



CHAUCER
Troilus and Criseyde



Troilus and Criseyde

By

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***Free*editorial** 

BOOK I.

Incipit Liber Primus

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen, That was the king Priamus sone of
Troye, In lovinge, how his adventures fellen Fro wo to wele, and after out of
Ioye, My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.

Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte Thise woful vers, that wepen as I
wryte!

To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment, Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in
peyne; Help me, that am the sorwful instrument That helpeth lovers, as I
can, to pleyne!

For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne, A woful wight to han a drery fere, And,
to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.

For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve, Ne dar to Love, for myn
unlyknesse, Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve, So fer am I fro his
help in derknesse; But natheles, if this may doon gladnesse To any lover,
and his cause avayle, Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!

But ye loveres, that bathen in gladnesse, If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesse That ye han felt, and on the
adversitee Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye Han felt that Love
dorste yow displese; Or ye han wonne hym with to greet an ese.

And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That love hem bringe in hevne to solas, And eek for me preyeth to god so
dere, That I have might to shewe, in som manere, Swich peyne and wo as
Loves folk endure, In Troilus unsely aventure.

And biddeth eek for hem that been despeyred In love, that never nil
recovered be, And eek for hem that falsly been apeyred Thorough wikked
tonges, be it he or she; Thus biddeth god, for his benignitee, So graunte hem
sone out of this world to pace, That been despeyred out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese, That god hem graunte ay good
perseveraunce, And sende hem might hir ladies so to plese, That it to Love
be worship and plesaunce.

For so hope I my soule best avaunce, To preye for hem that Loves servaunts
be, And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

And for to have of hem compassioun As though I were hir owene brother
dere.

Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun, For now wol I gon streight to my
matere, In whiche ye may the double sorwes here Of Troilus, in loving of
Criseyde, And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge In armes with a thousand shippes
wente To Troyewardes, and the citee longe Assegeden neigh ten yeer er
they stente, And, in diverse wyse and oon entente, The ravissing to wreken
of Eleyne, By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne.

Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas, That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be, By answeere of his god, that
highte thus, Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge, And eek by answeere of this
Appollo, That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe, Thorough which that
Troye moste been for-do, He caste anoon out of the toun to go; For wel
wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde Destroyed ben, ye, wolde who-so nolde.

For which, for to departen softly Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
And to the Grekes ost ful prively He stal anoon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Hym deden bothe worship and servyse, In trust that he hath conning hem to
rede In every peril which that is to drede.

The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed, Thorough al the toun, and
generally was spoken, That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed With hem of
Grece; and casten to ben wroken On him that falsly hadde his feith so
broken; And seyden, he and al his kin at ones Ben worthy for to brennen,
fel and bones.

Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce, Al unwist of this false and
wikked dede, His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce, For of hir lyf
she was ful sore in drede, As she that niste what was best to rede; For bothe
a widowe was she, and allone Of any freend to whom she dorste hir mone.

Criseyde was this lady name a-right; As to my dome, in al Troyes citee Nas
noon so fair, for passing every wight So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she, As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.

This lady, which that al-day herde at ere Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and
tresoun, Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere, In widewes habit large
of samit broun, On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun; With pitous voys, and
tendrely wepinge, His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

Now was this Ector pitous of nature, And saw that she was sorwfully
bigoon, And that she was so fair a creature; Of his goodnesse he gladed hir
anoon, And seyde, 'Lat your fadres treson goon Forth with mischaunce, and
ye your-self, in loye, Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

'And al thonour that men may doon yow have, As ferforth as your fader
dwelled here, Ye shul han, and your body shal men save, As fer as I may
ought enquere or here.'

And she him thonked with ful humble chere, And ofter wolde, and it hadde
ben his wille, And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir stille.

And in hir hous she abood with swich meynee As to hir honour nede was to
holde; And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee, Kepte hir estat, and bothe
of yonge and olde Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.

But whether that she children hadde or noon, I rede it naught; therefore I late
it goon.

The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre, Bitwixen hem of Troye and
Grekes ofte; For som day boughten they of Troye it derre, And eft the
Grekes founden no thing softe The folk of Troye; and thus fortune on-lofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe After hir cours, ay whyl they
were wrothe.

But how this toun com to destruccioun Ne falleth nought to purpos me to
telle; For it were a long digressioun

Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.

But the Troyane gestes, as they felle, In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte,
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten, And hir citee bisegede al a-
boute, Hir olde usage wolde they not letten, As for to honoure hir goddes
ful devoute; But aldermost in honour, out of doute, They hadde a relik hight
Palladion, That was hir trist a-boven everichon.

And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme Of Aperil, whan clothed is the
mede With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme, And swote smellen floures
whyte and rede, In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede, The folk of Troye hir
observaunces olde, Palladiones feste for to holde.

And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse, In general, ther wente many a
wight, To herkennen of Palladion servyse; And namely, so many a lusty
knight, So many a lady fresh and mayden bright, Ful wel arayed, bothe
moste and leste, Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda, In widewes habite blak; but
natheless, Right as our firste lettre is now an A, In beautee first so stood
she, makelees; Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.

Nas never seyn thing to ben preysed derre, Nor under cloude blak so bright
a sterre As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon That hir behelden in hir
blake wede; And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon, Bihinden othere
folk, in litel brede, And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede, Simple of a-
tyr, and debonaire of chere, With ful assured loking and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and
doun In thilke large temple on every syde, Biholding ay the ladyes of the
toun, Now here, now there, for no devocioun Hadde he to noon, to reven
him his reste, But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.

And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten If knight or squyer of his
companye Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten On any woman that he
coude aspye; He wolde smyle, and holden it folye, And seye him thus, `god
wot, she slepeth softe For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!

`I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge, Ye lovers, and your lewede
observaunces, And which a labour folk han in winninge Of love, and, in the

keping, which doutaunces; And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye; Ther nis not oon can war by other
be.'

And with that word he gan cast up the browe, Ascaunces, 'Lo! is this
nought wysly spoken?'

At which the god of love gan loken rowe Right for despyt, and shoop for to
ben wroken; He kidde anoon his bowe nas not broken; For sodeynly he hit
him at the fulle; And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.

O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!

How ofte falleth al theeffect contraire Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.

This Troilus is clomben on the staire, And litel weneth that he moot
descenden.

But al-day falleth thing that foles ne wenden.

As proude Bayard ginneth for to skippe Out of the wey, so priketh him his
corn, Til he a lash have of the longe whippe, Than thenketh he, 'Though I
praunce al biforn First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn, Yet am I but an
hors, and horses lawe I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'

So ferde it by this fers and proude knight; Though he a worthy kinges sone
were, And wende nothing hadde had swiche might Ayens his wil that
sholde his herte stere, Yet with a look his herte wex a-ferre, That he, that
now was most in pryde above, Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love.

For-thy ensample taketh of this man, Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes
alle, To scornen Love, which that so sone can The freedom of your hertes to
him thralle; For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle, That Love is he that alle
thing may binde; For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.

That this be sooth, hath preved and doth yet; For this trowe I ye knowen,
alle or some, Men reden not that folk han gretter wit Than they that han be
most with love y-nome; And strengest folk ben therwith overcome, The
worthiest and grettest of degree: This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

And trowelich it sit wel to be so; For alderwyssest han therwith ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo, With love han ben confortid most
and esed; And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed, And worthy folk maad
worthier of name, And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde, And is a thing so vertuouus in
kinde, Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde, Sin, as him-selven list, he may
yow binde.

The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde Than that that brest; and
therfor I yow rede To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

But for to tellen forth in special As of this kinges sone of which I tolde, And
leten other thing collateral, Of him thenke I my tale for to holde, Both of his
loye, and of his cares colde; And al his werk, as touching this matere, For I
it gan, I wol ther-to refere.

With-inne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge, This Troilus, of every
wight aboute, On this lady and now on that lokinge, Wher-so she were of
toun, or of with-oute: And up-on cas bifel, that thorough a route His eye
perced, and so depe it wente, Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

And sodeynly he wax therwith astoned, And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty
wyse: 'O mercy, god!' thoughte he, 'wher hastow woned, That art so fair
and goodly to devyse?'

Therwith his herte gan to sprede and ryse, And softe sighed, lest men
myghte him here, And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere.

She nas nat with the leste of hir stature, But alle hir limes so wel
answeringe Weren to womanhode, that creature Was neuer lasse mannish in
semyng.

And eek the pure wyse of here meninge Shewede wel, that men might in hir
gesse Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle Gan for to lyke hir meninge and hir
chere, Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle Hir look a lite a-side,
in swich manere, Ascaunces, 'What! May I not stonden here?'

And after that hir loking gan she lighte, That never thoughte him seen so
good a sighte.

And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken So greet desir, and swich
affeccioun, That in his herte botme gan to stiken Of hir his fixe and depe
impressioun: And though he erst hadde poured up and down, He was tho
glad his hornes in to shrinke; Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.

Lo, he that leet him-selven so konninge, And scorned hem that loves peynes
dryen, Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge With-inne the subtile
stremes of hir yen; That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen, Right with hir
look, the spirit in his herte; Blissed be love, that thus can folk converte!

She, this in blak, likinge to Troylus, Over alle thyng, he stood for to
biholde; Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus, He neither chere made, ne
worde tolde; But from a-fer, his maner for to holde, On other thing his look
som-tyme he caste, And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

And after this, not fulliche al awhaped, Out of the temple al esiliche he
wente, Repentinge him that he hadde ever y-iaped Of loves folk, lest fully
the descente Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he mente, Lest it were
wist on any maner syde, His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed, He streyght anoon un-to his
paleys torneth, Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-darted, Al
feyneth he in lust that he soiorneth; And al his chere and speche also he
borneth; And ay, of loves servants every whyle, Him-self to wrye, at hem
he gan to smyle.

And seyde, `Lord, so ye live al in lest, Ye loveres! For the conningest of
yow, That serveth most ententiflich and best, Him tit as often harm ther-of
as prow; Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, god wot how!

Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse; In feith, your ordre is ruled
in good wyse!

`In noun-certeyn ben alle your observaunces, But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne nothing asketh so grete attendaunces As doth youre lay, and that knowe
alle ye; But that is not the worste, as mote I thee; But, tolde I yow the
worste poynt, I leve, Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

'But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe, Or elles doon of good
entencioun, Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue, And deme it harm in hir
opinioun; And yet if she, for other enchesoun, Be wrooth, than shalt thou
han a groyn anoon: Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!'

But for al this, whan that he say his tyme, He held his pees, non other bote
him gayned; For love bigan his fetheres so to lyme, That wel unnethe un-to
his folk he fayned That othere besye nedes him destrayned; For wo was
him, that what to doon he niste, But bad his folk to goon wher that hem
liste.

And whan that he in chaumbre was allone, He doun up-on his beddes feet
him sette, And first be gan to syke, and eft to grone, And thoughte ay on hir
so, with-outen lette, That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette That he hir
saw a temple, and al the wyse Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde, In which he saugh al hoolly hir
figure; And that he wel coude in his herte finde, It was to him a right good
aventure To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure To serven hir, yet
mighte he falle in grace, Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace.

Imagininge that travaille nor grame Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she, ne him for his desir ne shame, Al were it wist, but in prys and up-
born Of alle lovers wel more than biforn; Thus argumented he in his
ginninge, Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe, And thoughte he wolde werken
prively, First, to hyden his desir in muwe From every wight y-born, al-
outrely, But he mighte ought recovered be therby; Remembring him, that
love to wyde y-blowe Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.

And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte What for to speke, and what
to holden inne, And what to arten hir to love he soughte, And on a song
anoon-right to biginne, And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne; For with
good hope he gan fully assente Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.

And of his song nought only the sentence, As writ myn autour called
Lollius, But pleyntyly, save our tonges difference, I dar wel sayn, in al that

Troilus Seyde in his song, lo! every word right thus As I shal seyn; and
who-so list it here, Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

Cantus Troili.

`If no love is, O god, what fele I so?

And if love is, what thing and whiche is he!

If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?

If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me, Whenne every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke; For ay thurst I, the more that
I it drinke.

`And if that at myn owene lust I brenne, Fro whennes cometh my wailing
and my pleynte?

If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?

I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.

O quike deeth, O swete harm so queynte, How may of thee in me swich
quantitee, But-if that I consente that it be?

`And if that I consente, I wrongfully Compleyne, y-wis; thus passed to and
fro, Al sterelees with inne a boot am I A-mid the see, by-twixen windes
two, That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.

Allas! what is this wonder maladye?

For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I deye.'

And to the god of love thus seyde he With pitous voys, `O lord, now youres
is My spirit, which that oughte youres be.

Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this; But whether goddessse or
womman, y-wis, She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve; But as hir man I
wole ay live and sterve.

`Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily, As in a place un-to youre vertu digne;
Wherefore, lord, if my servyse or I May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estat royal here I resigne In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.'

In him ne deynd sparen blood royal The fyr of love, wher-fro god me
blesse, Ne him forbar in no degree, for al His vertu or his excellent
prowesse; But held him as his thral lowe in distresse, And brende him so in
sondry wyse ay newe, That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe.

So muche, day by day, his owene thought, For lust to hir, gan quiken and
encrese, That every other charge he sette at nought; For-thy ful ofte, his
hote fyr to cese, To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese; For ther-by to ben
esed wel he wende, And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.

For ay the ner the fyr, the hotter is, This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.

But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this, By night or day, for wisdom or
folye, His herte, which that is his brestes ye, Was ay on hir, that fairer was
to sene Than ever were Eleyne or Polixene.

Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre That to him-self a thousand
tyme he seyde, `Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure, As I best can,
now wolde god, Criseyde, Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!

My dere herte, allas! myn hele and hewe And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me
rewe.'

Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde, Both of the assege and his
savacioun; Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde But argumentes to
his conclusioun, That she on him wolde han compassioun, And he to be hir
man, whyl he may dure; Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve, That Ector or his othere bretheren
diden, Ne made him only therfore ones meve; And yet was he, wher-so men
wente or riden, Founde oon the beste, and lengest tyme abiden Ther peril
was, and dide eek such travayle In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde, Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde, But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun; Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep, And made his mete his foo;
and eek his sorwe Gan multiplie, that, who-so toke keep, It shewed in his
hewe, bothe eve and morwe; Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe Of

other syknesse, lest of him men wende That the hote fyr of love him brende,
And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis; But how it was, certayn, can I
not seye, If that his lady understood not this, Or feyned hir she niste, oon of
the tweye; But wel I rede that, by no maner weye, Ne semed it as that she of
him roughte, Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.

But than fel to this Troylus such wo, That he was wel neigh wood; for ay
his drede Was this, that she som wight had loved so, That never of him she
wolde have taken hede; For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.

Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

But whanne he hadde a space fro his care, Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan
to pleyne; He sayde, `O fool, now art thou in the snare, That whilom
Iapedest at loves peyne; Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne;
Thou were ay wont eche love rephende Of thing fro which thou canst
thee nat defende.

`What wol now every lover seyn of thee, If this be wist, but ever in thyn
absence Laughen in scorn, and seyn, `Lo, ther gooth he, That is the man of
so gret sapience, That held us lovers leest in reverence!

Now, thonked be god, he may goon in the daunce Of hem that Love list
febly for to avaunce!

`But, O thou woful Troilus, god wolde, Sin thou most loven thurgh thi
destinee, That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde Knowe al thy wo,
al lakkede hir pitee: But al so cold in love, towards thee, Thy lady is, as
frost in winter mone, And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone.'

`God wolde I were aryved in the port Of deth, to which my sorwe wil me
lede!

A, lord, to me it were a gret comfort; Than were I quit of languisshing in
drede.

For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede I shal bi-Iaped been a thousand
tyme More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

`But now help god, and ye, swete, for whom I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never
wight so faste!

O mercy, dere herte, and help me from The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf
may laste, More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.

And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete, Though never more thing
ye me bi-hete!

This wordes and ful manye an-other to He spak, and called ever in his
compleynte Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo, Til neigh that he in salte teres
dreynte.

Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte; And whan that he
bithoughte on that folye, A thousand fold his wo gan multiplie.

Biwayling in his chambre thus allone, A freend of his, that called was
Pandare, Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone, And say his freend in
swich distresse and care: `Allas!' quod he, `who causeth al this fare?

O mercy, god! What unhap may this mene?

Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

`Or hastow som remors of conscience, And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence, And hast for ferde caught
attricioun?

God save hem that biseged han our toun, And so can leye our Iolyte on
presse, And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!

These wordes seyde he for the nones alle, That with swich thing he mighte
him angry maken, And with an angre don his sorwe falle, As for the tyme,
and his corage awaken; But wel he wist, as fer as tonges spaken, Ther nas a
man of gretter hardinesse Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

`What cas,' quod Troilus, `or what aventure Hath gyded thee to see my
languisshinge, That am refus of euery creature?

But for the love of god, at my preyinge, Go henne a-way, for certes, my
deyinge Wol thee disese, and I mot nedes deye; Therfor go wey, ther is no
more to seye.

`But if thou wene I be thus sik for drede, It is not so, and therfor scorne
nought; Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede Wel more than ought the

Grekes han y-wrought, Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and thought.
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste, Be thou nought wrooth; I hyde it
for the beste.'

This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and routhe, Ful often seyde, 'Allas!
what may this be?

Now freend,' quod he, 'if ever love or trouthe Hath been, or is, bi-twixen
thee and me, Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee To hyde fro thy freend so
greet a care; Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

'I wole parten with thee al thy peyne, If it be so I do thee no comfort, As it
is freendes right, sooth for to seyne, To entreparten wo, as glad desport.
I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report, In wrong and right y-loved thee al
my lyve; Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve.'

Than gan this sorwful Troilus to syke, And seyde him thus, "God leve it be
my beste To telle it thee; for sith it may thee lyke, Yet wole I telle it, though
myn herte breste; And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.

But lest thow deme I truste not to thee, Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant
with me.

'Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth Him-selven most, him alder-lest
avayleth, With disespier so sorwfully me offendeth, That streyght un-to the
deeth myn herte sayleth.

Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth, That to ben slayn it were a
gretter loye To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

'Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare, That I have seyde, for now wostow
my wo; And for the love of god, my colde care So hyd it wel, I telle it never
to mo; For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two, If it were wist; but be thou
in gladnesse, And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse.'

'How hastow thus unkindely and longe Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod
Pandarus; 'Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe, That myn avys
anoon may helpen us.'

'This were a wonder thing,' quod Troilus, 'Thou coudest never in love thy-
selven wisse; How deuel maystow bringen me to blisse?'

'Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare, 'Though I be nyce; it happeth ofte
so, That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare, By good counseyl can kepe his
freend ther-fro.

I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go Ther-as he fel that coude loke
wyde; A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.

'A whetston is no kerving instrument, And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-
tolis.

And ther thou woost that I have ought miswent, Eschewe thou that, for
swich thing to thee scole is; Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.

If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared; By his contrarie is every thing
declared.

'For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe To him that never tasted
bitternesse?

Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe, That never was in sorwe or som
distresse; Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse, Ech set by other,
more for other semeth; As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.

'Sith thus of two contraries is a lore, I, that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevauces, oughte conne, and wel the more Counsayllen thee of that thou
art amayed.

Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed, Though I desyre with thee for to
bere Thyn hevy charge; it shal the lasse dere.

'I woot wel that it fareth thus by me As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that y-cleped was Oenone,

Wrot in a compleynte of hir hevinesse: Ye say the lettre that she wroot, y
gesse?'

'Nay, never yet, y-wis,' quod Troilus.

'Now,' quod Pandare, 'herkneth, it was thus. — "Phebus, that first fond art
of medicyne,'

Quod she, `and coude in every wightes care Remede and reed, by herbes he
knew fyne, Yet to him-self his conning was ful bare; For love hadde him so
bounden in a snare, Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete, That al his
craft ne coude his sorwe bete." — `Right so fare I, unhappily for me; I love
oon best, and that me smerteth sore; And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self; repreve me no more.

I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore As doth an hauk that listeth for to
pleye, But to thyn help yet somewhat can I seye.

`And of o thing right siker maystow be, That certayn, for to deyen in the
peyne, That I shal never-mo discoveren thee; Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat
restreyne Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne, That is thy brotheres
wif, if ich it wiste; Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.

`Therefore, as freend fullich in me assure, And tel me plat what is thyn
enchesoun, And final cause of wo that ye endure; For douteth nothing, myn
entencioun Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun, To speke as now, for no
wight may bireve A man to love, til that him list to leve.

`And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces, Mistrusten alle, or elles alle
leve; But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is, For to trusten sum wight is a
preve Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve Thy wrong conseyte, and
do thee som wight triste, Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.

`The wyse seyth, "Wo him that is allone, For, and he falle, he hath noon
help to ryse;"

And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone; For this nis not, certeyn, the
nexte wyse To winnen love, as techen us the wyse, To walwe and wepe as
Niobe the quene, Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.

`Lat be thy weping and thi drerinesse, And lat us lissen wo with other
speche; So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.

Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche, As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure, And listen nought to seche hem
other cure.

`Men seyn, "To wrecche is consolacioun To have an-other felawe in his
peyne;"

That oughte wel ben our opinioun, For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne, That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space.

`If god wole thou art not agast of me, Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
Thow wost thy-self whom that I love, pardee, As I best can, gon sithen
longe whyle.

And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle, And sith I am he that thou tristest
most, Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.'

Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde, But longe he ley as stille as he ded
were; And after this with sykinge he abreyde, And to Pandarus voys he
lente his ere, And up his eyen caste he, that in fere Was Pandarus, lest that
in frenesye He sholde falle, or elles sone dye; And cryde `A-wake' ful
wonderly and sharpe; `What? Slombrestow as in a lytargye?

Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe, That hereth soun, whan men the strenges
plye, But in his minde of that no melodye May sinken, him to glade, for that
he So dul is of his bestialitee?'

And with that, Pandare of his wordes stente; And Troilus yet him no word
answerde, For-why to telle nas not his entente To never no man, for whom
that he so ferde.

For it is seyde, `Man maketh ofte a yerde With which the maker is him-self
y-beten In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten, And namely, in his counseyl
tellinge That toucheth love that oughte be secree; For of him-self it wolde
y-nough out-springe, But-if that it the bet governed be.

Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee Fro thing which in effect men hunte
faste; Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

But nathelees, whan he had herd him crye `Awake!' he gan to syke wonder
sore, And seyde, `Freend, though that I stille lye, I am not deaf; now pees,
and cry no more; For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore; But suffre me my
mischef to biwayle, For thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

`Nor other cure canstow noon for me.

Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye; What knowe I of the quene Niobe?

Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye.'

'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therefore I seye, Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.

'Now knowe I that ther reson in the fayleth.

But tel me, if I wiste what she were For whom that thee al this misaunter
ayleth?

Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for
fere, And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?

'Why, nay,' quod he, 'by god and by my trouthe!'

'What, Not as bisily,' quod Pandarus, 'As though myn owene lyf lay on this
nede?'

'No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus, 'And why?' — 'For that thou
sholdest never spede.'

'Wostow that wel?' — 'Ye, that is out of drede,'

Quod Troilus, 'for al that ever ye conne, She nil to noon swich wrecche as I
be wonne.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Allas! What may this be, That thou dispeyred art thus
causelees?

What? Liveth not thy lady? Benedicite!

How wostow so that thou art gracelees?

Swich yvel is nat alwey botelees.

Why, put not impossible thus thy cure, Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.

'I graunte wel that thou endurest wo As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo That highte volturis, as bokes telle.

But I may not endure that thou dwelle In so unskilful an opinioun

That of thy wo is no curacioun.

'But ones niltow, for thy coward herte, And for thyn ire and folish
wilfulnesse, For wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte, Ne to thyn owene

help do businesse As much as speke a resoun more or lesse, But lyst as he
that list of nothing recche.

What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

`What may she demen other of thy deeth, If thou thus deye, and she not
why it is, But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth, For Grekes han biseged
us, y-wis?

Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!

Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones, "The wrecche is deed, the devel
have his bones!"

`Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele; But, love a woman that
she woot it nought, And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele; Unknowe,
unkist, and lost that is un-sought.

What! Many a man hath love ful dere y-bought Twenty winter that his lady
wiste, That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.

`What? Shulde be therfor fallen in despeyr, Or be recreaunt for his owene
tene, Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr?

Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene To serve and love his dere
hertes quene, And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve A thousand-fold more
than he can deserve.'

Of that word took hede Troilus,

And thoughte anon what folye he was inne, And how that sooth him seyde
Pandarus, That for to sleen him-self mighte he not winne, But bothe doon
unmanhod and a sinne, And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte; For of his
wo, god woot, she knew ful lyte.

And with that thought he gan ful sore syke, And seyde, `Allas! What is me
best to do?'

To whom Pandare answered, `If thee lyke, The best is that thou telle me thy
wo; And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so, I be thy bote, or that it be ful
longe, To peces do me drawe, and sithen honge!'

`Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho, `allas!

But, god wot, it is not the rather so; Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo, Ne alle the men that ryden conne or
go May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde; For, as hir list, she pleyeth
with free and bonde.'

Quod Pandarus, `Than blamestow Fortune For thou art wrooth, ye, now at
erst I see; Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune To every maner wight
in som degree?

And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!

That, as hir Ioyes moten over-goon, So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.

`For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to torne, Than cessed she Fortune anon to
be: Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may soiorne, What wostow if hir
mutabilitee

Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee, Or that she be not fer fro thyn
helpinge?

Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

`And therfor wostow what I thee beseche?

Lat be thy wo and turning to the ground; For who-so list have helping of
his leche, To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde.

To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde, Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe, By
my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.

`Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy
nede; Knowe ich hir ought? For my love, tel me this; Than wolde I hopen
rather for to spede.'

Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede, For he was hit, and wex al reed for
shame; `A ha!' quod Pandare, `Here biginneth game!'

And with that word he gan him for to shake, And seyde, `Theef, thou shalt
hir name telle.'

But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake As though men sholde han led him in-
to helle, And seyde, `Allas! Of al my wo the welle, Than is my swete fo
called Criseyde!'

And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde.

And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene, Lord, he was glad, and seyde, `Freend so dere, Now fare a-right, for Ioves name in hevene, Love hath biset the wel, be of good chere; For of good name and wysdom and manere She hath y-nough, and eek of gentillesse; If she be fayr, thou wost thy-self, I gesse, `Ne I never saw a more bountevous Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche A freendlier, ne a more gracious For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche What for to doon; and al this bet to eche, In honour, to as fer as she may strecche, A kinges herte semeth by hirs a wrecche.

`And for-thy loke of good comfort thou be; For certainly, the firste poynt is this Of noble corage and wel ordeyne, A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis; So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is To loven wel, and in a worthy place; Thee oghte not to clepe it hap, but grace.

`And also thenk, and therwith glade thee, That sith thy lady vertuous is al, So folweth it that ther is som pitee Amonges alle thise othere in general; And for-thy see that thou, in special, Requere nought that is ayein hir name; For vertue streccheth not him-self to shame.

`But wel is me that ever that I was born, That thou biset art in so good a place; For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn, Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace; And wostow why? For thou were wont to chace At Love in scorn, and for despyt him calle "Seynt Idiot, lord of these foles alle."

`How often hastow maad thy nyce Iapes, And seyde, that loves servants everichone Of nycetee been verray goddes apes; And some wolde monche hir mete alone, Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to grone; And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere, And preydest god he sholde never kevere.

`And som of hem tok on hem, for the colde, More than y-nough, so seydestow ful ofte; And som han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde How that they wake, whan they slepen softe; And thus they wolde han brought hem-self a-lofte, And natheles were under at the laste; Thus seydestow, and Iapedest ful faste.

`Yet seydestow, that, for the more part, These loveres wolden speke in
general, And thoughten that it was a siker art, For fayling, for to assayen
over-al.

Now may I iape of thee, if that I shal!

But nathelees, though that I sholde deye, That thou art noon of tho, that
dorste I seye.

`Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love, "Thy grace, lord! For now I me
repente If I mis spak, for now my-self I love:"

Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.'

Quod Troilus, `A! Lord! I me consente, And prey to thee my Iapes thou
foryive, And I shal never-more whyl I live.'

`Thou seyst wel,' quod Pandare, `and now I hope That thou the goddes
wraththe hast al apesed; And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope, And
seyd swich thing wher-with thy god is plesed, Now wolde never god but
thou were esed; And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo Here-after may
thy comfort been al-so.

`For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke, Bereth eek thise holsom
herbes, as ful ofte Next the foule netle, rough and thikke, The rose waxeth
swote and smothe and softe; And next the valey is the hil a-lofte; And next
the derke night the glade morwe; And also Ioye is next the fyn of sorwe.

`Now loke that atempre be thy brydel, And, for the beste, ay suffre to the
tyde, Or elles al our labour is on ydel; He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.

Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse, And al is wel, if thou werke in this
wyse.

`But he that parted is in every place Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes
wyse; What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?

Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?

As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse, And on the morwe pulle it up as
blyve, No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

`And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed In place digne un-to thy
worthinesse, Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed; And of thy-self,
for any hevinesse, Hope alwey wel; for, but-if drerinesse Or over-haste our
bothe labour shende, I hope of this to maken a good ende.

`And wostow why I am the lasse a-fered Of this matere with my nece trete?
For this have I herd seyde of wyse y-lered, "Was never man ne woman yet
bigete That was unapt to suffren loves hete, Celestial, or elles love of
kinde;"

For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde.

`And for to speke of hir in special, Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe A worthy knight to loven and
cheryce, And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

`Wherefore I am, and wol be, ay redy To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plesse thus hope I Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse That no man shal the wyser of
it be; And so we may be gladed alle three.

`And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee A good conceyt in my wit, as
I gesse, And what it is, I wol now that thou see.

I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse, Hath thee converted out of
wikkednesse, That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve, Of al his lay, and
most his foos to-greve.

`Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes, That erren aldermost a-yein a
lawe, And ben converted from hir wikked werkes Thorough grace of god,
that list hem to him drawe, Than arn they folk that han most god in awe,
And strengest-feythed been, I understonde, And conne an errour alder-best
withstonde.'

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented To been his help in loving of
Criseyde, Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented, But hotter wex his
love, and thus he seyde, With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde, `Now
blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve, Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank
deserve.

`But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse Til this be doon? And goode,
eek tel me this, How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?

Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wys, Or nil not here or trowen how
it is.

Al this drede I, and eek for the manere Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich
thing here.'

Quod Pandarus, `Thou hast a ful gret care Lest that the cherl may falle out
of the mone!

Why, lord! I hate of the thy nyce fare!

Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!

For goddes love, I bidde thee a bone, So lat me alone, and it shal be thy
beste.' — `Why, freend,' quod he, `now do right as the leste.

`But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde That thou in me wendest so greet
folye, That to my lady I desiren sholde That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
For dredelees, me were lever dye Than she of me ought elles understode
But that, that mighte sounen in-to gode.'

Tho lough this Pandare, and anoon answerde, `And I thy borw? Fy! No
wight dooth but so; I roughte nought though that she stode and herde How
that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go.

A-dieu! Be glad! God spede us bothe two!

Yif me this labour and this besinesse, And of my speed be thyn al that
swetnesse.'

Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle, And Pandare in his armes hente
faste, And seyde, `Now, fy on the Grekes alle!

Yet, pardee, god shal helpe us at the laste; And dredelees, if that my lyf may
laste, And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shal smerte; And yet me athinketh
that this avaunt me asterte!

`Now, Pandare, I can no more seye, But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst,
thou art al!

My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn bonde I leye; Help now,' Quod he, 'Yis, by
my trouthe, I shal.'

'God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,'

Quod Troilus, 'that thou me recomaunde To hir that to the deeth me may
comaunde.'

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve His fulle freend, than seyde in this
manere, 'Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve; Have here my trouthe,
and that thou shalt wel here.' — And wente his wey, thenking on this
matere, And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace, And finde a tyme
ther-to, and a place.

For every wight that hath an hous to founde Ne renneth nought the werk for
to biginne With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde, And sende his hertes
lyne out fro with-inne Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.

Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte, And caste his werk ful wysly, or he
wroughte.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger down, But up anoon up-on his stede bay, And
in the feld he pleyde tho leoun; Wo was that Greek that with him mette that
day.

And in the toun his maner tho forth ay So goodly was, and gat him so in
grace, That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

For he bicom the frendlyeste wight, The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thriftieste and oon the beste knight, That in his tyme was, or mighte be.

Dede were his Iapes and his crueltee, His heighe port and his manere
estraunge, And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde, That fareth lyk a man that hurt is
sore, And is somdel of akinge of his wounde Y-lissed wel, but heled no del
more: And, as an esy pacient, the lore Abit of him that gooth aboute his
cure; And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus

BOOK II.

Incipit Prohemium Secundi Libri.

Out of these blake wawes for to sayle, O wind, O wind, the weder ginneth
clere; For in this see the boot hath swich travayle, Of my conning, that
unnethe I it stere: This see clepe I the tempestous matere Of desespeyr that
Troilus was inne: But now of hope the calendes biginne.

O lady myn, that called art Cleo, Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my
muse, To ryme wel this book, til I have do; Me nedeth here noon other art to
use.

For-why to every lovere I me excuse, That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte.

Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame Of al this werk, but prey yow
mekely, Disblameth me if any word be lame, For as myn auctor seyde, so
seye I.

Eek though I speke of love unfeelingly, No wondre is, for it nothing of newe
is; A blind man can nat Iuggen wel in hewis.

Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge With-inne a thousand
yeer, and wordes tho That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge Us
thinketh hem; and yet they spake hem so, And spedde as wel in love as men
now do; Eek for to winne love in sondry ages, In sondry londes, sondry ben
usages.

And for-thy if it happe in any wyse, That here be any lovere in this place
That herketh, as the storie wol devyse, How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchase, Or wondreth on his speche or
his doinge, I noot; but it is me no wonderinge; For every wight which that
to Rome went, Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere; Eek in som lond were al

the gamen shent, If that they ferde in love as men don here, As thus, in open
doing or in chere, In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hire sawes; For-thy men
seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.

Eek scarsly been ther in this place three That han in love seid lyk and doon
in al; For to thy purpos this may lyken thee, And thee right nought, yet al is
seyd or shal; Eek som men grave in tree, som in stoon wal, As it bitit; but
sin I have begonne, Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne.

Exclipit prohemium Secundi Libri.

Incipit Liber Secundus.

In May, that moder is of monthes glade, That fresshe floures, blewe, and
whyte, and rede, Ben quike agayn, that winter dede made, And ful of
bawme is fleting every mede; Whan Phebus doth his brighte bemes sprede
Right in the whyte Bole, it so bitidde As I shal singe, on Mayes day the
thridde, That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche, Felt eek his part of loves
shottes kene, That, coude he never so wel of loving preche, It made his
hewe a-day ful ofte grene; So shoop it, that hym fil that day a tene In love,
for which in wo to bedde he wente, And made, er it was day, ful many a
wente.

The swalwe Proigne, with a sorwful lay, Whan morwe com, gan make hir
waymentinge, Why she forshapen was; and ever lay Pandare a-bedde, half
in a slomeringe, Til she so neigh him made hir chiteringe How Tereus gan
forth hir suster take, That with the noyse of hir he gan a-wake; And gan to
calle, and dresse him up to ryse, Remembringe him his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eek his greet empryse; And caste and knew in good plyt
was the mone To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone Un-to his neces
paleys ther bi-syde; Now Ianus, god of entree, thou him gyde!

Whan he was come un-to his neces place, `Wher is my lady?' to hir folk
seyde he; And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace, And fond, two
othere ladyes sete and she, With-inne a paved parlour; and they three
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem
leste.

Quod Pandarus, 'Ma dame, god yow see, With al your book and al the
companye!'

'Ey, uncle myn, welcome y-wis,' quod she, And up she roos, and by the
hond in hye She took him faste, and seyde, 'This night thrye, To goode
mote it turne, of yow I mette!'

And with that word she doun on bench him sette.

'Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet, If god wole, al this yeer,' quod Pandarus;
'But I am sory that I have yow let To herkennen of your book ye preysen thus;
For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.

Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!'

'Uncle,' quod she, 'your maistresse is not here!'

With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde, 'This romaunce is of
Thebes, that we rede; And we han herd how that king Laius deyde Thurgh
Edippus his sone, and al that dede; And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book can telle, Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to
helle.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Al this knowe I my-selve, And al the assege of Thebes and
the care; For her-of been ther maked bokes twelve: — But lat be this, and
tel me how ye fare; Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare; Do wey
your book, rys up, and lat us daunce, And lat us don to May som
observaunce.'

'A! God forbede!' quod she. 'Be ye mad?

Is that a widewes lyf, so god you save?

By god, ye maken me right sore a-drad, Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye
rave!

It sete me wel bet ay in a cave

To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves; Lat maydens gon to daunce, and
yonge wyves.'

'As ever thryve I,' quod this Pandarus, 'Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you
pleye.'

'Now, uncle dere,' quod she, 'tel it us For goddes love; is than the assege
awaye?

I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.'

'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'as ever mote I thryve!

It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.'

'Ye, holy god,' quod she, 'what thing is that?

What! Bet than swiche fyve? Ey, nay, y-wis!

For al this world ne can I reden what It sholde been; som Iape, I trowe, is
this; And but your-selven telle us what it is, My wit is for to arede it al to
lene; As help me god, I noot nat what ye meene.'

'And I your borow, ne never shal, for me, This thing be told to yow, as mote
I thryve!'

'And why so, uncle myn? Why so?' quod she.

'By god,' quod he, 'that wole I telle as blyve; For prouder womman were
ther noon on-lyve, And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye; I iape nought, as
ever have I Ioye!'

Tho gan she wondren more than biforn A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen
caste; For never, sith the tyme that she was born, To knowe thing desired
she so faste; And with a syk she seyde him at the laste, 'Now, uncle myn, I
nil yow nought displese, Nor axen more, that may do yow disese.'

So after this, with many wordes glade, And freendly tales, and with mery
chere, Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade In many an unkouth
glad and deep matere, As freendes doon, whan they ben met y-fere; Til she
gan axen him how Ector ferde, That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.

'Ful wel, I thanke it god,' quod Pandarus, 'Save in his arm he hath a litel
wounde; And eek his fresshe brother Troilus, The wyse worthy Ector the
secounde, In whom that ever vertu list abounde, As alle trouthe and alle
gentillesse, Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.'

'In good feith, eem,' quod she, 'that lyketh me; They faren wel, god save
hem bothe two!

For trewely I holde it greet deyntee A kinges sone in armes wel to do, And
been of good condicions ther-to; For greet power and moral vertu here Is
selde y-seye in o persone y-fere.'

'In good feith, that is sooth,' quod Pandarus; 'But, by my trouthe, the king
hath sones tweye, That is to mene, Ector and Troilus, That certainly, though
that I sholde deye, They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye, As any men
that liveth under the sonne, Hir might is wyde y-knowe, and what they
conne.

'Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle: In al this world ther nis a better
knight Than he, that is of worthinesse welle; And he wel more vertu hath
than might.

This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight.

The same prys of Troilus I seye, God help me so, I knowe not swiche
tweye.'

'By god,' quod she, 'of Ector that is sooth; Of Troilus the same thing trowe
I; For, dredelees, men tellen that he dooth In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly To every wight, that al the prys
hath he Of hem that me were levest preysed be.'

'Ye sey right sooth, y-wis,' quod Pandarus; 'For yesterday, who-so hadde
with him been, He might have wondred up-on Troilus; For never yet so
thikke a swarm of been Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen; And
thorough the feld, in everi wightes ere, Ther nas no cry but "Troilus is there!"

'Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste, Ther nas but Grekes blood;
and Troilus, Now hem he hurte, and hem alle doun he caste; Ay where he
wente, it was arayed thus: He was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us; That
as that day ther dorste noon withstonde, Whyl that he held his bloody swerd
in honde.

'Therto he is the freendlieste man Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve;
And wher him list, best felawshipe can To suche as him thinketh able for to
thryve.'

And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve, He took his leve, and seyde, 'I
wol go henne.'

'Nay, blame have I, myn uncle,' quod she thenne.

'What eyleth yow to be thus wery sone, And namelich of wommen? Wol ye
so?

Nay, sitteth down; by god, I have to done With yow, to speke of wisdom er
ye go.'

And every wight that was a-boute hem tho, That herde that, gan fer a-wey
to stonde, Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.

Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende, Of hire estat and of hir
gouvernaunce, Quod Pandarus, 'Now is it tyme I wende; But yet, I seye,
aryseth, lat us daunce, And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce: What list
yow thus your-self to disfigure, Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?'

'A! Wel bithought! For love of god,' quod she, 'Shal I not witen what ye
mene of this?'

'No, this thing axeth layser,' tho quod he, 'And eek me wolde muche greve,
y-wis, If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis.

Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille Than seye a sooth that were ayeins
your wille.

'For, nece, by the goddesse Minerve, And Iuppiter, that maketh the thonder
ringe, And by the blisful Venus that I serve, Ye been the womman in this
world livinge, With-oute paramours, to my wittinge, That I best love, and
lothest am to greve, And that ye witen wel your-self, I leve.'

'Y-wis, myn uncle,' quod she, 'grant mercy; Your frendship have I founden
ever yit; I am to no man holden trewely,

So muche as yow, and have so litel quit; And, with the grace of god,
emforth my wit, As in my gilt I shal you never offende; And if I have er
this, I wol amende.

'But, for the love of god, I yow beseche, As ye ben he that I love most and
triste, Lat be to me your fremde manere speche, And sey to me, your nece,
what yow liste:'

And with that word hir uncle anoon hir kiste, And seyde, 'Gladly, leve nece
dere, Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.'

With that she gan hir eiyen doun to caste, And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, 'Nece, alwey, lo! To the laste, How-so it be that som men hem
delyte With subtil art hir tales for to endyte, Yet for al that, in hir entencioun
Hir tale is al for som conclusioun.

'And sithen thende is every tales strengthe, And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe To yow, that been my freend
so feithfully?'

And with that word he gan right inwardly Biholden hir, and loken on hir
face, And seyde, 'On suche a mirour goode grace!'

Than thoughte he thus: 'If I my tale endyte Ought hard, or make a proces
any whyle, She shal no savour han ther-in but lyte, And trowe I wolde hir in
my wil bigyle.

For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle Ther-as they can nat pleynty
understonde; For-thy hir wit to serven wol I fonde —'

And loked on hir in a besy wyse, And she was war that he byheld hir so,
And seyde, 'Lord! So faste ye me avyse!

Sey ye me never er now? What sey ye, no?'

'Yes, yes,' quod he, 'and bet wole er I go; But, by my trouthe, I thoughte
now if ye Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.

'For to every wight som goodly aventure Som tyme is shape, if he it can
receyven; And if that he wol take of it no cure, Whan that it commeth, but
wilfully it weyven, Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven, But right his
verray slouthe and wrecchednesse; And swich a wight is for to blame, I
gesse.

'Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it
take; And, for the love of god, and eek of me, Cacche it anoon, lest aventure
slake.

What sholde I lenger proces of it make?

Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon, If that yow list, a wight so wel
begoon.

`And sith I speke of good entencioun, As I to yow have told wel here-
biforn, And love as wel your honour and renoun As creature in al this world
y-born; By alle the othes that I have yow sworn, And ye be wrooth therfore,
or wene I lye, Ne shal I never seen yow eft with ye.

`Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wher-to?

Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe; For hardely the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe, Yet trist alwey, ye shal me
finde trewe; And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge, To yow nolde I
no swiche tales bringe.'

`Now, my good eem, for goddes love, I preye,'

Quod she, `com of, and tel me what it is; For bothe I am agast what ye wol
seye, And eek me longeth it to wite, y-wis.

For whether it be wel or be amis, Say on, lat me not in this fere dwelle:'

`So wol I doon; now herkneth, I shal telle: `Now, nece myn, the kinges dere
sone, The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free, Which alwey for to do
wel is his wone, The noble Troilus, so loveth thee, That, bot ye helpe, it wol
his bane be.

Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?

Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.

`But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve; Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not
lyen; Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve —'

With that the teres braste out of his yen, And seyde, `If that ye doon us
bothe dyen, Thus giltelees, than have ye fished faire; What mende ye,
though that we bothe apeyre?

`Allas! He which that is my lord so dere, That trewe man, that noble gentil
knight, That nought desireth but your frendly chere, I see him deye, ther he
goth up-right, And hasteth him, with al his fulle might, For to be slayn, if
fortune wol assente; Allas! That god yow swich a beautee sente!

`If it be so that ye so cruel be, That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see, No more than of a Iapere or a
wrecche, If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche To make amendes
of so cruel a dede; Avysement is good bifore the nede.

`Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!

Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!

Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees!

Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!

And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote, If therwith-al in you ther be no
routhe, Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!

