Forgot his woe for anger of her speech,
And from his bed all suddenly he start,
As though all whole him had y-made a leech ³
And day by day he gan enquire and seek
A sooth of this with all his fullè cure;

physician

The truth / attention

¹ 171.4-5: Troilus turns from Cassandra to rebuke himself for even consulting her, and then returns to accuse her of lying about ladies. *thou* in line 4 refers to Troilus himself while *thou* in .3 referred to Cassandra.

² 171.7: "You'll be (proved) wrong by the outcome tomorrow."

³ 172.4: "As if a physician (*leech*) had cured him."

And thus he driveth forth his aventure.¹

173. Fortune, which that permutation
Of thingès hath (as it is her committed
Through purveyance and disposition
Of highè Jove,² as regnes shall ben flitted
From folk to folk, or when they shall be smitted),
'Gan pull away the feathers bright of Troy
From day to day, till they be bare of joy.

change
providence & appointment
kingdoms ... moved
stricken

174. Among all this, the fine of the parodie³
Of Hector gan approachen wonder blive;
The Fatè would his soulè should ún-body,
And shapen had a means it out to drive;
Against which Fate him helpeth not to strive;
But on a day to fighten gan he wend,
At which, alas! he caught his lifè's end.

end of life span
very quickly
leave his body
And had planned
he went

175. For which methinketh every manner wight
That haunteth armès oughtè to bewail
The death of him that was so noble a knight.
For as he drew a king by th'aventail,
Unware of this, Achilles through the mail
And through the body gan him for to rive;
And thus this worthy knight was brought of live.

who honors chivalry
neck armor
did pierce
from life

176. For whom, as olden bookès tellen us,
Was made such woe, that tongue it may not tell;
And namèly the sorrow of Troilus,

especially

¹ 172.7: Either "he endures (ME *drieth*) his fate" or "he pursues (ME *driveth*) his business." The same line occurs at the end of Book I.

² 173.1-5: Jove (Jupiter) has given to Fortune, under Providence, control over worldly change such as the transfer of kingdoms (*regnes*) from one people to another, or their destruction. The subject of 'gan (.6) is *Fortune* (.1) which was earlier portrayed as spinning a wheel but is here seen as plucking off the victim's feathers.

³ 174.1: *parodie* is the French "periode", in this case the period or extent appointed by Fortune or one of the Fates for someone's life, here that of Hector, the major Trojan hero.

That next him was of worthiness the well.
 And in this woe gan Troilus to dwell,
 That, what for sorrow and love and for unrest,
 Full oft a day he bade his heartè brest.

the source

burst

177. But natheless though he gan him despair
 And dread ay that his lady was untrue.
 Yet ay on her his heartè gan repair,
 And, as these lovers do, he sought ay new
 To get again Criseyde bright of hue,
 And in his heart he went her éxcusing,
 That Calchas causèd all her tarrying.

always

return

again & again

178. And often times he was in purpose great
 Him selfen like a pilgrim to disguise
 To see her; but he may not counterfeit
 To be unknown of folkè that were wise,
 Nor find excuse aright that may suffice,
 If he among the Greekès knowen were,¹
 For which he wept full often many a tear.

179. To her he wrote yet often times all new
 Full piteously, (he left it not for sloth),
 Beseeching her, that since that he was true,
 That she would come again and hold her troth:
 For which Criseyde upon a day for ruth,
 (I take it so) touching all this mattér
 Wrote him again, and said as you may hear:

keep her promise

pity

Criseyde's Letter

180. "Cupid's son, example of goodlihead,
 O sword of knighthood, source of gentleness!
 How might a wight in torment and in dread

a person

¹ 178.3-6: He could not disguise himself well enough to deceive perceptive people, or think up a good enough story if he were to be caught in disguise among the Greeks.

And heal-less, as send you yet gladness?
 I heartless, I sick, I in distress
 Since you with me nor I with you may deal,
 You neither may I send nor heart nor heal.¹

unhealthy or unhealed
disheartened
meet

181. "Your letters full, the paper all y-plainted
 Conceivèd hath my heartè's pietee;
 I have eke seen with tearès all depainted
 Your letter, and how you requiren me
 To come again, which yet ne may not be,
 But why, lest that this letter founden were,
 No mention ne make I now for fear."²

complaining
Has stirred my h's pity

182. "Grievous to me, God wot, is your unrest,
 Your haste, and that the goddès' ordinance
 It seemeth not you take it for the best,
 Nor other thing is in your rémembrance,
 As thinketh me, but only your pleasance;
 But be not wroth, and that I you beseech,
 For that I tarry is all for wicked speech.