`And also think wel that this is no gaude; For me were lever, thou and I and
he Were hanged, than I sholde been his baude, As heyghe, as men mighte
on us alle y-see: I am thyn eem, the shame were to me, As wel as thee, if
that I sholde assente, Thorough myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.

`Now understand, for I yow nought requere, To binde yow to him thorough
no behest, But only that ye make him better chere Than ye han doon er
this, and more feste, So that his lyf be saved, at the leste; This al and som,
and playnly our entente; God help me so, I never other mente.

`Lo, this request is not but skile, y-wis, Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther
noon.

I sette the worste that ye dredden this, Men wolden wondren seen him come
or goon: Ther-ayeins answere I thus a-noon, That every wight, but he be
fool of kinde, Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde.

`What? Who wol deme, though he see a man To temple go, that he the
images eteth?

Think eek how wel and wysly that he can Governe him-self, that he
nothing foryeteth, That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him geteth; And
eek ther-to, he shal come here so selde, What fors were it though al the toun
behelde?

`Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun; And wrye yow in that mantel
ever-mo; And god so wis be my savacioun,

As I have seyde, your beste is to do so.

But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo, So lat your daunger sucred ben a
lyte, That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.'

Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse, Thoughte, `I shal fele what he
meneth, y-wis.'

`Now, eem,' quod she, `what wolde ye devyse?

What is your reed I sholde doon of this?'

`That is wel seyde,' quod he. `certayn, best is That ye him love ayein for his
lovinge, As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.

`Think eek, how elde wasteth every houre In eche of yow a party of
beautee; And therefore, er that age thee devoure, Go love, for, olde, ther wol
no wight of thee.

Lat this proverbe a lore un-to yow be; "To late y-war, quod Beautee, whan it
paste;"

And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.

`The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude, Whan that him thinketh a
womman bereth hir hye, "So longe mote ye live, and alle proude, Til crowes
feet be growe under your ye, And sende yow thanne a mirour in to pryte In
whiche that ye may see your face a-morwe!"

Nece, I bidde wisse yow no more sorwe.'

With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed, And she bigan to breste a-
wepe anon, And seyde, `Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?

For of this world the feith is al agoon!

Allas! What sholden straunge to me doon, Whan he, that for my beste
freend I wende, Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

`Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees, That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
Had loved other him or Achilles, Ector, or any mannes creature,

Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure On me, but alwey had me in repreve;
This false world, allas! Who may it leve?

‘What? Is this al the Ioye and al the feste?

Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?

Is this the verray mede of your beheste?

Is al this peynted proces seyde, allas!

Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!

Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye; For so astonied am I that I deye!’

With that she gan ful sorrowfully to syke; ‘A! May it be no bet?’ quod
Pandarus; ‘By god, I shal no-more come here this wyke, And god to-forn,
that am mistrusted thus; I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us, Or of our
death! Allas! I woful wrecche!

Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

‘O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte, O Furies three of helle, on yow I crye!

So lat me never out of this hous departe, If that I mente harm or vilanye!

But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye, And I with him, here I me shryve, and
seye That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.

‘But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed, By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I never eten breed Til I myn owene herte blood may see;
For certayn, I wole deye as sone as he —’

And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte, Til she agayn him by the lappe
caughte.

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere, So as she was the ferfulleste
wight That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere, And saw the sorrowful
ernest of the knight, And in his preyere eek saw noon unright, And for the
harm that mighte eek fallen more, She gan to rewe and dredde hir wonder
sore; And thoughte thus, ‘Unhappes fallen thikke Alday for love, and in
swich maner cas, As men ben cruel in hem-self and wikke; And if this man
slee here him-self, allas!

In my presence, it wol be no solas.

What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye; It nedeth me ful sleyly for to
pleye.'

And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye, 'A! Lord! What me is tid a sory
chaunce!

For myn estat lyth in Iupartye,

And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce; But nathelees, with goddes
gouvernaunce, I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe, And eek his lyf; and
stinte for to wepe.

'Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese; Yet have I lever maken him good
chere In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese; Ye seyn, ye nothing elles me
requere?'

'No, wis,' quod he, 'myn owene nece dere.'

'Now wel,' quod she, 'and I wol doon my peyne; I shal myn herte ayeins
my lust constreyne.

'But that I nil not holden him in honde, Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde, Myn honour sauf, plese him fro day to
day; Ther-to nolde I nought ones have seyd nay, But that I dredde, as in my
fantasye; But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

'And here I make a protestacioun, That in this proces if ye depper go, That
certaynly, for no savacioun Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo, Ne shal I never on him han other
routhe. —'

'I graunte wel,' quod Pandare, 'by my trouthe.

'But may I truste wel ther-to,' quod he, 'That of this thing that ye han hight
me here, Ye wol it holden trewly un-to me?'

'Ye, doutelees,' quod she, 'myn uncle dere.'

'Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,'

Quod he, 'to pleyne, or after yow to preche?'

‘Why, no, parde; what nedeth more speche?’

Tho fillen they in othere tales glade, Til at the laste, ‘O good eem,’ quod she
tho, ‘For love of god, which that us bothe made, Tel me how first ye wisten
of his wo: Wot noon of hit but ye?’ He seyde, ‘No.’

‘Can he wel speke of love?’ quod she, ‘I preye, Tel me, for I the bet me shal
purveye.’

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle, And seyde, ‘By my trouthe, I shal yow
telle.

This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle, In-with the paleys-gardyn, by a
welle, Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle, Right for to speken of an
ordenaunce, How we the Grekes myghte disavaunce.

‘Sone after that bigonne we to lepe, And casten with our dartes to and fro,
Til at the laste he seyde he wolde slepe, And on the gres a-down he leyde
him tho; And I after gan rome to and fro

Til that I herde, as that I welk allone, How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

‘Tho gan I stalke him softly bihinde, And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde, Right thus to Love he gan him for to
pleyne; He seyde, "Lord! Have routhe up-on my peyne, Al have I been
rebel in myn entente; Now, MEA CULPA, lord! I me repente.

“O god, that at thy disposicioun Ledest the fyn by Iuste purveyaunce, Of
every wight, my lowe confessioun Accepte in gree, and send me swich
penaunce As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce, That may my goost
departe away fro thee, Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.

“For certes, lord, so soore hath she me wounded, That stod in blak, with
loking of hir yen, That to myn hertes botme it is y-sounded, Thorough which
I woot that I mot nedes dyen; This is the worste, I dar me not bi-wryen; And
wel the hotter been the gledes rede, That men hem wryen with asshen pale
and dede.”

‘With that he smoot his heed adoun anoon, And gan to motre, I noot what,
trewely.

And I with that gan stille away to goon, And leet ther-of as nothing wist
hadde I, And come ayein anoon and stood him by, And seyde, "A-wake, ye
slepen al to longe; It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe, "That slepen so
that no man may yow wake.

Who sey ever or this so dul a man?"

"Ye, freend," quod he, "do ye your hedes ake For love, and lat me liven as I
can."

But though that he for wo was pale and wan, Yet made he tho as freshe a
countenance As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.

`This passed forth, til now, this other day, It fel that I com roming al allone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay Up-on his bed; but man so sore
grone Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone, Ne wist I nought; for,
as I was cominge, Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge.

`Of which I took somwat suspeciou, And neer I com, and fond he wepte
sore; And god so wis be my savacioun,

As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.

For neither with engyn, ne with no lore, Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him
kepe; That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

`And god wot, never, sith that I was born, Was I so bisy no man for to
preche, Ne never was to wight so depe y-sworn, Or he me tolde who mighte
been his leche.

But now to yow rehersen al his speche, Or alle his woful wordes for to
soun, Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.

`But for to save his lyf, and elles nought, And to non harm of yow, thus am
I driven; And for the love of god that us hath wrought, Swich chere him
dooth, that he and I may liven.

Now have I plat to yow myn herte shriven; And sin ye woot that myn
entente is clene, Tak hede ther-of, for I non yvel mene.

`And right good thrift, I prey to god, have ye, That han swich oon y-caught
with-oute net; And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see, Wel in the ring than is

the ruby set.

Ther were never two so wel y-met, Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:
Ther mighty god yet graunte us see that houre!

`Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha!' quod she, `As helpe me god, ye shenden
every deel!

`O mercy, dere nece,' anoon quod he, `What-so I spak, I mente nought but
weel, By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel; Now beth nought wrooth,
my blood, my nece dere.'

`Now wel,' quod she, `foryeven be it here!'

With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente; And lord, he was glad and
wel bigoon!

Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente, But straught in-to hir closet wente
anoon, And sette here doun as stille as any stoon, And every word gan up
and doun to winde, That he hadde seyde, as it com hir to minde; And wex
somdel astonied in hir thought, Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought Of peril, why she oughte afered
be.

For man may love, of possibilitee, A womman so, his herte may to-breste,
And she nought love ayein, but-if hir leste.

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus, Thascry aroos at skarmish al with-
oute, And men cryde in the strete, `See, Troilus Hath right now put to flight
the Grekes route!'

With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute, `A! Go we see, caste up the latis
wyde; For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde; `For other wey is fro
the yate noon Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.'

With that com he and al his folk anoon An esy pas rydinge, in routes
tweyne, Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne, For which, men say,
may nought disturbed be That shal bityden of necessitee.

This Troilus sat on his baye stede, Al armed, save his heed, ful richely, And
wounded was his hors, and gan to blede, On whiche he rood a pas, ful

softely; But swych a knightly sighte, trewely, As was on him, was nought,
with-ouen faile, To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

So lyk a man of armes and a knight He was to seen, fulfild of heigh
prowesse; For bothe he hadde a body and a might To doon that thing, as wel
as hardinesse; And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse, So fresh, so
yong, so weldy semed he, It was an heven up-on him for to see.

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places, That by a tissew heng, his bak
bihinde, His sheld to-dashed was with swerdes and maces, In which men
mighte many an arwe finde That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde; And
ay the peple cryde, 'Here cometh our Ioye, And, next his brother, holdere
up of Troye!'

For which he wex a litel reed for shame, Whan he the peple up-on him
herde cryen, That to biholde it was a noble game, How sobreliche he caste
doun his yen.

Cryseyda gan al his chere aspyen, And leet so softe it in hir herte sinke,
That to hir-self she seyde, 'Who yaf me drinke?'

For of hir owene thought she wex al reed, Remembringe hir right thus, 'Lo,
this is he Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed, But I on him
have mercy and pitee;'

And with that thought, for pure a-shamed, she Gan in hir heed to pulle, and
that as faste, Whyl he and al the peple for-by paste, And gan to caste and
rollen up and doun With-inne hir thought his excellent prowesse, And his
estat, and also his renoun, His wit, his shap, and eek his gentillesse; But
most hir favour was, for his distresse Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a
routhe To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

Now mighte som envyous Iangle thus, 'This was a sodeyn love; how
mighte it be That she so lightly lovede Troilus Right for the firste sighte; ye,
pardee?'

Now who-so seyth so, mote he never thee!

For every thing, a ginning hath it nede Er al be wrought, with-ouen any
drede.

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly Yaf him hir love, but that she gan
enclyne To lyke him first, and I have told yow why; And after that, his
manhod and his pyne Made love with-inne hir for to myne, For which, by
proces and by good servyse, He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed, Sat in hir seventhe hous of hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed, To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.

And, sooth to seyn, she nas not al a fo To Troilus in his nativitee;

God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe, That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne
faste Un-to Criseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe, Ther-as she sat allone,
and gan to caste Wher-on she wolde apoynte hir at the laste, If it so were hir
eem ne wolde cesse, For Troilus, up-on hir for to presse.

And, lord! So she gan in hir thought argue In this matere of which I have
yow told, And what to doon best were, and what eschue, That plyted she ful
ofte in many fold.

Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold, And what she thoughte somewhat
shal I wryte, As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.

She thoughte wel that Troilus persone She knew by sighte and eek his
gentillesse, And thus she seyde, `Al were it nought to done, To graunte him
love, yet, for his worthinesse, It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,
In honestee, with swich a lord to dele, For myn estat, and also for his hele.

`Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he; And sith he hath to see me swich
delyt, If I wolde utterly his sighte flee, Peraunter he mighte have me in
dispyt, Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt; Now were I wys, me
hate to purchace, With-outen nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

`In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure.

For though a man forbede dronkenesse, He nought for-bet that every
creature Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse; Eek sith I woot for me is his
distresse, I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse, Sith it is so, he meneth
in good wyse.

And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon, His thewes goode, and that he is
not nyce.

Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, he is noon; To wys is he to do so gret a
vyce; Ne als I nel him never so cheryce, That he may make avaunt, by Iuste
cause; He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.

Now set a cas, the hardest is, y-wis, Men mighten deme that he loveth me;
What dishonour were it un-to me, this?

May I him lette of that? Why nay, pardee!

I knowe also, and alday here and see, Men loven wommen al this toun
about; Be they the wers? Why, nay, with-outen doute.

I think eek how he able is for to have Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,
To been his love, so she hir honour save; For out and out he is the
worthieste, Save only Ector, which that is the beste.

And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure, But swich is love, and eek myn
aventure.

Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought; For wel wot I my-self, so god me
spede, Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought, I am oon the fayreste, out
of drede, And goodlieste, who-so taketh hede; And so men seyn in al the
toun of Troye.

What wonder is it though he of me have Ioye?

I am myn owene woman, wel at ese, I thank it god, as after myn estat;
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty lese, With-outen Ialousye or swich
debat; Shal noon housbonde seyn to me "Chekmat!"

For either they ben ful of Ialousye, Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.

What shal I doon? To what fyn live I thus?

Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?

What, par dieux! I am nought religious!

And though that I myn herte sette at reste Upon this knight, that is the
worthieste, And kepe alwey myn honour and my name, By alle right, it may

do me no shame.'

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte, In March, that chaungeth ofte
tyme his face, And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte Which over-sprat
the sonne as for a space, A cloudy thought gan thorough hir soule pace, That
over-spradde hir brighte thoughtes alle, So that for fere almost she gan to
falle.

That thought was this: `Allas! Sin I am free, Sholde I now love, and putte in
Iupartye My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?

Allas! How dorste I thenken that folye?

May I nought wel in other folk aspye Hir dredful loye, hir constreynt, and
hir peyne?

Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.

`For love is yet the moste stormy lyf, Right of him-self, that ever was
bigonne; For ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf, Ther is in love, som cloud is
over that sonne: Ther-to we wrecched wommen nothing conne, Whan us is
wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke; Our wreche is this, our owene wo to
drinke.

`Also these wikked tonges been so prest To speke us harm, eek men be so
untrewe, That, right anoon as cessed is hir lest, So cesseth love, and forth to
love a newe: But harm y-doon, is doon, who-so it rewe.

For though these men for love hem first to-rende, Ful sharp biginning
breketh ofte at ende.

`How ofte tyme hath it y-knowen be, The treson, that to womman hath be
do?

To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see, Or wher bicometh it, whan it is
ago; Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so, Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight
on it sporneth; That erst was nothing, in-to nought it torneth.

`How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be To plesen hem that Iangle of love, and
demen, And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me?

For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen Al be for harm that folk hir
freendes quemen; And who may stoppen every wikked tonge, Or soun of
belles whyl that they be ronge?'

And after that, hir thought bigan to clere, And seyde, 'He which that
nothing under-taketh, No thing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere.'

And with an other thought hir herte quaketh; Than slepeth hope, and after
dreed awaketh; Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bi-twixen tweye, She rist hir
up, and went hir for to pleye.

Adoun the steyre anoon-right tho she wente In-to the gardin, with hir neces
three, And up and doun ther made many a wente, Flexippe, she, Tharbe,
and Antigone, To pleyen, that it Ioye was to see; And othere of hir
wommen, a gret route, hir folwede in the gardin al aboute.

This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes, And shadwed wel with
blosmy bowes grene, And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes, In
which she walketh arm in arm bi-twene; Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singe clere, That it an heven was hir voys to here.
— She seyde, 'O love, to whom I have and shal Ben humble subgit, trewe
in myn entente, As I best can, to yow, lord, yeve ich al For ever-more, myn
hertes lust to rente.

For never yet thy grace no wight sente So blisful cause as me, my lyf to
lede In alle Ioye and seurtee, out of drede.

'Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset In love, y-wis, that al that bereth lyf
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet; For, lord, with-uten Ialousye or stryf, I
love oon which that is most ententyf To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned.

'As he that is the welle of worthinesse, Of trouthe ground, mirour of
goodliheed, Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernesse, Of vertu rote, of lust
findere and heed, Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed, Y-wis, I love him
best, so doth he me; Now good thrift have he, wher-so that he be!

'Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of love, Of al this blisse, in which to
bathe I ginne?

And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!

This is the righte lyf that I am inne, To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
This doth me so to vertu for to entende, That day by day I in my wil
amende.

`And who-so seyth that for to love is vyce, Or thraldom, though he fele in it
distresse, He outhere is envyous, or right nyce, Or is unmighty, for his
shrewednesse, To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse, Defamen love, as
nothing of him knowe; Thei speken, but they bente never his bowe.

`What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte, Though that a man, for feblesse of
his yen, May nought endure on it to see for bryghte?

Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?

No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.

And for-ty, who that hath an heed of verre, Fro cast of stones war him in
the werre!

`But I with al myn herte and al my might, As I have seyde, wol love, un-to
my laste, My dere herte, and al myn owene knight, In which myn herte
growen is so faste, And his in me, that it shal ever laste.

Al dredde I first to love him to biginne, Now woot I wel, ther is no peril
inne.'

And of hir song right with that word she stente, And therwith-al, `Now,
nece,' quod Criseyde, `Who made this song with so good entente?'

Antigone answerde anon, and seyde, `Ma dame, y-wis, the goodlieste
mayde Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye; And let hir lyf in most honour
and Ioye.'

`Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,'

Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to syke, And seyde, `Lord, is there
swich blisse among These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?'

`Ye, wis,' quod freshe Antigone the whyte, `For alle the folk that han or
been on lyve Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.

`But wene ye that every wrecche woot The parfit blisse of love? Why, nay,
y-wis; They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot; Do wey, do wey, they woot

nothing of this!

Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is Aught fair in hevene; Why? For they
conne telle; And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.'

Criseyde un-to that purpos nought answerde, But seyde, 'Y-wis, it wol be
night as faste.'

But every word which that she of hir herde, She gan to prenten in hir herte
faste; And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste Than it dide erst, and sinke in
hir herte, That she wex somewhat able to converte.

The dayes honour, and the hevenes ye, The nightes fo, al this clepe I the
sonne, Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye, As he that hadde his
dayes cours y-ronne; And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne For lak
of light, and sterres for to appere, That she and al hir folk in wente y-fere.

So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste, And voyded weren they that voyden
oughte, She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.

Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte.

Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, and thoughte Of al this thing the
manere and the wyse.

Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

A nightingale, upon a cedre grene, Under the chambre-wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene, Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.

That herkned she so longe in good entente, Til at the laste the dede sleep hir
hente.

And as she sleep, anoon-right tho hir mette, How that an egle, fethered
whyt as boon, Under hir brest his longe clawes sette, And out hir herte he
rente, and that a-noon, And dide his herte in-to hir brest to goon, Of which
she nought agroos, ne nothing smerte, And forth he fleigh, with herte left
for herte.

Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
Fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde, And in his chaumbre sit, and hath

abiden Til two or three of his messages yeden For Pandarus, and soughten
him ful faste, Til they him founde and broughte him at the laste.

This Pandarus com leping in at ones, And seiye thus: `Who hath ben wel
y-bete To-day with swerdes, and with slinge-stones, But Troilus, that hath
caught him an hete?'

And gan to Iape, and seyde, `Lord, so ye swete!

But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste;'

And he answerde him, `Do we as thee leste.'

With al the haste goodly that they mighte, They spedde hem fro the souper
un-to bedde; And every wight out at the dore him dighte, And wher him
liste upon his wey him spedde; But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
For wo, til that he herde som tydinge, He seyde, `Freend, shal I now wepe
or singe?'

Quod Pandarus, `Ly stille and lat me slepe, And don thyn hood, thy nedes
spedde be; And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe; At shorte
wordes, thow shal trowe me. — Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee, And love
thee best, by god and by my trouthe, But lak of pursuit make it in thy
slouthe.

`For thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne, Fro day to day, til this day, by
the morwe, Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne, And also hath she
leyd hir feyth to borwe.

Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.'

What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?

As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

But right as floures, thorough the colde of night Y-closed, stoupen on hir
stalke lowe, Redressen hem a-yein the sonne bright,

And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe, Right so gan tho his eyen up to
throwe This Troilus, and seyde, 'O Venus dere, Thy might, thy grace, y-
heried be it here!'

And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes, And seyde, 'Lord, al thyn be
that I have; For I am hool, al brosten been my bondes; A thousand Troians
who so that me yave, Eche after other, god so wis me save, Ne mighte me
so gladen; lo, myn herte, It spredeth so for Ioye, it wol to-sterete!

'But Lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?

Whan shal I next my dere herte see?

How shal this longe tyme a-wey be driven, Til that thou be ayein at hir fro
me?

Thou mayst answer, "A-byd, a-byd," but he That hangeth by the nekke,
sooth to seyne, In grete disese abyde for the peyne.'

'Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,'

Quod Pandarus, 'for every thing hath tyme; So longe abyde til that the night
departe; For al so siker as thou lyst here by me, And god tofor, I wol be
there at pryde, And for thy werk somewhat as I shal seye, Or on som other
wight this charge leye.

'For pardee, god wot, I have ever yit Ben redy thee to serve, and to this
night Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit Don al thy lust, and shal
with al my might.

Do now as I shal seye, and fare a-right; And if thou nilt, wyte al thy-self thy
care, On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.

'I woot wel that thou wyser art than I A thousand fold, but if I were as
thou, God help me so, as I wolde outrely, Right of myn owene hond, wryte
hir right now A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how I ferde amis, and hir
beseche of routhe; Now help thy-self, and leve it not for slouthe.

'And I my-self shal therwith to hir goon; And whan thou wost that I am
with hir there, Worth thou up-on a courser right anoon, Ye, hardily, right in
thy beste gere, And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were, And thou
shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge At som windowe, in-to the strete lokinge.

‘And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe, And up-on me make thy
contenance;

But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe To tarien ought, god shilde us fro
mischaunce!

Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce; And we shal speke of thee
somwhat, I trowe, Whan Thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!

‘Touching thy lettre, thou art wys y-nough, I woot thow nilt it digneliche
endyte; As make it with thise argumentes tough; Ne scrivenish or craftily
thou it wryte; Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte; And if thou wryte a
goodly word al softe, Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.

‘For though the beste harpoure upon lyve Wolde on the beste souned Ioly
harpe That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve, Touche ay o streng, or ay o
werbul harpe, Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe, It shulde maken
every wight to dulle, To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.

‘Ne Iompre eek no discordaunt thing y-fere, As thus, to usen termes of
phisyk;

In loves termes, hold of thy matere The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk;
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought; so nere it but a Iape.'

This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus; But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this:
— ‘Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,

I am ashamed for to wryte, y-wis,

Lest of myn innocence I seyde a-mis, Or that she nolde it for despyt
receyve; Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it nothing weyve.'

To that Pandare answerde, ‘If thee lest, Do that I seye, and lat me therwith
goon; For by that lord that formed est and west, I hope of it to bringe
answere anon Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon, Lat be; and sory
mote he been his lyve, Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.'

Quod Troilus, ‘Depardieux, I assente; Sin that thee list, I will aryse and
wryte; And blisful god preye ich, with good entente, The vyage, and the

lettre I shal endyte, So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte, Yif thou me
wit my lettre to devyse:'

And sette him doun, and wroot right in this wyse. — First he gan hir his
righte lady calle, His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche, His blisse, and
eek these othere termes alle, That in swich cas these loveres alle seche; And
in ful humble wyse, as in his speche, He gan him recomaunde un-to hir
grace; To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.

And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde To be nought wrooth, though he, of
his folye, So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde, That love it made, or
elles moste he dye, And pitously gan mercy for to crye; And after that he
seyde, and ley ful loude, Him-self was litel worth, and lesse he coude; And
that she sholde han his conning excused, That litel was, and eek he dredde
hir so, And his unworthinesse he ay acused; And after that, than gan he telle
his woo; But that was endeles, with-outen ho; And seyde, he wolde in
trouthe alwey him holde; — And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.

And with his salte teres gan he bathe The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wax deliverliche and rathe; Therwith a thousand tymes, er he
lette, He kiste tho the lettre that he shette, And seyde, 'Lettre, a blisful
destenee Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see.'

This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme A-morwe, and to his neces
paleys sterte, And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryde, And gan to
lape, and seyde, 'Y-wis, myn herte, So fresh it is, al-though it sore smerte, I
may not slepe never a Mayes morwe; I have a Ioly wo, a lusty sorwe.'

Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde, With dreedful herte, and desirous
to here The cause of his cominge, thus answerde: 'Now by your feyth, myn
uncle,' quod she, 'dere, What maner windes gydeth yow now here?

Tel us your Ioly wo and your penaunce, How ferforth be ye put in loves
daunce.'

'By god,' quod he, 'I hoppe alwey bihinde!'

And she to-laugh, it thoughte hir herte breste.

Quod Pandarus, 'Loke alwey that ye finde Game in myn hood, but
herkneþ, if yow leste; Ther is right now come in-to toune a geste, A Greek

espye, and telleth newe thinges, For which I come to telle yow tydings.

‘Into the gardin go we, and we shal here, Al prevely, of this a long
sermoun.’

With that they wenten arm in arm y-fere In-to the gardin from the chaumbre
doun.

And whan that he so fer was that the soun Of that he speke, no man here
mighte, He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte, ‘Lo, he that is al hoolly
yours free Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace, And sent to you this
lettre here by me; Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space, And of som
goodly answeere yow purchace; Or, helpe me god, so pleyntyly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.’

Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille, And took it nought, but al hir
humble chere Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, ‘Scrit ne bille, For love of
god, that toucheth swich matere, Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere, To
myn estat have more reward, I preye, Than to his lust; what sholde I more
seye?’

‘And loketh now if this be resonable, And letteth nought, for favour ne for
slouthe, To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable To myn estat, by god, and
by your trouthe, To taken it, or to han of him routhe, In harming of my-self
or in repreve?’

Ber it a-yein, for him that ye on leve!’

This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare, And seyde, ‘Now is this the grettest
wonder That ever I sey! Lat be this nyce fare!’

To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder, If, for the citee which that
stondeth yonder, Wolde I a lettre un-to yow bringe or take To harm of yow;
what list yow thus it make?’

‘But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some, That he that most desireth yow
to serve, Of him ye recche leest wher he bicometh, And whether that he live
or elles sterve.’

But for al that that ever I may deserve, Refuse it nought,’ quod he, and hente
hir faste, And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste, And seyde hire, ‘Now

cast it away anon, That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.'

Quod she, 'I can abyde til they be goon,'

And gan to smyle, and seyde hym, 'Eem, I preye, Swich answeere as yow
list, your-self purveye, For trewely I nil no lettre wryte.'

'No? than wol I,' quod he, 'so ye endyte.'

Therwith she lough, and seyde, 'Go we dyne.'

And he gan at him-self to iape faste, And seyde, 'Nece, I have so greet a
pyne For love, that every other day I faste' — And gan his beste Iapes forth
to caste; And made hir so to laughe at his folye, That she for laughter
wende for to dye.

And whan that she was comen in-to halle, 'Now, eem,' quod she, 'we wol
go dine anon;'

And gan some of hir women to hir calle, And streyght in-to hir chaumbre
gan she goon; But of hir businesses, this was oon Amonges othere thinges,
out of drede, Ful prively this lettre for to rede; Avysed word by word in
every lyne,

And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good; And up it putte, and went hir
in to dyne.

But Pandarus, that in a study stood, Er he was war, she took him by the
hood, And seyde, 'Ye were caught er that ye wiste;'

'I vouche sauf,' quod he. 'do what yow liste.'

Tho wesshen they, and sette hem down and ete; And after noon ful slelyly
Pandarus

Gan drawe him to the window next the strete, And seyde, 'Nece, who hath
arayed thus The yonder hous, that stant afor-yeyn us?'

'Which hous?' quod she, and gan for to biholde, And knew it wel, and whos
it was him tolde, And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale, And seten in
the window bothe tweye.

Whan Pandarus saw tyme un-to his tale, And saw wel that hir folk were alle
awaye, 'Now, nece myn, tel on,' quod he; 'I seye, How liketh yow the lettre
that ye woot?

Can he ther-on? For, by my trouthe, I noot.'

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she, And gan to humme, and seyde, 'So I
trowe.'

'Aqyte him wel, for goddes love,' quod he; 'My-self to medes wol the
lettre sowe.'

And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe, 'Now, goode nece, be it never so
lyte, Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.'

'Ye, for I can so wryte,' quod she tho; 'And eek I noot what I sholde to him
seye.'

'Nay, nece,' quod Pandare, 'sey nat so; Yet at the leste thanketh him, I
preye, Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.'

Now for the love of me, my nece dere, Refuseth not at this tyme my
preyere.'

'Depardieux,' quod she, 'God leve al be wel!

God help me so, this is the firste lettre That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.'

And in-to a closet, for to avyse hir bettre, She wente allone, and gan hir
herte unfette Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte; And sette hir down, and
gan a lettre wryte, Of which to telle in short is myn entente Theeffect, as fer
as I can understonde: — She thonked him of al that he wel mente Towardes
hir, but holden him in honde She nolde nought, ne make hir-selven bonde In
love, but as his suster, him to plese, She wolde fayn to doon his herte an
ese.

She shette it, and to Pandarus in gan goon, There as he sat and loked in-to
the strete, And down she sette hir by him on a stoon Of Iaspre, up-on a
quisshin gold y-bete, And seyde, 'As wisly helpe me god the grete, I never
dide a thing with more peyne Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne;'

And took it him: He thonked hir and seyde, 'God woot, of thing ful ofte
looth bigonne Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde, That ye to him
of hard now ben y-wonne Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne!

For-why men seyth, "Impressiounes lighte Ful lightly been ay redy to the
flighte.'

'But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe, And hard was it your herte for to
grave; Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge, Al wolde ye the forme of
daunger save.

But hasteth yow to doon him Ioye have; For trusteth wel, to longe y-doon
hardnesse Causeth despyt ful often, for destresse.'

And right as they declamed this matere, Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes
ende, Com ryding with his tenthe some y-fere, Al softly, and thiderward
gan bende Ther-as they sete, as was his way to wende To paleys-ward; and
Pandare him aspyde, And seyde, 'Nece, y-see who cometh here ryde!

'O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose; Lest he may thinke that ye him
eschuwe.'

'Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as reed as rose.

With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe With dreedful chere, and oft his
hewes muwe; And up his look debonairly he caste, And bekked on Pandare,
and forth he paste.

God woot if he sat on his hors a-right, Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!

God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!

What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?

Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say, To telle in short, hir lyked al y-
fere, His persone, his aray, his look, his chere, His goodly manere, and his
gentillesse, So wel, that never, sith that she was born, Ne hadde she swich
routhe of his distresse; And how-so she hath hard ben her-biforn, To god
hope I, she hath now caught a thorn, She shal not pulle it out this nexte
wyke; God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

Pandare, which that stood hir faste by, Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to
smyte, And seyde, 'Nece, I pray yow hertely, Tel me that I shal axen yow a
lyte: A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte, With-outen his gilt, but for
hir lakked routhe, Were it wel doon?' Quod she, 'Nay, by my trouthe!'

'God help me so,' quod he, 'ye sey me sooth.

Ye felen wel your-self that I not lye; Lo, yond he rit!' Quod she, 'Ye, so he
dooth!'

'Wel,' quod Pandare, 'as I have told yow thrye, Lat be youre nyce shame
and youre folye, And spek with him in esing of his herte; Lat nycetee not do
yow bothe smerte.'

But ther-on was to heven and to done; Considered al thing, it may not be;
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone To graunten him so greet a
libertee.

'For playnly hir entente,' as seyde she, 'Was for to love him unwist, if she
mighte, And guerdon him with nothing but with sighte.'

But Pandarus thoughte, 'It shal not be so, If that I may; this nyce opinioun
Shal not be holden fully yeres two.'

What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?

He moste assente on that conclusioun, As for the tyme; and whan that it was
eve, And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.

And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde, And right for Ioye he felte his
herte daunce; And Troilus he fond alone a-bedde,

That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce, Bitwixen hope and derk
desesperaunce.

But Pandarus, right at his in-cominge, He song, as who seyth, 'Lo!
Sumwhat I bringe,'

And seyde, 'Who is in his bed so sone Y-buried thus?' 'It am I, freend,'
quod he.

'Who, Troilus? Nay, helpe me so the mone,'

Quod Pandarus, 'Thou shalt aryse and see A charme that was sent right now
to thee, The which can helen thee of thyn accesse, If thou do forth-with al
thy besinesse.'

'Ye, through the might of god!' quod Troilus.

And Pandarus gan him the lettre take, And seyde, 'Pardee, god hath holpen
us; Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.'

But ofte gan the herte glade and quake Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.

But fynally, he took al for the beste That she him wroot, for somewhat he
biheld On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste, Al covered she
the wordes under sheld.

Thus to the more worthy part he held, That, what for hope and Pandarus
biheste, His grete wo for-yede he at the leste.

But as we may alday our-selven see, Through more wode or col, the more
fyr; Right so encrees hope, of what it be, Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek
desyr; Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr, So through this lettre, which that
she him sente, Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.

Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and night This Troilus gan to desiren more

Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, and dide his might To pressen on, as by
Pandarus lore, And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore Fro day to day; he leet
it not refreyde, That by Pandare he wroot somewhat or seyde; And dide also
his othere observaunces That to a love-re longeth in this cas; And, after that
these dees turnede on chaunces, So was he outhere glad or seyde 'Allas!'

And held after his gestes ay his pas; And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outhere gladde.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours, And pitously gan ay til him to
pleyne, And him bisoughte of rede and som socours; And Pandarus, that
sey his wode peyne, Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne, And
bisily with al his herte caste

Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste; And seyde, 'Lord, and freend, and
brother dere, God woot that thy disese dooth me wo.

But woltow stinten al this woful chere, And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes
two, And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so, That thou shalt come in-to a
certayn place, Ther-as thou mayst thy-self hir preye of grace.

`And certainly, I noot if thou it wost, But tho that been expert in love it
seye, It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most, A man to have a leysyer for
to preye, And siker place his wo for to biwreye; For in good herte it moot
som routhe impresse, To here and see the giltles in distresse.

`Paraunter thenkestow: though it be so That kinde wolde doon hir to
biginne To han a maner routhe up-on my wo,

Seyth Daunger, "Nay, thou shalt me never winne; So reuleth hir hir hertes
goost with-inne, That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote; What in
effect is this un-to my bote?"

`Think here-ayeins, whan that the sturdy ook, On which men hakketh ofte,
for the nones, Receyved hath the happy falling strook, The grete sweigh
doth it come al at ones, As doon these rokkes or these milne-stones.

For swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte, Whan it descendeth, than
don thinges lighte.

`And reed that boweth down for every blast, Ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol
aryse; But so nil not an ook whan it is cast; It nedeth me nought thee longe
to forbyse.

Men shal reioysen of a greet empryse Acheved wel, and stant with-ouen
doute, Al han men been the lenger ther-about.

`But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest, A thing now which that I shal axen
thee; Which is thy brother that thou lovest best As in thy verray hertes
privetee?'

`Y-wis, my brother Deiphebus,' quod he.

`Now,' quod Pandare, `er houres twyes twelve, He shal thee ese, unwist of it
him-selve.

`Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,'

Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho Which hadde his lord and grete
freend ben ay; Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.

To telle in short, with-outen wordes mo, Quod Pandarus, 'I pray yow that ye
be Freend to a cause which that toucheth me.'

'Yis, pardee,' quod Deiphebus, 'wel thow wost, In al that ever I may, and
god to-fore, Al nere it but for man I love most, My brother Troilus; but sey
wherfore It is; for sith that day that I was bore, I nas, ne never-mo to been I
thinke, Ayeins a thing that mighte thee for-thinke.'

Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde, 'Lo, sire, I have a lady in this
toun, That is my nece, and called is Criseyde, Which some men wolden
doon oppressioun, And wrongfully have hir possessioun: Wherfor I of your
lordship yow biseche To been our freend, with-oute more speche.'

Deiphebus him answerde, 'O, is not this, That thow spekest of to me thus
straungely, Criseyda, my freend?' He seyde, 'Yis.'

'Than nedeth,' quod Deiphebus, 'hardely, Na-more to speke, for trusteth
wel, that I Wol be hir champioun with spore and yerde; I roughte nought
though alle hir foos it herde.

'But tel me how, thou that woost al this matere, How I might best avaylen?
Now lat see.'

Quod Pandarus; 'If ye, my lord so dere, Wolden as now don this honour to
me, To preyen hir to-morwe, lo, that she Come un-to yow hir pleyntes to
devyse, Hir adversaries wolde of it agryse.

'And if I more dorste preye as now, And chargen yow to have so greet
travayle, To han som of your bretheren here with yow, That mighten to hir
cause bet avayle, Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle For to be
holpen, what at your instaunce, What with hir othere freendes governaunce.'

Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde, To al honour and bountee to
consente, Answerde, 'It shal be doon; and I can finde Yet gretter help to this
in myn entente.

What wolt thow seyn, if I for Eleyne sente To speke of this? I trowe it be
the beste; For she may leden Paris as hir leste.

`Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother, It nedeth nought to preye him
freend to be; For I have herd him, o tyme and eek other, Speke of Criseyde
swich honour, that he May seyn no bet, swich hap to him hath she.

It nedeth nought his helpes for to crave; He shal be swich, right as we wole
him have.

`Spek thou thy-self also to Troilus On my bihalve, and pray him with us
dyne.'

`Sire, al this shal be doon,' quod Pandarus; And took his leve, and never gan
to fyne, But to his neces hous, as streyt as lyne, He com; and fond hir fro
the mete aryse; And sette him down, and spak right in this wyse.

He seyde, `O veray god, so have I ronnel

Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete?

I noot whether ye the more thank me conne.

Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete Is now aboute eft-sones for to
plete, And bringe on yow advocacyes newe?'

`I? No,' quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe.

`What is he more aboute, me to drecche And doon me wrong? What shal I
do, allas?

Yet of him-self nothing ne wolde I recche, Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That been his freendes in swich maner cas; But, for the love of god, myn
uncle dere, No fors of that; lat him have al y-fere; `With-uten that I have
ynough for us.'

`Nay,' quod Pandare, `it shal nothing be so.

For I have been right now at Deiphebus, And Ector, and myne othere lordes
mo, And shortly maked eche of hem his fo; That, by my thrift, he shal it
never winne For ought he can, whan that so he biginne.'

And as they casten what was best to done, Deiphebus, of his owene
curtasye,

Com hir to preye, in his propre persone, To holde him on the morwe
companye

At diner, which she nolde not denye, But goodly gan to his preyere obeye.

He thonked hir, and wente up-on his weye.

Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up a-noon, To telle in short, and forth
gan for to wende To Troilus, as stille as any stoon; And al this thing he tolde
him, word and ende; And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende; And seyde
him, 'Now is tyme, if that thou conne, To bere thee wel to-morwe, and al is
wonne.

'Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne; Lat not for nyce shame, or
drede, or slouthe; Som-tyme a man mot telle his owene peyne; Bileve it,
and she shal han on thee routhe; Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in
trouthe.

But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede; And what it is, I leye, I can arede.

'Thow thinkest now, "How sholde I doon al this?"

For by my cheres mosten folk aspye, That for hir love is that I fare a-mis;
Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye."

Now think not so, for thou dost greet folye.

For I right now have founden o manere Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy
chere.

'Thow shalt gon over night, and that as blyve, Un-to Deiphebus hous, as
thee to pleye, Thy maladye a-wey the bet to dryve, For-why thou semest
syk, soth for to seye.

Sone after that, doun in thy bed thee leye, And sey, thow mayst no lenger
up endure, And ly right there, and byde thyn aventure.

'Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take The same tyme, and lasten til a-
morwe; And lat see now how wel thou canst it make, For, par-dee, syk is he
that is in sorwe.

Go now, farwel! And, Venus here to borwe, I hope, and thou this purpos
holde ferme, Thy grace she shal fully ther conferme.'

Quod Troilus, 'Y-wis, thou nedelees Conseylest me, that sykliche I me
feyne, For I am syk in earnest, doutelees,

So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Thou shalt the bettre pleyne, And hast the lasse need to
countrefete; For him men demen hoot that men seen swete.

'Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I Shal wel the deer un-to thy bowe
dryve.'

Therwith he took his leve al softly, And Troilus to paleys wente blyve.
So glad ne was he never in al his lyve; And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he wente.

What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere That Deiphebus un-to his brother
made, Or his accesse, or his siklych manere, How men gan him with clothes
for to lade, Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde him glade?

But al for nought; he held forth ay the wyse That ye han herd Pandare er
this devyse.

But certeyn is, er Troilus him leyde, Deiphebus had him prayed, over night,
To been a freend and helping to Criseyde.

God woot, that he it grauntede anon-right, To been hir fulle freend with al
his might.

But swich a nede was to preye him thenne, As for to bidde a wood man for
to renne.

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme Of meel-tyd, that the faire
quene Eleyne Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme, With Deiphebus,
to whom she nolde feyne; But as his suster, hoomly, sooth to seyne, She
com to diner in hir playn entente.

But god and Pandare wiste al what this mente.

Com eek Criseyde, al innocent of this, Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also;
But flee we now prolixitee best is, For love of god, and lat us faste go Right
to the effect, with-oute tales mo, Why al this folk assembled in this place;

And lat us of hir saluinges pace.

Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn, And fedde hem wel with al that
mighte lyke.

But ever-more, `Allas!' was his refreyn, `My goode brother Troilus, the
syke, Lyth yet"—and therwithal he gan to syke; And after that, he peyned
him to glade Hem as he mighte, and chere good he made.

Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse So feithfully, that pitee was to
here, And every wight gan waxen for accesse A leche anoon, and seyde, `In
this manere Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow lere.'

But ther sat oon, al list hir nought to teche, That thoughte, best coude I yet
been his leche.

After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse, As folk don yet, whan som
wight hath bigonne To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse A
thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne: — `He is, he can, that fewe lordes
conne.'

And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme, He not for-gat hir preysing to
conferme.

Herde al this thing Criseyde wel y-nough, And every word gan for to
notifye;

For which with sobre chere hir herte lough; For who is that ne wolde hir
glorifye, To mowen swich a knight don live or dye?

But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle; For for o fyn is al that ever I telle.

The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse, And, as hem oughte, arisen
everychoon, And gonne a while of this and that devyse.

But Pandarus brak al this speche anoon, And seyde to Deiphebus, `Wole ye
goon, If youre wille be, as I yow preyde, To speke here of the nedes of
Criseyde?'

Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held, Took first the tale, and seyde, `Go
we blyve;'

And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,

And seyde, `Ioves lat him never thryve, That dooth yow harm, and bringe
him sone of lyve!

And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe, If that I may, and alle folk be
trewe.'

`Tel thou thy neces cas,' quod Deiphebus To Pandarus, `for thou canst best
it telle.' — `My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus; What sholde I lenger,'
quod he, `do yow dwelle?'

He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle, Up-on hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
So heynous, that men mighte on it spete.

Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other, And Poliphete they gonnen
thus to warien, `An-honged be swich oon, were he my brother; And so he
shal, for it ne may not varien.'

What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?

Pleyedly, alle at ones, they hir highten To been hir helpe in al that ever they
mighten.

Spak than Eleyne, and seyde, `Pandarus, Woot ought my lord, my brother,
this matere, I mene, Ector? Or woot it Troilus?'

He seyde, `Ye, but wole ye now me here?

Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here, It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hir-self him al this, er she wente.

`For he wole have the more hir grief at herte, By cause, lo, that she a lady
is;

And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte, And do yow wite, and that
anoon, y-wis, If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this.'

And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere, `God have thy soule, y-brought
have I thy bere!'

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, with-oute rekeninge,

Out wente anoon to Eleyne and Deiphebus, And seyde hem, `So there be no tarynge, Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe Criseyda, my lady, that is here;

And as he may enduren, he wole here.

`But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte, And fewe folk may lightly make it warm; Now loketh ye, (for I wol have no wyte, To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm Or him disesen, for my bettre arm), Wher it be bet she byde til eft-sones; Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

`I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe, That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye, But it were I, for I can, in a throwe, Reherce hir cas unlyk that she can seye; And after this, she may him ones preye To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve; This may not muchel of his ese him reve.

`And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere His ese, which that him thar nought for yow; Eek other thing that toucheth not to here, He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now, That secret is, and for the tounes prow.'