God knows
decision

183. "For I have heard well moré than I wend
 Touching us two, how thingès have y-stood,
 Which I shall with dissimuling amend;³
 And, be not wroth, I have eke understood
 How you ne do but holden me in hand;
 But now no force; I cannot in you guess
 But allè truth and allè gentleness.

knew

angry
you only deceive me
no matter

184. "Comen I will, but yet in such disjoint

difficulty

¹ 180.7: "I can send you neither comfort (*heart*) nor cure (*heal*)" since, as she has said, she herself is heartless and sick.

² 181.6-7: She says she cannot give the reason for her delay lest the letter be incepted.

³ 182-3: Having accused Troilus of thinking only of his own pleasure, she uses her real obsession with malicious rumor to pretend that she has heard stories about them both that she will have to put right by lying (*dissumuling*), and even stories about his infidelity.

I stand as now, that what year or what day
 That this shall be, that can I not appoint;
 But in effect I pray you as I may
 Of your good word and of your friendship ay,
 For truly while that my life may dure
 As for a friend you may in me assure.

I cannot say

*always
 may last*

185. "Yet pray I you on evil you ne take
 That it is short which that I to you write;
 I dare not where I am well letters make,
 Ne never yet ne could I well endite.
 Eke great effect men write in place lite.
 Th' intent is all, and not the letter's space,
 And fare now well; God have you in his grace!
 Le vostre, C."

don't be offended

*write
 great matter / little space
 length*

yours, C

186. This Troilus the letter thought all strange
 When he it saw, and sorrowfully he sighed;
 Him thought it like the kalends of a change;¹
 But finally he full ne trowen might
 That she ne would him holden what she hight,²
 For with full evil will list him to leave³
 That loveth well, in such case, though him grieve.

*could not fully believe
 keep / promised*

187. But natheless, men say that at the last,
 For any thing men shall the soothè see,
 And such a case betid, and that as fast,
 That Troilus well understood that she

*in spite of everything / truth
 happened*

¹ 186.3: *Kalends* was the beginning of the month in the ancient Roman calendar. Hence her letter seems to mark the beginning of a change.

² 186.4-5: Probably the meaning is: "he couldn't really believe that she would break her promise." The double negative (*ne ... ne*) is a little ambiguous here.

³ 186.6: Any of the three modern equivalents of ME *leve* will make some sense here. The meaning of the couplet appears to be that only with reluctance (*evil will*) will someone who deeply loves (another) believe / grant / leave in such a case, although it hurts him.

Was not so kind as that her ought to be;
 And, finally, he wot now out of doubt
 That all is lost that he has been about.

*knows
 worked for*

188. Stood on a day in his meláncholy
 This Troilus, and in suspicïon
 Of her for whom he weened for to die,
 And so befell that throughout Troyè town,
 As was the guise, y-borne was up and down
 A manner coat armóur, as says the story,
 Before Deiphebe, in sign of his victory.¹

thought he would

the custom

T's brother

189. The whichè coat, as telleth Lollius,²
 Deiphebe it had y-rent from Diomedè
 The samè day; and when this Troilus
 It saw, he gan to taken of it heed,
 Avising of the length and of the breadth
 And all the work, but as he gan behold,
 Full suddenly his heartè gan to cold,

had torn

became cold

190. As he that on the collar found within
 A brooch that he Criseydè gave that morrow
 That she from Troyè mustè needès twin,³
 In rémembrance of him and of his sorrow,
 And she him laid again her faith to borrow
 To keep it ay; but now full well he wist
 His lady was no longer on to trist.

depart

gave her solemn pledge

always / knew

be trusted

191. He goes him home, and gan full soonè send
 For Pandarus, and all this newè chance

¹ 188.6: "coat armor" like that captured by Deiphebus, was a cloth garment, often decorative, worn over armor.

² 189.1: Lollius is the author from whom Chaucer says he got the story of Troilus & Criseyde. No such author has been found.

³ 190.2-3: "A brooch that he had given to Criseyde on the morning she had to leave Troy." No such gift is mentioned in the account of that morning earlier in Book V.