And they, that nothing knewe of his entente, With-oute more, to Troilus in they wente.

Eleyne, in al hir goodly softe wyse, Gan him saluwe, and womanly to pleye, And seyde, `Ywis, ye moste alweyes aryse!

Now fayre brother, beth al hool, I preye!'

And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye, And him with al hir wit to recomforte; As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.

So after this quod she, `We yow biseke, My dere brother, Deiphebus and I, For love of god, and so doth Pandare eke, To been good lord and freend, right hertely, Un-to Criseyde, which that certainly Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare, That can hir cas wel bet than I declare.'

This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle, And al hir cas reherce, and that anoon; Whan it was seyde, sone after, in a whyle, Quod Troilus, `As sone as I may goon, I wol right fayn with al my might ben oon, Have god my trouthe, hir cause to sustene.'

'Good thrift have ye,' quod Eleyne the quene.

Quod Pandarus, 'And it your wille be That she may take hir leve, er that she go?'

'O, elles god forbede,' tho quod he, 'If that she vouche sauf for to do so.'

And with that word quod Troilus, 'Ye two, Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere, To yow have I to speke of o matere, 'To been avysed by your reed the better': — And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed, The copie of a tretis and a lettre, That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed, If swich a man was worthy to ben deed, Woot I nought who; but in a grisly wyse He preyede hem anon on it avyse.

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde In earnest greet; so did Eleyne the quene; And rominge outward, fast it gan biholde, Downward a steyre, in-to an herber grene.

This ilke thing they redden hem bitwene; And largely, the mountaunce of an houre, Thei gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now lat hem rede, and turne we anon To Pandarus, that gan ful faste pryde That al was wel, and out he gan to goon In-to the grete chambre, and that in hye, And seyde, 'God save al this companye!

Com, nece myn; my lady quene Eleyne Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne.

'Rys, take with yow your nece Antigone, Or whom yow list, or no fors, hardily; The lesse prees, the bet; com forth with me, And loke that ye thonke humbly

Hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly Your tyme y-see, taketh of hem your leve, Lest we to longe his restes him bireve.'

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,

Quod tho Criseyde, 'Go we, uncle dere'; And arm in arm inward with him she wente, Avysed wel hir wordes and hir chere; And Pandarus, in earnestful manere,

Seyde, `Alle folk, for goddes love, I preye, Stinteth right here, and softly
yow pleye.

`Aviseth yow what folk ben here with-inne, And in what plyt oon is, god
him amende!

And inward thus ful softly biginne; Nece, I conjure and heighly yow
defende, On his half, which that sowle us alle sende, And in the vertue of
corounes tweyne, Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this peyne!

`Fy on the devel! Think which oon he is, And in what plyt he lyth; com of
anoon; Think al swich taried tyd, but lost it nis!

That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.

Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon Up-on yow two; come of now, if ye
conne; Whyl folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!

`In titering, and pursuite, and delayes, The folk devyne at wagginge of a
stree; And though ye wolde han after merye dayes, Than dar ye nought, and
why? For she, and she Spak swich a word; thus loked he, and he; Lest tyme
I loste, I dar not with yow dele; Com of therefore, and bringeth him to hele.'

But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here, Was Troilus nought in a cankedort,

That lay, and mighte whispringe of hem here, And thoughte, `O lord, right
now renneth my sort Fully to dye, or han anoон comfort'; And was the firste
tyme he shulde hir preye Of love; O mighty god, what shal he seye?

Explicit Secundus Liber.

BOOK III.

Incipit prohemium tercii libri.

O blisful light of whiche the bemes clere Adorneth al the thridde hevене
faire!

O sonnes lief, O Loves doughter dere, Plesaunce of love, O goodly
debonaire, In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!

O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse, Y-heried be thy might and thy
goodnesse!

In hevене and helle, in erthe and salte see Is felt thy might, if that I wel
descerne; As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree Thee fele in tymes
with vapour eterne.

God loveth, and to love wol nought werne; And in this world no lyves
creature, With-outen love, is worth, or may endure.

Ye Loves first to thilke effectes glade, Thorough which that thinges liven alle
and be, Comeveden, and amorous him made

On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
And in a thousand formes doun him sente For love in erthe, and whom yow
liste, he hente.

Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,

And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne; Algates, hem that ye wol sette a-
fyre, They dreden shame, and vices they resigne; Ye do hem corteys be,
fresshe and benigne, And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth; The Ioyes
that he hath, your might him sendeth.

Ye holden regne and hous in unitee; Ye soothfast cause of frendship been
also; Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee Of thinges which that folk on
wondren so, Whan they can not construe how it may io, She loveth him, or
why he loveth here; As why this fish, and nought that, comth to were.

Ye folk a lawe han set in universe, And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse: Now, lady bright, for thy
benignitee, At reverence of hem that serven thee, Whos clerk I am, so
techeth me devyse Som Ioye of that is felt in thy servyse.

Ye in my naked herte sentement

Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse. — Caliope, thy vois be now
present,

For now is nede; sestow not my destresse, How I mot telle anon-right the
gladnesse Of Troilus, to Venus herynge?

To which gladnes, who nede hath, god him bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Incipit Liber Tercius.

Lay al this mene whyle Troilus,

Recordinge his lessoun in this manere, 'Ma fey!' thought he, 'Thus wole I
seye and thus; Thus wole I pleyne unto my lady dere; That word is good,
and this shal be my chere; This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.'

God leve him werken as he can devyse!

And, lord, so that his herte gan to quappe, Heringe hir come, and shorte for
to syke!

And Pandarus, that ledde hir by the lappe, Com ner, and gan in at the curtin
pyke, And seyde, 'God do bote on alle syke!

See, who is here yow comen to visyte; Lo, here is she that is your deeth to
wyte.'

Therwith it semed as he wepte almost; 'A ha,' quod Troilus so rewwfully,

'Wher me be wo, O mighty god, thow wost!

Who is al there? I se nought trewely.'

'Sire,' quod Criseyde, 'it is Pandare and I.'

'Ye, swete herte? Allas, I may nought ryse To knele, and do yow honour in
som wyse.'

And dressede him upward, and she right tho Gan bothe here hondes softe
upon him leye, 'O, for the love of god, do ye not so To me,' quod she, 'Ey!
What is this to seye?

Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye; First, yow to thonke, and of your
lordshipe eke Continuance I wolde yow biseke.'

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed, Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye, Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.

But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed, And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne, To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.

Cryseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough, For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse, Al nere he malapert, or made it tough, Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.

But whan his shame gan somewhat to passe, His resons, as I may my rymes holde, I yow wole telle, as techen bokes olde.

In chaunged vois, right for his verray drede, Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede, Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere, With look doun cast and humble yolden chere, Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte Was, twyes, `Mercy, mercy, swete herte!'

And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe, The nexte word was, `God wot, for I have, As feyfully as I have had konninge, Ben youre, also god so my sowle save; And shal til that I, woful wight, be grave.

And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne, Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.

`Thus mucche as now, O wommanliche wyf, I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese, That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese, If with my deeth your herte I may apese.

But sin that ye han herd me somewhat seye, Now recche I never how sone that I deye.'

Therwith his manly sorwe to biholde, It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe; And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde, And poked ever his nece newe and newe, And seyde, `Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!

For love of god, make of this thing an ende, Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.'

'I? What?' quod she, 'By god and by my trouthe, I noot nought what ye
wilne that I seye.'

'I? What?' quod he, 'That ye han on him routhe, For goddes love, and doth
him nought to deye.'

'Now thanne thus,' quod she, 'I wolde him preye To telle me the fyn of his
entente; Yet wist I never wel what that he mente.'

'What that I mene, O swete herte dere?'

Quod Troilus, 'O goodly, fresshe free!

That, with the stremes of your eyen clere, Ye wolde som-tyme freendly on
me see, And thanne agreeen that I may ben he, With-oute braunche of vyce
on any wyse, In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse, 'As to my lady
right and chief resort, With al my wit and al my diligence, And I to han,
right as yow list, comfort, Under your yerde, egal to myn offence, As deeth,
if that I breke your defence; And that ye deigne me so muche honoure, Me
to comaunden ought in any houre.

'And I to ben your verray humble trewe, Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,

To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent, And, with good herte, al holly your
talent Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte, Lo, this mene I, myn owene
swete herte.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Lo, here an hard request, And resonable, a lady for to
werne!

Now, nece myn, by natal Ioves fest, Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
That heren wel, this man wol nothing yerne But your honour, and seen him
almost sterve, And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.'

With that she gan hir eyen on him caste Ful esily, and ful debonairly,
Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste

With never a word, but seyde him softly, 'Myn honour sauf, I wol wel
trewely, And in swich forme as he can now devyse, Receyven him fully to
my servyse,

`Biseching him, for goddes love, that he Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentillesse, As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,

And myn honour, with wit and besinesse Ay kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse, From hennes-forth, y-wis, I nil not feyne: Now beeth al hool; no lenger ye ne pleyne.

`But nathelees, this warne I yow,' quod she, `A kinges sone al-though ye be, y-wis, Ye shal na-more have soverainetee

Of me in love, than right in that cas is; Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon amis, To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve, Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.

`And shortly, dere herte and al my knight, Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse, And I shal trewely, with al my might, Your bittre tornen al in-to swetenesse.

If I be she that may yow do gladnesse, For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse'; And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen To hevne threw, and held his hondes hye, `Immortal god!' quod he, `That mayst nought dyen, Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye; And Venus, thou mayst maken melodye; With-outen hond, me semeth that in the towne, For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.

`But ho! No more as now of this matere, For-why this folk wol comen up anoon, That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.

But I coniure thee, Criseyde, and oon, And two, thou Troilus, whan thou mayst goon, That at myn hous ye been at my warninge, For I ful wel shal shape youre cominge; `And eseth ther your hertes right y-nough; And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle To speke of love a-right!' therwith he lough, `For ther have ye a layser for to telle.'

Quod Troilus, `How longe shal I dwelle Er this be doon?' Quod he, `Whan thou mayst ryse, This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.'

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus Tho comen upward, right at the steyres ende; And Lord, so than gan grone Troilus, His brother and his

suster for to blende.

Quod Pandarus, 'It tyme is that we wende; Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle
three, And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.'

She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily, As she wel coude, and they hir
reverence Un-to the fulle diden hardely,

And speken wonder wel, in hir absence, Of hir, in preysing of hir
excellence, Hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere Commendedden, it Ioye
was to here.

Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place, And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin
seyn.

And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn Delivered been, and seyde that him
leste To slepe, and after tales have reste.

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve, Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente
every wight; And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve, To Troilus tho com,
as lyne right;

And on a paillet, al that glade night, By Troilus he lay, with mery chere, To
tale; and wel was hem they were y-fere.

Whan every wight was voided but they two, And alle the dores were faste
y-shette, To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo, This Pandarus, with-uten
any lette, Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette, And gan to speken in a
sobre wyse

To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse:

'Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere, God woot, and thou, that it sat me
so sore, When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere, For love, of which thy wo
wex alwey more; That I, with al my might and al my lore, Have ever sithen
doon my businesse

To bringe thee to Ioye out of distresse, 'And have it brought to swich plyt as
thou wost, So that, thorough me, thou stondest now in weye To fare wel, I
seye it for no bost, And wostow which? For shame it is to seye, For thee

have I bigonne a gamen pleye Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

`That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen, Bitwixen game and earnest, swich a
mene As maken wommen un-to men to comen; Al sey I nought, thou wost
wel what I mene.

For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene, So fully maad thy gentillesse triste,
That al shal been right as thy-selve liste.

`But god, that al wot, take I to witnesse, That never I this for coveityse
wroughte, But only for to abregge that distresse, For which wel nygh thou
deydest, as me thoughte.

But, gode brother, do now as thee oughte, For goddes love, and kep hir out
of blame, Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.

`For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here Among the peple, as who seyth,
halwed is; For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere, That ever wiste that she
dide amis.

But wo is me, that I, that cause al this, May thenken that she is my nece
dere, And I hir eem, and trattor eek y-fer!

`And were it wist that I, through myn engyn, Hadde in my nece y-put this
fantasye, To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn, Why, al the world up-on it
wolde crye, And seye, that I the worste trecherye Dide in this cas, that ever
was bigonne, And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne.

`Wherefore, er I wol ferther goon a pas, Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas; That is to seye, that thou us never
wreye; And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye To holden secree
swich an heigh matere; For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere.

`And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this, For makeinge of avantes, as men
rede; And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is, Fro day to day, right
for that wikked dede; For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede Han ever
yet proverbed to us yonge, That "Firste vertu is to kepe tonge."

`And, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge Diffusioun of speche, I coude
almost A thousand olde stories thee alegge Of wommen lost, thorough fals

and foles bost; Proverbes canst thy-self y-nowe, and wost, Ayeins that vyce,
for to been a labbe, Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

`O tonge, allas! So often here-biforn Hastow made many a lady bright of
hewe Seyd, "Welawey! The day that I was born!"

And many a maydes sorwes for to newe; And, for the more part, al is
untrewe That men of yelp, and it were brought to preve; Of kinde non
avauntour is to leve.

`Avauntour and a lyere, al is on;

As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me Hir love, and seyth that other wol
she non, And I am sworn to holden it secree, And after I go telle it two or
three; Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste, And lyere, for I breke my biheste.

`Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame, Swich maner folk; what shal
I clepe hem, what, That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name, That never
yet bihighte hem this ne that, Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat?

No wonder is, so god me sende hele, Though wommen drede with us men
to dele.

`I sey not this for no mistrust of yow, Ne for no wys man, but for foles
nyce, And for the harm that in the world is now, As wel for foly ofte as for
malyce; For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce No womman drat, if she be
wel avysed; For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

`But now to purpos; leve brother dere, Have al this thing that I have seyde in
minde, And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere, For at thy day thou
shalt me trewe finde.

I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde, And god to-forn, that it shall thee
suffyse, For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

`For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde; Therefore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee, And day is set, the chartres up
to make.

Have now good night, I may no lenger wake; And bid for me, sin thou art
now in blisse, That god me sende deeth or sone lisse.'

Who mighte telle half the Ioye or feste Which that the sowle of Troilus tho
felte, Heringe theeffect of Pandarus biheste?

His olde wo, that made his herte swelte, Gan tho for Ioye wasten and to-
melte, And al the richesse of his sykes sore At ones fledde, he felte of hem
no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayes, That han in winter dede been
and dreye, Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is, Whan every lusty
lyketh best to pleye; Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye, Wax
sodeynliche his herte ful of Ioye, That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste Ful sobrelly, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, `Freend, in Aprille the laste, As wel thou wost, if it remembre
thee, How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me; And how thou didest al
thy bisnesse To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

`Thou wost how longe I it for-bar to seye To thee, that art the man that I
best triste; And peril was it noon to thee by-wreye, That wiste I wel; but tel
me, if thee liste, Sith I so looth was that thy-self it wiste, How dorst I mo
tellen of this matere, That quake now, and no wight may us here?

`But natheles, by that god I thee swere, That, as him list, may al this world
governe, And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere Myn herte cleve, al were my
lyf eterne, As I am mortal, if I late or yerne

Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne, For al the good that god made
under sonne; `That rather deye I wolde, and determyne, As thinketh me,
now stokked in presoun, In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne, Caytif
to cruel king Agamenoun;

And this, in alle the temples of this toun Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee
swere, To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here.

`And that thou hast so mucche y-doon for me, That I ne may it never-more
deserve, This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee A thousand tymes on a
morwen sterve.

I can no more, but that I wol thee serve Right as thy sclave, whider-so thou
wende, For ever-more, un-to my lyves ende!

`But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche, That never in me thou deme
swich folye As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche, That this, which
thou me dost for companye, I sholde wene it were a bauderye;

I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be; It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

`But he that goth, for gold or for richesse, On swich message, calle him
what thee list; And this that thou dost, calle it gentillesse, Compassioun, and
felawship, and trist; Departe it so, for wyde-where is wist How that there is
dyversitee requered Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

`And, that thou knowe I thanke nought ne wene That this servyse a shame
be or Iape, I have my faire suster Polixene,

Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape; Be she never so faire or wel y-
shape, Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone, To han for thyn, and lat me
thanne allone.

`But, sith that thou hast don me this servyse My lyf to save, and for noon
hope of mede, So, for the love of god, this grete empryse Performe it out;
for now is moste nede.

For high and low, with-uten any drede, I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.'

Thus held him ech of other wel apayed, That al the world ne mighte it bet
amende; And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed, Ech to his owene
nedes gan entende.

But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende For sharp desyr of hope and of
plesaunce, He not for-gat his gode governaunce.

But in him-self with manhod gan restreyne Ech rakel dede and ech
unbrydled chere, That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne, Ne sholde han
wist, by word or by manere, What that he mente, as touching this matere.

From every wight as fer as is the cloude He was, so wel dissimulen he
coude.

And al the whyl which that I yow devyse, This was his lyf; with al his fulle
might, By day he was in Martes high servyse, This is to seyn, in armes as a

knight; And for the more part, the longe night He lay, and thoughte how
that he mighte serve His lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

Nil I nought swere, al-though he lay softe, That in his thought he nas
sumwhat disesed, Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte, And wolde of that
him missed han ben sesed; But in swich cas men is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I wot, no more than was he; That can I deme of possibilitee.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go, That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
He say his lady som-tyme; and also

She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste, And by hir bothe avys, as
was the beste, Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,

So as they dorste, how they wolde procede.

But it was spoken in so short a wyse, In swich awayt alwey, and in swich
fere, Lest any wyght devynen or devyse

Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere, That al this world so leef to hem ne
were As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende To maken of hir speche aright
an ende.

But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte, His wyse goost took ay of al
swich hede, It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte With-uten word, so
that it was no nede To bidde him ought to done, or ought forbede; For
which she thought that love, al come it late, Of alle Ioye hadde opned hir
the yate.

And shortly of this proces for to pace, So wel his werk and wordes he
bisette, That he so ful stood in his lady grace, That twenty thousand tymes,
or she lette, She thonked god she ever with him mette; So coude he him
governe in swich servyse, That al the world ne might it bet devyse.

For-why she fond him so discreet in al, So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal Of steel, and sheld from every
displesaunce; That, to ben in his gode governaunce, So wys he was, she was
no more afered, I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr, Was evere y-lyke prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.

He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent; He lettres bar whan Troilus was
absent.

That never man, as in his freendes nede, Ne bar him bet than he, with-ouen
drede.

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde That every word, or sonde, or
look, or chere Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,

In al this whyle un-to his lady dere; I trowe it were a long thing for to here;
Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte, His wordes alle, or every
look, to poynte.

For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this, In storye noon, ne no man here, I
wene; And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis; For ther was som epistel hem
bitwene, That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene Neigh half this
book, of which him list not wryte; How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus, That standing in concord and in
quiete, Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus, As I have told, and in this
tyme swete, Save only often mighte they not mete, Ne layser have hir
speches to fulfelle, That it befel right as I shal yow telle.

That Pandarus, that ever dide his might Right for the fyn that I shal speke of
here, As for to bringe to his hous som night His faire nece, and Troilus y-
fere, Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere, Touching hir love, were at the
fulle up-bounde, Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

For he with greet deliberacioun

Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle
Forn-cast, and put in
execucioun.

And neither laft, for cost ne for travayle; Come if hem list, hem sholde
nothing fayle; And for to been in ought espyed there, That, wiste he wel, an
inpossible were.

Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind Of every pye and every lette-game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blind In this matere, bothe fremed and
tame.

This timbur is al redy up to frame; Us lakketh nought but that we witen
wolde A certein houre, in which she comen sholde.

And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it
ay, Hadde here-up-on eek made gret ordenaunce, And founde his cause, and
ther-to his aray, If that he were missed, night or day, Ther-whyle he was
aboute this servyse, That he was goon to doon his sacrifyse, And moste at
swich a temple alone wake, Answered of Appollo for to be;

And first to seen the holy laurer quake, Er that Apollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee, And forthy lette him no man,
god forbede, But preye Apollo helpen in this nede.

Now is ther litel more for to doone, But Pandare up, and shortly for to
seyne, Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone, Whan lightles is the
world a night or tweyne, And that the welken shoop him for to reyne, He
streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente; Ye han wel herd the fyn of his
entente.

Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye As he was wont, and of him-self
to Iape; And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye, By this and that, she sholde
him not escape, Ne lengere doon him after hir to gape; But certeynly she
moste, by hir leve, Come soupen in his hous with him at eve.

At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse, And seyde, 'It rayneth; lo,
how sholde I goon?'

'Lat be,' quod he, 'ne stond not thus to muse; This moot be doon, ye shal be
ther anoon.'

So at the laste her-of they felle at oon, Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.

Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne, And asked him if Troilus were
there?

He swor hir, 'Nay, for he was out of towne,'

And seyde, 'Nece, I pose that he were, Yow thurfte never have the more
fere.

For rather than men mighte him ther aspye, Me were lever a thousand-fold
to dye.'

Nought list myn auctor fully to declare What that she thoughte whan he
seyde so, That Troilus was out of town y-fare, As if he seyde ther-of sooth
or no; But that, with-ouen awayt, with him to go, She graunted him, sith he
hir that bisoughte And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.

But natheles, yet gan she him biseche, Al-though with him to goon it was
no fere, For to be war of goosish peples speche, That dremen thinges
whiche that never were, And wel avyse him whom he broughte there; And
seyde him, 'Eem, sin I mot on yow triste, Loke al be wel, and do now as
yow liste.'

He swor hire, 'Yis, by stokkes and by stones, And by the goddes that in
hevene dwelle, Or elles were him levere, soule and bones, With Pluto king
as depe been in helle As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?

Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve, And she to souper com, whan it
was eve, With a certayn of hir owene men,

And with hir faire nece Antigone,

And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten; But who was glad now, who, as
trowe ye, But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see Thurgh-out a litel
windowe in a stewe, Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewes, Unwist of
every wight but of Pandare?

But to the poynt; now whan that she was y-come With alle Ioye, and alle
frendes fare, Hir em anoon in armes hath hir nome, And after to the souper,
alle and some, Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette; God wot, ther was
no deyntee for to fette.

And after souper gonnen they to ryse, At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and
glade, And wel was him that coude best devyse To lyken hir, or that hir
laughen made.

He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.

But at the laste, as every thing hath ende, She took hir leve, and nedes
wolde wende.

But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes, O influences of these hevenes hye!
Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes, Though to us bestes been the
causes wrye.