And of this brooch he told him ord and end,
 Complaining of her heartè's variance,
 His longè love, his truth, and his penance;
 And after Death, withouten wordes more,
 Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

*beginning & end
 fickleness
 suffering
 for death*

192. Then spoke he thus: "O lady mine, Criseyde!
 Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
 Where is your love? Where is your truth?" he said.
 "Of Diomedè have you now all this feast?
 Alas ! I would have trowéd at the least
 That since you would in truth not to me stand,
 That you thus n'ould have holden me in hand.

*promise
 attention, pleasure
 have thought
 wouldn't have deceived*

193. "Who shall now trow on any oathès mo"?
 Alas ! I never would have weened ere this
 That you, Criseydé, could have changéd so,
 Ne but I had a-guilt and done amiss.
 So cruel weened I not your heartè iwis ¹
 To slay me thus. Alas, your name of truth
 Is now fordone, and that is all my ruth.

*trust / more
 have thought
 Unless I were guilty
 ruined / regret*

194. "Was there no other brooch you list to let
 To feoffè with your newè love," quod he,
 "But thilkè brooch that I with tearès wet
 You gave as for a rémembrance of me?
 No other cause, alas ! ne hadden ye
 But for despite, and eke for that you meant
 All utterly to shopen your intent,

*could have used
 To present to
 that same*

195. "Through which I see that clean out of your mind
 You have me cast, and I ne can nor may
 For all this world within mine heartè find
 To unlove you a quarter of a day.
 In cursed time I born was, welaway!
 That you that do me all this woe endure,

alas!

¹ 193.5: "I had not thought (*weened*) your heart was indeed so cruel."

Yet love I best of any creature.

196. "And certainly, withouten more speech,
From hencèforth, as farforth as I may,
Mine owne death in armès will I seek,
I reckè not how soonè be the day;
But truly, Criseydè, my sweet may!
Whom I have ay with all my might y-served,
That you do thus I have it not deserved."

*lady
always*

197. This Pandarus, that all these thingès heard,
And wistè well he said a sooth of this,
He not a word again to him answered
For sorry of his friend's sorrow he is,
And shamèd for his niece hath done amiss,
And stood astonèd of these causes tway
As still as stone; one word ne could he say.

knew / truth

stunned by

198. Great was the sorrow and plaint of Troilus,
But forth her coursè Fortune ay gan to hold,
Criseydè loves the son of Tydeus,
And Troilus must weep in carès cold:
Such is this world, who so it can behold;
In each estate is little heartè's rest;
God leve us for to take it for the best !

*kept her steady course
i.e. Diomedè*

God grant

199. In many a cruel battle, out of dread,
Of Troilus this ilkè noble knight
(As men may in these oldè bookès read)
Was seen his knighthood and his greatè might,
And dreadèless his ire both day and night
Full cruelly the Greekès ay a-bought,
And always most this Diomedè he sought.

certainly

*anger
constantly felt*

200. The wrath, as I began you for to say,
Of Troilus the Greekès boughten dear,

For thousandès his handès maden die,
 As he that was withouten any peer,
 Save Hector in his time, as I can hear;
 But welaway! (save only Goddè's will)
 Despitously him slew the fierce Achil.

caused to

alas!

A. slew him (Troilus)

201. And when that he was slain in this mannér
 His lightè ghost full blissfully is went
 Up to the hollowness of the eighthè sphere,
 In converse letting every element,¹
 And there he saw, with full avisèment,
 Th'erratic stars, hearkening harmony,²
 With soundès full of heavenish melody.

leaving below

clear vision

202. And down from thencè fast he gan advise
 This little spot of earth that with the sea
 Embracèd is, and fully gan despise
 This wretched world, and held all vanity
 In réspect of the plain felicity
 That is in heaven above; and at the last
 Where he was slain his looking down he cast.

look closely at

total happiness

203. And in himself he laughed right at the woe
 Of them that wepten for his death so fast,
 And damnèd all our works that follow so
 The blindè lust the which that may not last,
 And shouldeñ all our heart on heaven cast;
 And forth he wentè, shortly for to tell,
 Where as Mercúry sorted him to dwell.

so hard

And rebuked

Who should

assigned

¹ 201.4: Troilus's soul is taken up to the heaven of the eighth sphere. *in converse letting*: the meaning of this phrase is obscure; it is generally glossed: "leaving below" or "leaving behind".