This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye, But execut was al bisyde hir
leve,

At the goddes wil, for which she moste bleve.

The bente mone with hir hornes pale, Saturne, and Iove, in Cancro ioyned
were, That swich a rayn from hevене gan avale That every maner womman
that was there Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere; At which Pandare
tho lough, and seyde thenne, 'Now were it tyme a lady to go henne!

'But goode nece, if I mighte ever plese Yow any-thing, than prey I yow,'
quod he, 'To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese As for to dwelle here al
this night with me, For-why this is your owene hous, pardee.

For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game, To wende as now, it were to me
a shame.'

Criseyde, which that coude as muche good As half a world, tok hede of his
preyere; And sin it ron, and al was on a flood, She thoughte, as good chep
may I dwellen here, And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere, And have
a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde; For hoom to goon, it may nought wel
bityde.'

'I wol,' quod she, 'myn uncle leef and dere, Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so; I am right glad with yow to dwellen here; I seyde but a-game, I wolde go.'

'Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!' quod he tho; 'Were it a game or no, soth for to telle, Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.'

Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright The newe Ioye, and al the feste agayn;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might, He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn,
And seyde, 'Lord, this is an huge rayn!

This were a weder for to slepen inne; And that I rede us sonE to biginne.

'And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye, For that we shul not liggen fer asonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye, Heren noise of reynes nor of thondre?

By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.

And I wol in that outer hous allone Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.

'And in this middel chaumbre that ye see Shal youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be; And if ye liggen wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte.

The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste, So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.'

Ther nis no more, but here-after sone, The voyde dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Gan every wight, that hadde nought to done More in the place, out of the chamber gon.

And ever-mo so sternelich it ron,

And blew therwith so wonderliche loude, That wel neigh no man heren other coude.

Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte, With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
Ful glad un-to hir beddes syde hir broughte, And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, 'Here at this closet-dore with-oute,

Right over-thwart, your wommen liggen alle, That, whom yow list of hem,
ye may here calle.'

So whan that she was in the closet leyd, And alle hir wommen forth by
ordenaunce A-bedde weren, ther as I have seyde, There was no more to
skippen nor to traunce, But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce, If any
wight was sterige any-where, And late hem slepe that a-bedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del The olde daunce, and every poynt
ther-inne, Whan that he seyde that alle thing was wel, He thoughte he wolde
up-on his werk biginne, And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne; And
stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette, By Troilus a-doun right he him sette.

And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon, Of al this werk he tolde him word
and ende, And seyde, 'Make thee redy right anon, For thou shalt in-to
hevene blisse wende.'

'Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,'

Quod Troilus, 'for never yet no nede Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the
drede.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Ne drede thee never a del, For it shal been right as thou
wilt desyre; So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel, Or casten al the
gruwel in the fyre.'

'Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,'

Quod Troilus, 'as wis as I thee serve, And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

'And if I hadde, O Venus ful of murthe, Aspectes badde of Mars or of
Saturne, Or thou combust or let were in my birthe, Thy fader prey al thilke
harm disturne Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne, For love of him
thou lovedest in the shawe, I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

'O Iove eek, for the love of faire Europe, The whiche in forme of bole away
thou fette; Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope, For love of Cipris,
thou me nought ne lette; O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede, Yet for hir love, O help now at
this nede!

`Mercurie, for the love of Hierse eke, For which Pallas was with Aglauros
wrooth, Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke That this viage be not to
thee looth.

O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth Me shapen was, my destene me
sponne, So helpeth to this werk that is bigonne!

Quod Pandarus, `Thou wrecched mouses herte, Art thou agast so that she
wol thee byte?

Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte, And folowe me, for I wol have
the wyte; But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte.'

And with that word he gan un-do a trappe, And Troilus he broughte in by
the lappe.

The sterne wind so loude gan to route That no wight other noyse mighte
here; And they that layen at the dore with-oute, Ful sykerly they slepten alle
y-fere; And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere, Goth to the dore anon with-
outen lette, Ther-as they laye, and softlyt it shette.

And as he com ayeinward prively,

His nece awook, and asked, `Who goth there?'

`My dere nece,' quod he, `it am I;

Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;'

And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere, `No word, for love of god I yow
biseche; Lat no wight ryse and heren of oure speche.'

`What! Which wey be ye comen, benedicite?'

Quod she; `And how thus unwist of hem alle?'

`Here at this secre trappe-dore,' quod he.

Quod tho Criseyde, `Lat me som wight calle.'

`Ey! God forbede that it sholde falle,'

Quod Pandarus, `that ye swich foly wroughte!

They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!

`It is nought good a sleping hound to wake, Ne yeve a wight a cause to
devyne;

Your wommen slepen alle, I undertake, So that, for hem, the hous men
mighte myne; And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.

And whan my tale al brought is to an ende, Unwist, right as I com, so wol I
wende.

`Now, nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,'

Quod he, `so as ye wommen demen alle, That for to holde in love a man in
honde, And him hir "leef" and "dere herte" calle, And maken him an howve
above a calle, I mene, as love an other in this whyle, She doth hir-self a
shame, and him a gyle.

`Now wherby that I telle yow al this?

Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight, How that your love al fully
graunted is To Troilus, the worthieste knight,

Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght, That, but it were on him
along, ye nolde Him never falsen, whyle ye liven sholde.

`Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente, This Troilus, right platly for to
seyn, Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente, In-to my chaumbre come in al this
reyn, Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn, Save of my-self, as wisly have
I Ioye, And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

`And he is come in swich peyne and distresse That, but he be al fully wood
by this, He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse, But-if god helpe; and cause
why this is, He seyth him told is, of a freend of his, How that ye sholde love
oon that hatte Horaste, For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.'

Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde, Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte
colde, And with a syk she sorwfully answerde, `Allas! I wende, who-so
tales tolde, My dere herte wolde me not holde

So lightly fals! Allas! Conceytes wronge, What harm they doon, for now
live I to longe!

`Horaste! Allas! And falsen Troilus?

I knowe him not, god helpe me so,' quod she; `Allas! What wikked spirit
tolde him thus?

Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see, I shal ther-of as ful excusen me

As ever dide womman, if him lyke';

And with that word she gan ful sore syke.

`O god!' quod she, `So worldly selinesse, Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
Y-medled is with many a bitternesse!

Ful anguissous than is, god woot,' quod she, `Condicoun of veyn
prosperitee;

For either Ioyes comen nought y-fere, Or elles no wight hath hem alwey
here.

`O brotel wele of mannes Ioye unstable!

With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye, Either he woot that thou,
Ioye, art muable, Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye; Now if he woot
it not, how may he seye That he hath verray Ioye and selinesse, That is of
ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

`Now if he woot that Ioye is transitorie, As every Ioye of worldly thing mot
flee, Than every tyme he that hath in memorie, The drede of lesing maketh
him that he May in no perfit selinesse be.

And if to lese his Ioye he set a myte, Than semeth it that Ioye is worth ful
lyte.

`Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere, That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here.

But O, thou wikked serpent, Ialouslye, Thou misbeleved and envious folye,

Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste, That never yet agilte him, that I
wiste?'

Quod Pandarus, `Thus fallen is this cas.'

`Why, uncle myn,' quod she, `who tolde him this?

Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?'

'Ye woot, ye nece myn,' quod he, 'what is; I hope al shal be wel that is amis, For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste, And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.'

'So shal I do to-morwe, y-wis,' quod she, 'And god to-forn, so that it shal suffyse.'

'To-morwe? Allas, that were a fair!' quod he, 'Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse; For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse, That peril is with drecching in y-drawe; Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.'

'Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe; For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle, Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle How is this candele in the straw y-falle?'

A! Benedicite! For al among that fare The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!

'And, nece myn, ne take it not a-greef, If that ye suffre him al night in this wo, God help me so, ye hadde him never leef, That dar I seyn, now there is but we two; But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so; Ye been to wys to do so gret folye, To putte his lyf al night in Iupartye.'

'Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene Ye hadde never thing so leef,' quod she.

'Now by my thrift,' quod he, 'that shal be sene; For, sin ye make this ensample of me, If I al night wolde him in sorwe see For al the tresour in the toun of Troye, I bidde god, I never mote have Ioye!'

'Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love, Shul putte al night his lyf in Iupartye For thing of nought! Now, by that god above, Nought only this delay comth of folye, But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.'

What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse, Ye neither bountee doon ne gentillesse!'

Quod tho Criseyde, 'Wole ye doon o thing, And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese?'

Have here, and bereth him this blewe ringe, For ther is nothing mighte him
bette plese, Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese; And sey my dere
herte, that his sorwe Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe.'

'A ring?' quod he, 'Ye, hasel-wodes shaken!

Ye nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon That mighte dede men alyve
maken;

And swich a ring trowe I that ye have noon.

Discrecioun out of your heed is goon; That fele I now,' quod he, 'and that is
routhe; O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouthe!

'Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek
for lyte?

But if a fool were in a Ialous rage, I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte, But
feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte Another day, whan that I mighte him
finde; But this thing stant al in another kinde.

'This is so gentil and so tendre of herte, That with his deeth he wol his
sorwes wreke; For trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte, He wol to yow
no Ialouse wordes speke.

And for-thy, nece, er that his herte breke, So spek your-self to him of this
matere; For with o word ye may his herte stere.

'Now have I told what peril he is inne, And his coming unwist is to every
wight; Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon, ne sinne; I wol my-self be with
yow al this night.

Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight, And that, by right, ye moste
upon him triste, And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.'

This accident so pitous was to here, And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere, His prive coming, and the siker place,
That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace, Considered alle thinges as
they stode, No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.

Cryseyde answerde, 'As wisly god at reste My sowle bringe, as me is for
him wo!

And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste, If that I hadde grace to do so.

But whether that ye dwelle or for him go, I am, til god me better minde
sende, At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'

Quod Pandarus, 'Ye, nece, wol ye here?

Dulcarnon called is "fleminge of wrecches"; It semeth hard, for wrecches
wol not lere For verray slouthe or othere wilful tecches; This seyde by hem
that be not worth two fecches.

But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde Nis neither hard, ne skilful to
withstonde.'

'Thanne, eem,' quod she, 'doth her-of as yow list; But er he come, I wil up
first aryse; And, for the love of god, sin al my trist Is on yow two, and ye
ben bothe wyse, So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse, That I honour may
have, and he plesaunce; For I am here al in your governaunce.'

'That is wel seyde,' quod he, 'my nece dere'

Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!

But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here, It nedeth not no further for him
sterte; And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte, For love of god; and,
Venus, I the herie; For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.'

This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette Ful sobrely, right be hir beddes
heed, And in his beste wyse his lady grette; But lord, so she wex
sodeynliche reed!

Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed, She coude nought a word a-
right out-bringe So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.

But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele In every thing, to pleye anon bigan,
And seyde, 'Nece, see how this lord can knele!

Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!'

And with that word he for a quisschen ran, And seyde, 'Kneleth now, whyl
that yow leste, Ther god your hertes bringe sone at reste!'

Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse, If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce, Or elles that she toke it in the wyse Of duetee, as for his observaunce;

But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce, That she him kiste, al-though she syked sore; And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more.

Quod Pandarus, `Now wol ye wel biginne; Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere, Upon your beddes syde al there with-inne, That ech of yow the bet may other here.'

And with that word he drow him to the fere, And took a light, and fond his contenaunce, As for to loke up-on an old romaunce.

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right, And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse, Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse, Yet nathelees, considered his distresse, And that love is in cause of swich folye, Thus to him spak she of his Ialouslye: `Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence Of love, ayeins the which that no man may, Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistence And eek bycause I felte wel and say Youre grete trouthe, and servyse every day; And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne, This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne.

`And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit, Of whiche, my dere herte and al my knight, I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit, Al can I nought as mucche as it were right; And I, emforth my conninge and my might, Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte, Ben to yow trewe and hool, with a myn herte; `And dredelees, that shal be founde at preve. — But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne Shal wel be told, so that ye nought yow greve, Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne.

For therwith mene I fynally the peyne, That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse, Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.

`My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how That Ialouslye, allas! That wikked wivere, Thus causelees is copen in-to yow; The harm of which I wolde fayn delivere!

Allas! That he, al hool, or of him slivere, Shuld have his refut in so digne a place, Ther love him sone out of your herte arace!

`But O, thou love, O auctor of nature, Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here iniure, And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?

O were it leful for to pleyne on thee, That undeserved suffrest Ialousye,
Of that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!

`Eek al my wo is this, that folk now usen To seyn right thus, "Ye, Ialousye
is love!"

And wolde a busshel venim al excusen, For that o greyn of love is on it
shove!

But that wot heighe god that sit above, If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;
And after that, it oughte bere his name.

`But certeyn is, som maner Ialousye Is excusable more than som, y-wis.
As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis, But goodly drinketh up al his distresse;
And that excuse I, for the gentillesse.

`And som so ful of furie is and despyt That it sourmounteth his repressioun;
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt, That thanke I god, for whiche your
passioun I wol not calle it but illusioun,

Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure, That dooth your herte this disese
endure.

`Of which I am right sory but not wrooth; But, for my devoir and your
hertes reste, Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth, By sort, or in what wyse
so yow leste, For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!

And if that I be giltif, do me deye, Allas! What mighte I more doon or
seye?'

With that a fewe brighte teres newe Owt of hir eyen fille, and thus she
seyde, `Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrewre To Troilus was
never yet Criseyde.'

With that hir heed doun in the bed she leyde, And with the shete it wreigh,
and syghed sore, And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.

But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe, So hope I that he shal, for he
best may; For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe Folwen ful ofte a mery
someres day; And after winter folweth grene May.

Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories, That after sharpe shoures been
victories.

This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde, Have ye no care, him liste not to
slepe; For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde To here or seen Criseyde,
his lady wepe; But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe, For every teer which
that Criseyde asterte, The crampe of death, to streyne him by the herte.

And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse That he cam there, and that that he
was born; For now is wikke y-turned in-to worse, And al that labour he hath
doon biforn, He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.

'O Pandarus,' thoughte he, 'allas! Thy wyle Serveth of nought, so weylaway
the whyle!'

And therwithal he heng a-doun the heed, And fil on knees, and sorwfully he
sighte; What mighte he seyn? He felte he nas but deed, For wrooth was she
that shulde his sorwes lighte.

But nathelees, whan that he speken mighte, Than seyde he thus, 'God woot,
that of this game, Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!'

Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette, That from his eyen fil there not a
tere, And every spirit his vigour in-knette, So they astoned or oppressed
were.

The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere, Or of ought elles, fled was out of
towne; And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

This was no litel sorwe for to see; But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,
'O nece, pees, or we be lost,' quod he, 'Beth nought agast;' But certeyn, at
the laste, For this or that, he in-to bedde him caste, And seyde, 'O theef, is
this a mannes herte?'

And of he rente al to his bare sherte; And seyde, 'Nece, but ye helpe us
now, Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!'

`Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how, Ful fayn,' quod she; `Allas! That I was
born!

`Ye, nece, wole ye pullen out the thorn That stiketh in his herte?' quod
Pandare; `Sey "Al foryeve," and stint is al this fare!

`Ye, that to me,' quod she, `ful lever were Than al the good the sonne aboute
gooth'; And therwithal she swoor him in his ere, `Y-wis, my dere herte, I am
nought wrooth, Have here my trouthe and many another ooth; Now speek to
me, for it am I, Cryseyde!

But al for nought; yet mighte he not a-breyde.

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes They gan to frote, and wete
his temples tweyne, And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes, She ofte him
kiste; and, shortly for to seyne, Him to revoked she dide al hir peyne.

And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe, And of his swough sone after
that adawe, And gan bet minde and reson to him take, But wonder sore he
was abayst, y-wis.

And with a syk, whan he gan bet a-wake, He seyde, `O mercy, god, what
thing is this?'

`Why do ye with your-selven thus amis?'

Quod tho Criseyde, `Is this a mannes game?'

What, Troilus! Wol ye do thus, for shame?'

And therwithal hir arm over him she leyde, And al foryaf, and ofte tyme
him keste.

He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde As fil to purpos for his herte
reste.

And she to that answerde him as hir leste; And with hir goodly wordes him
disporte She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.

Quod Pandarus, `For ought I can espyen, This light, nor I ne serven here of
nought; Light is not good for syke folkes yen.

But for the love of god, sin ye be brought In thus good plyt, lat now non
hevy thought Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye:'

And bar the candeale to the chimeneye.

Sone after this, though it no nede were, Whan she swich othes as hir list
devyse Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere, Ne cause eek non, to
bidde him thennes ryse.

Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse In many a cas; for every wight, I
gesse, That loveth wel meneth but gentillesse.

But in effect she wolde wite anoon

Of what man, and eek where, and also why He Ielous was, sin ther was
cause noon; And eek the signe, that he took it by, She bad him that to telle
hir bisily, Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde, That this was doon of
malis, hir to fonde.

With-outen more, shortly for to seyne, He moste obeye un-to his lady heste;
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.

He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste, She mighte on him han loked
at the leste; Not I not what, al dere y-nough a risshe, As he that nedes moste
a cause fissue.

And she answerde, `Swete, al were it so, What harm was that, sin I non yvel
mene?

For, by that god that boughte us bothe two, In alle thinge is myn entente
clene.

Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene; Wol ye the childish Ialous
contrefete?

Now were it worthy that ye were y-bete.'

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke,

Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde; And seyde, `Allas! Up-
on my sorwes syke Have mercy, swete herte myn, Cryseyde!

And if that, in thο wordes that I seyde, Be any wrong, I wol no more
trespace; Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.'

And she answerde, 'Of gilt misericorde!

That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this; And ever-more on this night yow
recorde, And beth wel war ye do no more amis.'

'Nay, dere herte myn,' quod he, 'y-wis.'

'And now,' quod she, 'that I have do yow smerte, Foryeve it me, myn
owene swete herte.'

This Troilus, with blisse of that supprysed, Put al in goddes hond, as he that
mente Nothing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed, He hir in armes faste to him
hente.

And Pandarus, with a ful good entente, Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, 'If
ye ben wyse, Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.'

What mighte or may the sely larke seye, Whan that the sperhawk hath it in
his foot?

I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye, To whom this tale sucre be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som-tyme I moot, After myn auctor, tellen hir
gladnesse, As wel as I have told hir hevinesse.

Criseyde, which that felte hir thus y-take, As writen clerkes in hir bokes
olde, Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake, Whan she him felte hir in his
armes folde.

But Troilus, al hool of cares colde, Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes
sevene; Thus sondry peynes bringen folk in hevene.

This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne, And seyde, 'O swete, as ever mote I
goon, Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne; Now yeldeth yow, for
other boot is noon.'

To that Criseyde answerde thus anoon, 'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte
dere, Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!'

O! Sooth is seyd, that heled for to be As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see, Ful bittre drink; and for to han

gladnesse, Men drinke often peyne and greet distresse; I mene it here, as
for this aventure, That though a peyne hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth more sweet, That bitternesse assayed was
biforn; For out of wo in blisse now they flete; Non swich they felten, sith
they were born; Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!

For love of god, take every womman hede To werken thus, if it comth to the
nede.

Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene, As she that iuste cause hadde
him to triste, Made him swich feste, it Ioye was to sene, Whan she his
trouthe and clene entente wiste.

And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste, Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-
binde, Gan eche of hem in armes other winde.

And as the newe abaysshed nightingale, That stinteth first whan she
biginneth to singe, Whan that she hereth any herde tale, Or in the hegges
any wight steringe, And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe; Right so
Criseyde, whan hir drede stente, Opned hir herte and tolde him hir entente.

And right as he that seeth his deeth y-shapen, And deye moot, in ought that
he may gesse, And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen, And from his deeth
is brought in sikernesse, For al this world, in swich present gladnesse Was
Troilus, and hath his lady swete; With worse hap god lat us never mete!

Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe, Hir sydes longe, fleshly,
smothe, and whyte He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte Hir
snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte; Thus in this hevne he gan him
to delyte, And therwith-al a thousand tyme hir kiste; That, what to done, for
Ioye unnethe he wiste.

Than seyde he thus, `O, Love, O, Charitee, Thy moder eek, Citherea the
swete,

After thy-self next heried be she,

Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete; And next that, Imeneus, I thee grete;
For never man was to yow goddes holde As I, which ye han brought fro
cares colde.

`Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges, Who-so wol grace, and list thee
nought honouren, Lo, his desyr wol flee with-outen winges.

For, noldestow of bountee hem socouren That serven best and most alwey
labouren, Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes, But-if thy grace
passed our desertes.

`And for thou me, that coude leest deserve Of hem that nombred been un-to
thy grace, Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve, And me bistowed in so
heygh a place That thilke boundes may no blisse pace, I can no more, but
laude and reverence Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!

And therwithal Criseyde anoon he kiste, Of which, certeyn, she felte no
disese, And thus seyde he, `Now wolde god I wiste, Myn herte swete, how I
yow mighte plese!

What man,' quod he, `was ever thus at ese As I, on whiche the faireste and
the beste That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

`Here may men seen that mercy passeth right; The experience of that is felt
in me, That am unworthy to so swete a wight.

But herte myn, of your benignitee, So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse, Right thourgh the vertu of your
heyghe servyse.

`And for the love of god, my lady dere, Sin god hath wrought me for I shal
yow serve, As thus I mene, that ye wol be my stere, To do me live, if that
yow liste, or sterve, So techeth me how that I may deserve Your thank, so
that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce, Ne do nothing that yow be displesaunce.

`For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf, This dar I seye, that trouthe and
diligence, That shal ye finden in me al my lyf, Ne wol not, certeyn, breken
your defence; And if I do, present or in absence, For love of god, lat slee me
with the dede, If that it lyke un-to your womanhede.'

`Y-wis,' quod she, `myn owne hertes list, My ground of ese, and al myn
herte dere, Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist; But late us falle away fro
this matere; For it suffyseth, this that seyde is here.

And at o word, with-outen repentaunce, Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my
suffisaunce!

Of hir delyt, or Ioyes oon the leste Were impossible to my wit to seye; But
iuggeth, ye that han ben at the feste, Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste
pleye!

I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye That night, be-twixen dreed and
sikernesse, Felten in love the grete worthinesse.

O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought, How blithe un-to hem bothe two
thou were!

Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought, Ye, or the leeste Ioye
that was there?

A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere, And lat hem in this hevене blisse
dwelle, That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!

But sooth is, though I can not tellen al, As can myn auctor, of his
excellence, Yet have I seyde, and, god to-forn, I shal In every thing al hoolly
his sentence.

And if that I, at loves reverence, Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwith-al right as your-selven leste.

For myne wordes, here and every part, I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art, And putte it al in your discrecioun To
encrese or maken diminucioun

Of my langage, and that I yow biseche; But now to purpos of my rather
speche.

Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft, So looth to hem a-sonder goon it
were, That ech from other wende been biraft, Or elles, lo, this was hir moste
fere, That al this thing but nyce dremes were; For which ful ofte ech of hem
seyde, `O swete, Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete?'

And, lord! So he gan goodly on hir see, That never his look ne bleynte from
hir face, And seyde, `O dere herte, may it be That it be sooth, that ye ben in
this place?'

`Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace!'

Quod tho Criseyde, and therwith-al him kiste, That where his spirit was, for
Ioye he niste.

This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two Gan for to kisse, and seyde, `O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo, Ye humble nettes of my lady dere!

Though ther be mercy writen in your chere, God wot, the text ful hard is,
sooth, to finde, How coude ye with-uten bond me binde?'

Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take, And wel an hundred tymes gan he
syke, Nought swiche sorwfull sykes as men make For wo, or elles whan
that folk ben syke, But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke, That shewed his
affeccioun with-inne; Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.

Sone after this they speke of sondry things, As fil to purpos of this
aventure, And pleyngre entrechaungen hir ringes, Of which I can nought

tellen no scripture; But wel I woot, a broche, gold and asure, In whiche a
ruby set was lyk an herte, Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wrecche, That blameth love and holt of it
despyt, That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche, Was ever yet y-
yeve him swich delyt, As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?

Nay, doutelees, for also god me save, So parfit Ioye may no nigard have!
They wol sey `Yis,' but lord! So that they lye, Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo
and drede!

They callen love a woodnesse or folye, But it shal falle hem as I shal yow
rede; They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede, And live in wo, ther god
yeve hem mischaunce, And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispyse Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so
longe As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse,

And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge As Crassus dide for his
affectis wronge, To techen hem that they ben in the vyce, And loveres
nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!

These ilke two, of whom that I yow seye, Whan that hir hertes wel assured
were, Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye, And eek rehercen how, and
whanne, and where, They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere That
passed was; but al swich hevynesse, I thanke it god, was tourned to
gladnesse.

And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke Of any thing of swich a tyme
agoon, With kissing al that tale sholde breke, And fallen in a newe Ioye
anoon,

And diden al hir might, sin they were oon, For to recoveren blisse and been
at ese, And passed wo with Ioye countrepeyse.

Reson wil not that I speke of sleep, For it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep, But lest this night, that was to
hem so dere, Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere, It was biset in Ioye
and busynesse Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.

But whan the cok, comune astrologer, Gan on his brest to bete, and after
crowe, And Lucifer, the dayes messenger,

Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe; And estward roos, to him that
coude it knowe, Fortuna maior, than anoon Criseyde, With herte sore, to
Troilus thus seyde: — `Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce, That I
was born, allas! What me is wo, That day of us mot make desseveraunce!

For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go, Or elles I am lost for evermo!

O night, allas! Why niltow over us hove, As longe as whanne Almena lay
by love?

`O blake night, as folk in bokes rede, That shapen art by god this world to
hyde At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede, That under that men mighte in
reste abyde, Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde, That there-as
day with labour wolde us breste, That thou thus fleest, and deynest us
nought reste!

`Thou dost, allas! To shortly thyn offyce, Thou rakel night, ther god,
makere of kinde, Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce, So faste ay to
our hemi-spere binde.

That never-more under the ground thou winde!

For now, for thou so hyst out of Troye, Have I forgon thus hastily my
Ioye!

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte, As thoughte him tho, for pietous
distresse, The blody teres from his herte melte, As he that never yet swich
hevynesse Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse, Gan therwith-al
Criseyde his lady dere In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere: — `O
cruel day, accusour of the Ioye That night and love han stole and faste y-
wryen, A-cursed be thy coming in-to Troye, For every bore hath oon of thy
bright yen!

Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?

What hastow lost, why sekestow this place, Ther god thy lyght so quenche,
for his grace?

`Allas! What han thise loveres thee agilt, Dispitous day? Thyn be the pyne
of helle!

For many a lovere hastow shent, and wilt; Thy pouring in wol no-wher lete
hem dwelle.

What proferestow thy light here for to selle?

Go selle it hem that smale seles graven, We wol thee nought, us nedeth no
day haven.'

And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde, And seyde, `O fool, wel may men
thee dispyse, That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde, And suffrest hir so
sone up fro thee ryse, For to disesen loveres in this wyse.

What! Holde your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Morwe!

I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!

Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde, `My lady right, and of my
wele or wo The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde, And shal I ryse,
allas! And shal I go?

Now fele I that myn herte moot a-two!

For how sholde I my lyf an houre save, Sin that with yow is al the lyf I
have?

`What shal I doon, for certes, I not how, Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme
see, That in this plyt I may be eft with yow; And of my lyf, god woot, how
that shal be, Sin that desyr right now so byteth me, That I am deed anon,
but I retourne.

How sholde I longe, allas! Fro yow soiourne?

`But nathelees, myn owene lady bright, Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight, Were in your herte set so
fermely

As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely, Me lever were than thise worldes
tweyne, Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.'

To that Cryseyde answerde right anoon, And with a syk she seyde, `O herte
dere, The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon, That first shal Phebus falle
fro his spere, And every egle been the dowves fere, And every roche out of
his place sterte, Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

`Ye he so depe in-with myn herte grave, That, though I wolde it turne out of
my thought, As wisly verray god my soule save, To dyen in the peyne, I
coude nought!

And, for the love of god that us bath wrought, Lat in your brayn non other
fantasye So crepe, that it cause me to dye!

`And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde As I have yow, that wolde I
yow biseche; And, if I wiste soothly that to finde, God mighte not a poynt
my Ioyes eche!

But, herte myn, with-oute more speche, Beth to me trewe, or elles were it
routhe; For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!

`Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse; Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal
to mo; And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse To turne ayein, soone after
that ye go, As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so, As wisly god myn herte bringe
at reste!

And him in armes took, and ofte keste.

Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be, This Troilus up roos, and faste him
cledde, And in his armes took his lady free An hundred tyme, and on his
wey him spedde, And with swich wordes as his herte bledde, He seyde,
`Farewel, mr dere herte swete, Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to
mete!

To which no word for sorwe she answerde, So sore gan his parting hir
destreyne; And Troilus un-to his palays ferde, As woo bigon as she was,
sooth to seyne; So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne For to ben eft
there he was in plesaunce, That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retorned to his real palais, sone

He softe in-to his bed gan for to slinke, To slepe longe, as he was wont to
done, But al for nought; he may wel ligge and winke, But sleep ne may ther

in his herte sinke; Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende, A
thousand-fold was worth more than he wende.

And in his thought gan up and doun to winde Hir wordes alle, and every
countenance, And fermely impressen in his minde The leste poynt that to
him was plesaunce; And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce, Desyr al
newe him brende, and lust to brede Gan more than erst, and yet took he non
hede.

Criseyde also, right in the same wyse, Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette His
worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse, His gentillesse, and how she with him
mette, Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette; Desyring eft to have hir herte
dere In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.

Pandare, a-morwe which that comen was Un-to his nece, and gan hir fayre
grete, Seyde, `Al this night so reyned it, allas!

That al my drede is that ye, nece swete, Han litel layser had to slepe and
mete; Al night,' quod he, `hath reyn so do me wake, That som of us, I trowe,
hir hedes ake.'

And ner he com, and seyde, `How stont it now This mery morwe, nece,
how can ye fare?'

Criseyde answerde, `Never the bet for yow, Fox that ye been, god yeve
youre herte care!

God help me so, ye caused al this fare, Trow I,' quod she, `for alle your
wordes whyte; O! Who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!'

With that she gan hir face for to wrye With the shete, and wex for shame al
reed; And Pandarus gan under for to pryde, And seyde, `Nece, if that I shal
be deed, Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.'

With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir
kiste.

I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye, What! God foryaf his deeth,
and she al-so Foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye, For other cause was
ther noon than so.

But of this thing right to the effect to go, Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous
she wente, And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

Now torne we ayein to Troilus,

That resteles ful longe a-bedde lay, And prevely sente after Pandarus,

To him to come in al the haste he may.

He com anon, nought ones seyde he `nay,'

And Troilus ful sobrelly he grette, And doun upon his beddes syde him sette.

This Troilus, with al the affeccoun Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knees fil adoun,

And er that he wolde of the place aryse, He gan him thonken in his beste
wyse; An hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse, That he was born, to bringe
him fro distresse.

He seyde, `O frend of frendes the alderbeste That ever was, the sothe for to
telle, Thou hast in hevne y-brought my soule at reste Fro Flegitoun, the
fery flood of helle; That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle, Upon a
day, my lyf in thy servyse, It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

`The sonne, which that al the world may see, Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar
I leye, So inly fayr and goodly as is she, Whos I am al, and shal, til that I
deye; And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye, That thanked be the heighe
worthynesse Of love, and eek thy kinde busynesse.

`Thus hastow me no litel thing y-yive, Fo which to thee obliged be for ay
My lyf, and why? For thorough thyn help I live; For elles deed hadde I be
many a day.'

And with that word doun in his bed he lay, And Pandarus ful sobrelly him
herde Til al was seyde, and than he thus answerde: `My dere frend, if I have
doon for thee In any cas, god wot, it is me leef; And am as glad as man may
of it be, God help me so; but tak now a-greef That I shal seyn, be war of
this myscheef, That, there-as thou now brought art in-to blisse, That thou
thy-self ne cause it nought to misse.

`For of fortunes sharpe adversitee The worst kinde of infortune is this, A
man to have ben in prosperitee,

And it remembren, whan it passed is.

Thou art wys y-nough, for-thy do nought amis; Be not to rakel, though thou
sitte warme, For if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme.

`Thou art at ese, and holde the wel ther-inne.

For also seur as reed is every fyr, As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr, For worldly Ioye halt not but by
a wyr; That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte; For-thy nede is to werke with
it softe.'

Quod Troilus, `I hope, and god to-forn, My dere frend, that I shal so me
bere, That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn, Ne I nil not racle as for to
grevn here; It nedeth not this matere ofte tere; For wistestow myn herte
wel, Pandare, God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.'

Tho gan he telle him of his glade night, And wher-of first his herte dredde,
and how, And seyde, `Freend, as I am trewe knight, And by that feyth I shal
to god and yow, I hadde it never half so hote as now; And ay the more that
desyr me byteth To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.

`I noot my-self not wisly what it is; But now I fele a newe qualitee,

Ye, al another than I dide er this.'

Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he That ones may in hevene blisse
be, He feleth other weyes, dar I leye, Than thilke tyme he first herde of it
seye.

This is o word for al: this Troilus Was never ful to speke of this matere, And
for to preysen un-to Pandarus

The bountee of his righte lady dere, And Pandarus to thanke and maken
chere.

This tale ay was span-newe to biginne, Til that the night departed hem a-
twinne.

Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde, I-comen was the blisful tyme swete, That Troilus was warned that he sholde, Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete; For which he felte his herte in Ioye flete; And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie; And lat see now if that he can be merie.

And holden was the forme and al the wyse, Of hir cominge, and eek of his also, As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.

But playnly to the effect right for to go, In Ioye and suerte Pandarus hem two A-bedde broughte, whan that hem bothe leste, And thus they ben in quiete and in reste.

Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met, To aske at me if that they blythe were; For if it erst was wel, tho was it bet A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquere.

A-gon was every sorwe and every fere; And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende, As mucche Ioye as herte may comprende.

This is no litel thing of for to seye, This passeth every wit for to devyse; For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye; Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.

This Ioye may not writen been with inke, This passeth al that herte may bithinke.

But cruel day, so wel-away the stounde!

Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe, For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde; So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe, And day they goonnen to dispyse al newe, Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse, And bitterly the dayes light they curse.

Quod Troilus, `Allas! Now am I war That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three, Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char, Han goon som by-path in despyt of me; That maketh it so sone day to be;

And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse, Ne shal I never doon him sacrifyse!

But nedes day departe moste hem sone, And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere, They twinne anon as they were wont to done, And setten

tyme of meting eft y-ferre; And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in Ioye Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of
Troye.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges, This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, lusteth, maketh festeynges; He yeveth frely ofte, and
chaungeth wede, And held aboute him alwey, out of drede, A world of folk,
as cam him wel of kinde, The fresshest and the beste he coude fynde; That
swich a voys was of hym and a stevene Thorough-out the world, of honour
and largesse, That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene.

And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse, That in his herte he demede, as
I gesse, That there nis lovere in this world at ese So wel as he, and thus gan
love him plese.

The godlihede or beautee which that kinde In any other lady hadde y-set
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde, A-boute his herte, of al
Criseydes net.

He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet, That it undon on any manere syde,
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take This Pandarus, and in-to gardin
lede, And swich a feste and swich a proces make Him of Criseyde, and of
hir womanhede, And of hir beautee, that, with-outen drede, It was an
hevene his wordes for to here; And thanne he wolde singe in this manere.

`Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce, Love, that his hestes hath in
hevene hye, Love, that with an holsom alliaunce Halt peples ioyned, as him
list hem gye, Love, that knetteth lawe of companye, And couples doth in
vertu for to dwelle, Bind this acord, that I have told and telle; `That that the
world with feyth, which that is stable, Dyverseth so his stoundes
concordinge, That elements that been so discordable Holden a bond
perpetuely duringe,

That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe, And that the mone hath
lordship over the nightes, Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!

`That, that the see, that gredy is to flowen, Constreyneth to a certeyn ende
so

His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen To drenchen erthe and al for ever-
mo; And if that Love ought lete his brydel go, Al that now loveth a-sonder
sholde lepe, And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.

`So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde, That, with his bond, Love of his
vertu liste To cerclen hertes alle, and faste binde, That from his bond no
wight the wey out wiste.

And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste To make hem love, and that
hem leste ay rewe On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.'

In alle nedes, for the tounes werre, He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre, Save Ector, most y-drad of any wight;
And this encrees of hardinesse and might Cam him of love, his ladies thank
to winne, That altered his spirit so with-inne.

In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde, Or elles hunten boor, bere, or
lyoun; The smale bestes leet he gon bi-syde.

And whan that he com rydinge in-to toun, Ful ofte his lady, from hir
window doun, As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe, Ful reddy was, him
goodly to saluwe.

And most of love and vertu was his speche, And in despyt hadde alle
wrecchednesse; And doutelees, no nede was him biseche To honouren hem
that hadde worthinesse, And esen hem that weren in distresse.

And glad was he if any wight wel ferde, That lover was, whan he it wiste or
herde.

For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight But-if he were in loves heigh
servyse, I mene folk that oughte it been of right.

And over al this, so wel coude he devyse Of sentement, and in so unkouth
wyse Al his array, that every lover thoughte, That al was wel, what-so he
seyde or wroughte.

And though that he be come of blood royal, Him liste of pryde at no wight
for to chase; Benigne he was to ech in general,

For which he gat him thank in every place.

Thus wolde love, y-heried be his grace, That Pryde, Envye, Ire, and
Avaryce He gan to flee, and every other vyce.

Thou lady bright, the doughter to Dione, Thy blinde and winged sone eek,
daun Cupyde; Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone In hil Parnaso listen for
to abyde, That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde, I can no more, but sin
that ye wol wende, Ye heried been for ay, with-uten ende!

Thourgh yow have I seyde fully in my song Theffect and loye of Troilus
servyse, Al be that ther was som disese among, As to myn auctor listeth to
devyse.

My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse; And Troilus in luste and in
quiete Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete.

Explicit Liber Tercius.

BOOK IV.

Incipit Prohemium Liber Quartus.

But al to litel, weylaway the whyle, Lasteth swich loye, y-thonked be
Fortune!

That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle, And can to foles so hir song
entune, That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune; And whan a wight is
from hir wheel y-throwe, Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

From Troilus she gan hir brighte face Away to wrythe, and took of him non
hede, But caste him clene out of his lady grace, And on hir wheel she sette
up Diomedes; For which right now myn herte ginneth blede, And now my
penne, allas! With which I wryte, Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,

Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde, Mot hennes-forth ben matere of
my book, As wryten folk through which it is in minde.

Allas! That they sholde ever cause finde To speke hir harm; and if they on
hir lye, Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye.

O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three, That endelees compleynen ever in
pyne, Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone; Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to
Quiryne, This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne, So that the los of lyf and
love y-fere Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit prohemium.

Incipit Quartus Liber.

Ligginge in ost, as I have seyde er this, The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye
toun, Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is Up-on the brest of Hercules
Lyoune, That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun, Caste on a day with
Grekes for to fighte, As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte.

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene This purpos and that day they
fighte mente; But on a day wel armed, bright and shene, Ector, and many a
worthy wight out wente, With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente; And in
the herd, with-oute lenger lette, Hir fomen in the feld anon hem mette.

The longe day, with speres sharpe y-grounde, With arwes, dartes, swerdes,
maces felle, They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde, And with hir
axes out the braynes quelle.

But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle, The folk of Troye hem-selven so
misledden, That with the worse at night homward they fledden.

At whiche day was taken Antenor,

Maugre Polydamas or Monestee,

Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,

Polyte, or eek the Troian daun Ripheo, And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo.

So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye Dredden to lese a greet part of
hir loye.

Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste, A tyme of trewe, and tho they
gonnen trete, Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste, And for the
surplus yeven sommes grete.

This thing anoon was couth in every strete, Bothe in thassege, in toune, and
every-where, And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde, In consistorie, among the
Grekes, sone He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde, And sette him there-
as he was wont to done; And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone, For
love of god, to don that reverence, To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience.

Thanne seyde he thus, `Lo! Lordes myne, I was Troian, as it is knowen out
of drede; And, if that yow remembre, I am Calkas, That alderfirst yaf
comfort to your nede, And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede.

For dredelees, thorough yow, shal, in a stounde, Ben Troye y-brend, and
beten doun to grounde.

`And in what forme, or in what maner wyse This town to shende, and al
your lust to acheve, Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse; This knowe ye,
my lordes, as I leve.

And for the Grekes weren me so leve, I com my-self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done; `Havinge un-to my tresour ne
my rente Right no resport, to respect of your ese.

Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente, Wening in this you, lordes, for to
plese.

But al that los ne doth me no disese.

I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I Ioye, For you to lese al that I have in Troye,
`Save of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!

Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.

O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!

How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?

Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!

For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe, But-if ye lordes rewe up-on
my sorwe.

`For, by that cause I say no tyme er now Hir to delivere, I holden have my
pees; But now or never, if that it lyke yow, I may hir have right sone,
doutelees.

O help and grace! Amonges al this prees, Rewe on this olde caitif in
destresse, Sin I through yow have al this hevinesse!

`Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun Troians y-nowe; and if your
willes be, My child with oon may have redempcioun.

Now for the love of god and of bountee, Oon of so fele, alas! So yeve him
me.

What nede were it this preyere for to werne, Sin ye shul bothe han folk and
toun as yerne?

`On peril of my lyf, I shal nat lye, Appollo hath me told it feithfully; I have
eek founde it be astronomye, By sort, and by augurie eek trewely, And dar
wel seye, the tyme is faste by, That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal
sprede; And thus shal Troye turne to asshen dede.

`For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe, That makeden the walles of the
toun, Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe, That thei wol bringe it to
confusioun, Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.

By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre, The toun of Troye shal ben set on-
fyre.'

Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye, Humble in speche, and in his lokinge
eke, The salte teres from his eyen tweye Ful faste ronnen down by eyther
cheke.

So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke That, for to hele him of his sorwes
sore, They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.

But who was glad y-nough but Calkas tho?

And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde On hem that sholden for the tretis
go, And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde To bringen hoom king Toas and

Criseyde; And whan Pryam his save-garde sente, Thembassadours to Troye
streight they wente.

The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let here-upon his parlement to holde, Of which the effect rehersen yow I
shal.

Thembassadours ben answered for fynal, Theschaunge of prisoners and al
this nede Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place, Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
For which ful sone chaungen gan his face, As he that with tho wordes wel
neigh deyde.

But nathelees, he no word to it seyde, Lest men sholde his affeccioune espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

And ful of anguisshe and of grisly drede Abood what lordes wolde un-to it
seye; And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede, Theschaunge of hir, than
thoughte he thinges tweye, First, how to save hir honour, and what weye He
mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde; Ful faste he caste how al this
mighte stonde.

Love him made al prest to doon hir byde, And rather dye than she sholde
go; But resoun seyde him, on that other syde, 'With-oute assent of hir ne do
not so, Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo, And seyn, that thorough thy
medling is y-blowe Your bothe love, there it was erst unknowe.'

For which he gan deliberen, for the beste, That though the lordes wolde that
she wente, He wolde lat hem graunte what hem leste, And telle his lady first
what that they mente.

And whan that she had seyde him hir entente, Ther-after wolde he werken
also blyve, Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde, For Antenor how they wolde han
Criseyde, Gan it withstonde, and sobrelly answerde: — 'Sires, she nis no
prisoner,' he seyde; 'I noot on yow who that this charge leyde, But, on my
part, ye may eft-sone hem telle, We usen here no wommen for to selle.'

The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones, As breme as blase of straw y-
set on fyre; For infortune it wolde, for the nones, They sholden hir
confusioun desyre.

`Ector,' quod they, `what goost may yow enspyre This womman thus to
shilde and doon us lese Daun Antenor? — a wrong wey now ye chese —
`That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun, And we han nede to folk, as men
may see; He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun; O Ector, lat tho fantasyes
be!

O king Priam,' quod they, `thus seggen we, That al our voys is to for-gon
Criseyde;'

And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.

O Iuvenal, lord! Trewe is thy sentence, That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence; For cloud of errour let hem not
descerne What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.

This folk desiren now deliveraunce Of Antenor, that broughte hem to
mischaunce!

For he was after traytour to the toun Of Troye; allas! They quitte him out to
rathe; O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!

Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe, Shal now no lenger in hir
blisse bathe; But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toun, And she shal out;
thus seyden here and howne.

For which delibered was by parlement For Antenor to yelden out Criseyde,
And it pronounced by the president, Al-theigh that Ector `nay' ful ofte
preyde.

And fynaly, what wight that it with-seyde, It was for nought, it moste been,
and sholde; For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

Departed out of parlement echone,

This Troilus, with-oute wordes mo, Un-to his chaumbre spedde him faste
allone, But-if it were a man of his or two, The whiche he bad out faste for to
go, By-cause he wolde slepen, as he seyde, And hastely up-on his bed him
leyde.