² 201.6: The *erratic stars* are the planets, and Troilus is listening to the music (*hearkening harmony*) of the spheres, in which the planets revolve.

204. Such fine hath, lo! this Troilus for love,
 Such fine hath all his greatè worthiness,
 Such fine hath his estate royál above,
 Such fine his lust, such fine hath his noblesse.
 Such fine hath this false worldè's brittleness!
 And thus began his loving of Criseyde
 As I have told, and in this wise he died.

Such an end

205. O youngè, freshè folkès, he or she!
 In which that love up groweth with your age,
 Repaireth home from worldly vanity,
 And of your hearts up casteth the visage
 To thilkè God that after his image
 You made, and thinketh all is but a fair
 This world that passeth soon as flowers fair,

boy or girl

Turn back

just a show

206. And loveth Him, the which that right for love
 Upon a cross, our soulès for to buy,
 First starved, and rose, and sits in heaven above;
 For He n'ill falsen no wight, dare I say,
 That will his heart all wholly on Him lay,
 And since He best to love is, and most meek,
 What needeth feignèd lovès for to seek?

to redeem

First, died

won't deceive anyone

to Him devote

207. Go, little book, go little my tragedy,¹
 Where God thy maker yet ere that he die
 So send me might to make some comedy.
 But, little book, no making thou n'envy,
 But subject be to allè poesy,

maker & he = Chaucer

give me strength

making = poetry

¹ 207: Chaucer, the *maker*, i.e. the author of this "little book", hopes that God will grant him the chance to write some comedy before he dies. The "Go, little book" is a formula for poetic closure derived probably from Ovid and other classical sources, and occurs also in Boccaccio, though Chaucer seems to have been responsible for its small vogue in England. This stanza and the next have been moved here, nearer to the actual closure than in the original, where they occupy lines 1786-1799.

And kiss the steps where as thou seest pace *walk*
 Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace.¹

208. And, for there is so great diversity
 In English, and in writing of our tongue,
 So pray I God that none miswritè thee, *thee = his poem*
 Nor thee mis-meter for default of tongue;²
 And read where so thou be, or elsè sung, *wheresoever*
 That thou be understood, God I beseech;
 But yet to purpose of my rather speech.³

209. O moral Gower, this book I direct
 To thee, and to thee, philosophical Strode,⁴
 To vouchsafe, where need is, to correct, *To be good enough*
 Of your benignity and zealès good.
 And to that soothfast Christ, that starved on rood, *faithful / died on the cross*
 With all my heart of mercy ever I pray;
 And to the Lord right thus I speak and say:

210. Thou one and two and three, etern alive ⁵
 That reignest ay in three and two and one, *ever*
 Uncircumscribed, and all may'st circumscribe, *Unbounded*

¹ 207.7: Chaucer puts himself in important company here: with Virgil, author of **The Aeneid**; Ovid, author of **The Art of Love** and **Metamorphoses**; Homer, author of **The Iliad** and **The Odyssey**; Lucan, author of **The Pharsalia**; Statius, author of **Thebaid**. Most of these authors are mentioned by Boccaccio in the envoy to his **Filocolo**.

² 208.3-4: "And I pray God that no one miswrite you or write you out unmetrically because of the deficiency of his dialect", since there is the "diversity" in written English just mentioned.

³ 208.7: "But to get to what I wanted to say."

⁴ 209.1-2: The poet Gower, and Strode, an Oxford philosopher, were friends of Chaucer. The request to correct his copy is probably a conventional compliment, but in the days before a writer had the opportunity to correct the final printer's page proofs, his work was at the mercy of every scribe who chose or was employed to copy it, so the request might not have been a mere gesture. For Chaucer's exasperation at his own scribe Adam, see his short comic poem execrating Adam's errors.

⁵ The prayer is to the Holy Trinity, the three persons of the one God who reigns eternally: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Us from visible and invisible foes
Defend; and to Thy mercy everyone
So make us, Jesus, for thy mercy *digne*
For love of Maid and Mother thine benign.¹
Amen.

worthy

Here ends the book of Troilus and Criseyde

¹ "Make us worthy of thy mercy, for love of your benign maiden-mother," the Virgin Mary. *Digne* can be pronounced "dine".