And as in winter leves been biraft, Eche after other, til the tree be bare, So
that ther nis but bark and braunche y-laft, Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech wel-
fare, Y-bounden in the blake bark of care, Disposed wood out of his wit to
breyde, So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.

He rist him up, and every dore he shette And windowe eek, and tho this
sorweful man Up-on his beddes syde a-doun him sette, Ful lyk a deed
image pale and wan; And in his brest the heped wo bigan Out-breste, and he
to werken in this wyse In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.

Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe Now here, now there, y-darted to
the herte, And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge, Right so gan he aboute
the chaumbre sterte, Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte; His heed to
the wal, his body to the grounde Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to
confounde.

His eyen two, for pitee of his herte, Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte His speche him refte, unnethes
mighte he seye, `O deeth, allas! Why niltow do me deye?

A-cursed be the day which that nature Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!

But after, whan the furie and the rage Which that his herte twiste and faste
threste, By lengthe of tyme somewhat gan asswage, Up-on his bed he leyde
him doun to reste; But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste, That wonder
is, the body may suffyse To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

Than seyde he thus, `Fortune! Allas the whyle!

What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?

How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?

Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?

Shal thus Criseyde away, for that thou wilt?

Allas! How maystow in thyn herte finde To been to me thus cruel and
unkinde?

`Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve, As thou wel wost, above the
goddes alle?

Why wiltow me fro Ioye thus depryve?

O Troilus, what may men now thee calle But wrecche of wrecches, out of
honour falle In-to miserie, in which I wol biwayle Criseyde, allas! Til that
the breeth me fayle?

`Allas, Fortune! If that my lyf in Ioye Displeased hadde un-to thy foule
envye, Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye, By-raft the lyf, or doon
my bretheren dye, Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye, I,
combred-world, that may of nothing serve, But ever dye, and never fully
sterve?

`If that Criseyde allone were me laft, Nought roughte I whider thou woldest
me sterve; And hir, allas! Than hastow me biraft.

But ever-more, lo! This is thy manere, To reve a wight that most is to him
dere, To preve in that thy gerful violence.

Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!

`O verray lord of love, O god, allas!

That knowest best myn herte and al my thought, What shal my sorwful lyf
don in this cas If I for-go that I so dere have bought?

Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought In-to your grace, and bothe our
hertes seled, How may ye suffre, allas! It be repeled?

`What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure On lyve in torment and in cruel
peyne, This infortune or this disaventure, Allone as I was born, y-wis,
compleyne; Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne; But ende I wil, as Edippe,
in derknesse My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

`O wery goost, that errest to and fro, Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?

O soule, lurking in this wo, unneste, Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it
breste, And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere; Thy righte place is now no
lenger here!

`O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport Was al to seen Criseydes eyen
bryghte, What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort, Stonden for nought, and

wepen out your sighte?

Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte, In veyn fro-this-forth have I
eyen tweye Y-formed, sin your vertue is a-weye.

`O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne

Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth, Who shal now yeven comfort to the
peyne?

Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth, My spirit, which that so un-to
yow hyeth, Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve; For-thy no fors is,
though the body sterve.

`O ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel Ben set of Fortune, in good
aventure, God leve that ye finde ay love of steel, And longe mot your lyf in
Ioye endure!

But whan ye comen by my sepulture, Remembreth that your felawe resteth
there; For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.

`O olde, unholsum, and mislyved man, Calkas I mene, alas! What eyleth
thee To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?

O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be, In cursed tyme was thou born for
me!

As wolde blisful Iove, for his Ioye, That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in
Troye!"

A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede, Out of his brest ech after other
wente, Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede, For which his woful
teres never stente; And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente, And wex so mat,
that Ioye nor penaunce He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parlement Hadde herd what every lord and
burgeys seyde, And how ful graunted was, by oon assent, For Antenor to
yelden so Criseyde, Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde, So that,
for wo, he niste what he mente; But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it
him anoon; And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte, In-to the derke

chaumbre, as stille as stoon, Toward the bed gan softly to goon, So confus,
that he niste what to seye; For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chere and loking al to-torn, For sorwe of this, and with his
armes folden, He stood this woful Troilus biforn, And on his pitous face he
gan biholden; But lord, so often gan his herte colden, Seing his freend in
wo, whos hevinesse His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.

This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte His freend Pandare y-comen him to
see, Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte, For which this sorwful
Pandare, of pitee, Gan for to wepe as tendreliche as he; And specheles thus
been thise ilke tweye, That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

But at the laste this woful Troilus, Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to
rore, And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus, Among his sobbes and his
sykes sore, 'Lo! Pandare, I am deed, with-outen more.

Hastow nought herd at parlement,' he seyde, 'For Antenor how lost is my
Criseyde?'

This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe, Ful pitously answerde and seyde,
'Yis!

As wisly were it fals as it is trewe, That I have herd, and wot al how it is.

O mercy, god, who wolde have trowed this?

Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe, Fortune our Ioye wolde han
over-throwe?

'For in this world ther is no creature, As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorough cas or aventure.

But who may al eschewe, or al devyne?

Swich is this world; for-thy I thus defyne, Ne trust no wight to finden in
Fortune Ay propretee; hir yeftes been comune.

'But tel me this, why thou art now so mad To sorwen thus? Why lystow in
this wyse, Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had, So that, by right, it oughte y-
now suffyse?

But I, that never felte in my servyse A frendly chere or loking of an ye, Lat
me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

`And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve, This town is ful of ladies al
about; And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve As ever she was, shal I
finde, in som route, Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute.

For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother, If she be lost, we shal recovere
another.

`What, god forbede alwey that ech plesaunce In o thing were, and in non
other wight!

If oon can singe, another can wel daunce; If this be goodly, she is glad and
light; And this is fayr, and that can good a-right.

Ech for his vertu holden is for dere, Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

`And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys, "The newe love out chaceth ofte
the olde;"

And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.

Think eek, thy-self to saven artow holde; Swich fyr, by proces, shal of
kinde colde.

For sin it is but casuel plesaunce, Som cas shal putte it out of
remembraunce.

`For al-so seur as day cometh after night, The newe love, labour or other
wo, Or elles selde seinge of a wight,

Don olde affeccious alle over-go.

And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho To abrigge with thy bittre
peynes smerte; Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.'

Thisse wordes seyde he for the nones alle, To helpe his freend, lest he for
sorwe deyde.

For douteles, to doon his wo to falle, He roughte not what unthrift that he
seyde.

But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde, Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente; Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente: But at the laste answerde and seyde, `Freend, This lechecraft, or heled thus to be, Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend, To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!

I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee; But do me rather sterve anon-right here Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.

`She that I serve, y-wis, what so thou seye, To whom myn herte enhabit is by right, Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.

For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight, I wol not been untrewe for no wight; But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve, And never other creature serve.

`And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde As she, lat be, make no comparisoun To creature y-formed here by kinde.

O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,

I wol not be of thyn opinioun,

Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche, So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche.

`Thow biddest me I sholde love another Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!

It lyth not in my power, leve brother.

And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.

But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro, Nettle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?

Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!

`Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus, As he, that whan a wight is wo bi-goon, He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus, "Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon."

Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon, And reve me my passiounes alle,

Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.

`The deeth may wel out of my brest departe The lyf, so longe may this
sorwe myne; But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte Out never-mo; but down
with Proserpyne, Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne; And ther I wol
eternaly compleyne

My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.

`Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn, How that it sholde a lasse
peyne be Criseyde to for-goon, for she was myn, And live in ese and in
felicitee.

Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me That "him is wors that is fro wele
y-throwe, Than he hadde erst non of that wele y-knowe?"

`But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light To chaungen so in love, ay to
and fro, Why hastow not don bisily thy might To chaungen hir that doth
thee al thy wo?

Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?

Why niltow love another lady swete, That may thyn herte setten in quiete?

`If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce, And canst it not out of thyn
herte dryve, I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce With hir as muche as
creature on-lyve, How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve?

O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe, That canst so wel and formely
arguwe?

`Nay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thy reed, For which, for what that
ever may bifalle, With-outen wordes mo, I wol be deed.

O death, that endere art of sorwes alle, Com now, sin I so ofte after thee
calle, For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne, That, ofte y-cleped, cometh
and endeth peyne.

`Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete, Er thou me slowe, I wolde have
yeven hyre; But now thy cominge is to me so swete, That in this world I
nothing so desyre.

O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre, Thou outhere do me anoon yn teres
drenche, Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

`Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day
and night, Do me, at my requeste, this servyse, Deliver now the world, so
dostow right, Of me, that am the wofulleste wight That ever was; for tyme
is that I sterve, Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.'

This Troilus in teres gan distille, As licour out of alambyk ful faste; And
Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille, And to the ground his eyen down he
caste.

But natheless, thus thoughte he at the laste, `What, parde, rather than my
felawe deye, Yet shal I somewhat more un-to him seye:'

And seyde, `Freend, sin thou hast swich distresse, And sin thee list myn
arguments to blame, Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse, And with
thy manhod letten al this game?

Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame!

And outhere lat hir out of toune fare, Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce
fare.

`Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment To take a womman which that
loveth thee, And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent?

Now is not this a nyce vanitee?

Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be, And kyth thou art a man, for in this
houre I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.'

To this answerde him Troilus ful softe, And seyde, `Parde, leve brother
dere, Al this have I my-self yet thought ful ofte, And more thing than thou
devysest here.

But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here; And whan thou me hast yeve
an audience, Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.

`First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre For ravissing of women
so by might, It sholde not be suffred me to erre, As it stant now, ne doon so
gret unright.

I sholde han also blame of every wight, My fadres graunt if that I so
withstode, Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.

`I have eek thought, so it were hir assent, To aske hir at my fader, of his
grace; Than thenke I, this were hir accusement, Sin wel I woot I may hir not
purchase.

For sin my fader, in so heigh a place As parlement, hath hir eschaunge
enseled, He nil for me his lettre be repeled.

`Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distourbe, It moste been disclaundre to hir name.

And me were lever deed than hir defame, As nolde god but-if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

`Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see; For certeyn is, sin that I am hir
knight, I moste hir honour levere han than me In every cas, as loveere oughte
of right.

Thus am I with desyr and reson twight; Desyr for to destourben hir me
redeth, And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.'

Thus wepinge that he coude never cesse, He seyde, `Allas! How shal I,
wrecche, fare?

For wel fele I alwey my love encresse, And hope is lasse and lasse alwey,
Pandare!

Encressen eek the causes of my care; So wel-a-wey, why nil myn herte
breste?

For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.'

Pandare answerde, `Freend, thou mayst, for me, Don as thee list; but hadde
ich it so hote, And thyn estat, she sholde go with me; Though al this toun
cryede on this thing by note, I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote.

For when men han wel cryed, than wol they rounne; A wonder last but nyne
night never in toun.

`Devyne not in reson ay so depe

Ne curteysly, but help thy-self anoon; Bet is that othere than thy-selven
wepe, And namely, sin ye two been al oon.

Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon; And rather be in blame a lyte
y-founde Than sterve here as a gnat, with-oute wounde.

`It is no shame un-to yow, ne no vyce Hir to with-holden, that ye loveth
most.

Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce To lete hir go thus to the Grekes
ost.

Think eek Fortune, as wel thy-selven wost, Helpeth hardy man to his
enpryse,

And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

`And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve, Thou shalt thy pees ful wel
here-after make, But as for me, certayn, I can not leve That she wolde it as
now for yvel take.

Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?

Think eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother, A love; and why shaltow not
have another?

`And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere, That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy
leef, Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here, God helpe me so, she nil nat
take a-greef, Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef.

And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe, Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel
the lasse.

`For-thy tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight, Thourgh love is broken
alday every lawe.

Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might, Have mercy on thy-self, for
any awe.

Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe, But manly set the world on sixe
and sevene; And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.

`I wol my-self be with thee at this dede, Though ich and al my kin, up-on a
stounde, Shulle in a strete as dogges ligen dede, Thourgh-girt with many a
wyd and bloody wounde.

In every cas I wol a freend be founde.

And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche, A-dieu, the devel spede him that
it recche!

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken, And seyde, `Freend, graunt
mercy, ich assente; But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken, Ne peyne
noon ne may me so tormente, That, for no cas, it is not myn entente, At
shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde, To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it
wolde.'

`Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, `al this day.

But tel me than, hastow hir wil assayed, That sorwest thus?' And he
answerde, `Nay.'

`Wher-of artow,' quod Pandare, `than a-mayed, That nost not that she wol
ben y-vel apayed To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there, But-if that
love tolde it in thyn ere?

`For-thy rys up, as nought ne were, anoon, And wash thy face, and to the
king thou wende, Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.

Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende; Or, up-on cas, he may after
thee sende Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere, Be glad, and lat me
werke in this matere.

`For I shal shape it so, that sikerly Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som
manere, Com speke with thy lady prevely,

And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere, Thou shalt ful sone aperceyve and
wel here Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste; And fare now wel, for in
this point I reste.'

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges Egal reporteth lyk the thinges
trewe, Was thourgh-out Troye y-fled with preste winges Fro man to man,
and made this tale al newe, How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe, At
parlement, with-oute wordes more, I-graunted was in change of Antenore.

The whiche tale anoon-right as Criseyde Had herd, she, which that of hir
fader roughte, As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde, Ful bisily
to Iuppiter bisoughte

Yeve hem mischaunce that this tretis broughte.

But shortly, lest these tales sothe were, She dorste at no wight asken it, for
fere.

As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde On Troilus y-set so wonder
faste,

That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde, Ne Troilus out of hir herte
caste; She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.

And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede, So that she niste what was
best to rede.

But as men seen in toune, and al aboute, That women usen frendes to
visyte, So to Criseyde of women com a route For pitous Ioye, and wenden
hir delyte; And with hir tales, dere y-nough a myte, These women, whiche
that in the cite dwelle, They sette hem down, and seyde as I shal telle.

Quod first that oon, 'I am glad, trewely, By-cause of yow, that shal your
fader see.'

Another seyde, 'Y-wis, so nam not I, For al to litel hath she with us be.'

Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, y-wis, that she Shal bringen us the pees on
every syde, That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde!'

Tho wordes and tho wommanisshethinges, She herde hem right as though
she thennes were; For, god it wot, hir herte on other thing is, Although the
body sat among hem there.

Hir advertence is alwey elles-where; For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte;
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte.

These women, that thus wenden hir to please, Aboute nought gonne alle hir
tales spende; Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese, As she that, al this mene
whyle. brende Of other passioun than that they wende, So that she felte
almost hir herte deye For wo, and wery of that companye.

For which no lenger mighte she restreyne Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle, That yaven signes of the bitter peyne In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle; Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.

And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore By-cause that she sholde out of that route Departe, and never pleye with hem more.

And they that hadde y-knowen hir of yore Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse, And eche of hem wepte eek for hir destresse; And bisily they gonnen hir conforten Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte; And with hir tales wenden hir disporten, And to be glad they often hir bisoughte.

But swich an ese therwith they hir wroughte Right as a man is esed for to fele, For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele!

But after al this nyce vanitee

They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle.

Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,

In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle, And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle, In purpos never thennes for to ryse; And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse.

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe, She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe, And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.

Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale, Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte; And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte: `Alas!' quod she, `out of this regioun I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight, And born in corsed constellacioun, Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight; Wo worth, allas! That ilke dayes light On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne, That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!'

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two Doun fille, as shour in Aperill ful swythe; Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo After the deeth she cryed a

thousand sythe, Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe, She mot for-goon;
for which disaventure She held hir-self a forlost creature.

She seyde, `How shal he doon, and I also?

How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?

O dere herte eek, that I love so,

Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?

O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!

O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve, Wo worth that day that thou me
bere on lyve!

`To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?

How sholde a fish with-oute water dure?

What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?

How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature Live, with-oute his kinde noriture?

For which ful oft a by-word here I seye, That "rotelees, mot grene sone
deye."

`I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte Dar I non handle, for the
crueltee, That ilke day that I from yow departe, If sorwe of that nil not my
bane be, Than shal no mete or drinke come in me Til I my soule out of my
breste unshethe; And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

`And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte
swete, That I am as out of this world agoon, That wont was yow to setten in
quiete; And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete, The observaunce ever, in
your absence, Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

`Myn herte and eek the woful goost ther-inne Biquethe I, with your spirit to
compleyne Eternally, for they shal never twinne.

For though in erthe y-twinne be we tweyne, Yet in the feld of pitee, out of
peyne, That hight Elysos, shul we been y-fere, As Orpheus and Erudice, his
fere.

`Thus, herte myn, for Antenor, allas!

I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.

But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas, How shal youre tendre herte this
sustene?

But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene, And me also; for, soothly for to
seye, So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.'

How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe, The pleynte that she made in hir
distresse?

I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge, If I discreven wolde hir hevinesse, It
sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd
devyse, That for the beste it was accorded thus, And he ful glad to doon him
that servyse, Un-to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse, Ther-as she lay in
torment and in rage, Com hir to telle al hoolly his message, And fond that
she hir-selven gan to trete Ful pitously; for with hir salte teres Hir brest, hir
face, y-bathed was ful wete; The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres; Which yaf him verray signal of
martyre Of death, which that hir herte gan desyre.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anon Hir tery face a-twixe hir armes
hide, For which this Pandare is so wo bi-goon, That in the hous he mighte
unnethe abyde, As he that pitee felte on every syde.

For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore, Tho gan she pleyne a thousand
tymes more.

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde, `Pandare first of Ioyes mo than two
Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde, That now transmued been in
cruel wo.

Wher shal I seye to yow "wel come" or no, That alderfirst me broughte in-
to servyse Of love, allas! That endeth in swich wyse?

`Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!

And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me.

The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth; And who-so troweth not that it so
be, Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see, That my-self hate, and ay my
birthe aorse, Felinge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

`Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones, Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo,
distresse.

Out of my woful body harm ther noon is, As anguish, langour, cruel
bitternesse, A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.

I trowe, y-wis, from hevne teres reyne, For pitee of myn aspre and cruel
peyne!

`And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,'

Quod Pandarus, `what thenkestow to do?

Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport, Why woltow thus thy-selve,
allas, for-do?

Leef al this werk and tak now hede to That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good
entente, This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.'

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge So greet that it a deeth was for to
see: — `Allas!' quod she, `what wordes may ye bringe?

What wol my dere herte seyn to me, Which that I drede never-mo to see?

Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende?

I have y-nowe, if he ther-after sende!'

She was right swich to seen in hir visage As is that wight that men on bere
binde; Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image, Was al y-chaunged in another
kinde.

The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde On hir, and eek hir loyes
everychone, Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

Aboute hir eyen two a purple ring

Bi-trent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne, That to biholde it was a dedly
thing, For which Pandare mighte not restreyne The teres from his eyen for
to reyne.

But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde From Troilus these wordes to
Criseyde.

`Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how The king, with othere lordes, for the
beste, Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow, That cause is of this sorwe
and this unreste.

But how this cas doth Troilus moleste, That may non erthely mannes tonge
seye; For verray wo his wit is al aweye.

`For which we han so sorwed, he and I, That in-to litel bothe it hadde us
slawe; But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally, He somewhat is fro weping
now with-drawe.

And semeth me that he desyreth fawe With yow to been al night, for to
devyse Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.

`This, short and pleyne, theeffect of my message, As ferforth as my wit can
comprehende.

For ye, that been of torment in swich rage, May to no long prologe as now
entende; And her-upon ye may answer him sende.

And, for the love of god, my nece dere, So leef this wo er Troilus be here.'

`Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte sore, As she that feleth dedly sharp
distresse; `But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more, That love him bet than
he himself, I gesse.

Allas! For me hath he swich hevinesse?

Can he for me so pitously compleyne?

Y-wis, his sorwe doubleth al my peyne.

`Grevous to me, god wot, is for to twinne,'

Quod she, `but yet it hardere is to me To seen that sorwe which that he is
inne; For wel wot I, it wol my bane be;

And deye I wol in certayn,' tho quod she; 'But bidde him come, er deeth,
that thus me threteth, Dryve out that goost which in myn herte beteth.'

Thise wordes seyde, she on hir armes two Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.

Quod Pandarus, 'Allas! Why do ye so, Syn wel ye woot the tyme is faste
by, That he shal come? Arys up hastely, That he yow nat biwopen thus ne
finde, But ye wol have him wood out of his minde!

'For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere, He wolde him-selve slee; and if I
wende To han this fare, he sholde not come here For al the good that Pryam
may despente.

For to what fyn he wolde anon pretende, That knowe I wel; and for-thy yet
I seye, So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.

'And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge, And nought encresse, leve nece
swete; Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge, And with som wysdom ye
his sorwes bete.

What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete, Or though ye bothe in salte teres
dreynte?

Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

'I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe, Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon
assent, So shapeth how distourbe your goinge, Or come ayen, sone after ye
be went.

Wommen ben wyse in short avyement; And lat sen how your wit shal now
avayle; And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.'

'Go,' quod Criseyde, 'and uncle, trewely, I shal don al my might, me to
restreyne From weping in his sighte, and bisily, Him for to glade, I shal don
al my peyne, And in myn herte seken every veyne; If to this soor ther may
be founden salve, It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.'

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte, Til in a temple he fond him allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughte; But to the pitouse goddes
everichone Ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone, To doon him sone
out of this world to pace; For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye, He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye.

For right thus was his argument alwey: He seyde, he nas but loren,
waylawey!

`For al that comth, comth by necessitee; Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

`For certaynly, this wot I wel,' he seyde, `That for-sight of divyne
purveyaunce Hath seyn alwey me to for-gon Criseyde, Sin god seeth every
thing, out of doutaunce, And hem disponeth, thourgh his ordenaunce, In hir
merytes sothly for to be,

As they shul comen by predestinee.

`But nathelees, allas! Whom shal I leve?

For ther ben grete clerkes many oon, That destinee thourgh argumentes
preve; And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon; But that free chois is
yeven us everichoon.

O, welaway! So sleye arn clerkes olde, That I not whos opinion I may
holde.

`For som men seyn, if god seth al biforn, Ne god may not deceyved ben,
pardee, Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn, That purveyaunce
hath seyn bifore to be.

Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he Hath wist biforn our thought eek as
our dede, We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede.

`For other thought nor other dede also Might never be, but swich as
purveyaunce, Which may not ben deceyved never-mo, Hath feled biforn,
with-uten ignoraunce.

For if ther mighte been a variaunce To wrythen out fro goddes purveyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thing cominge; `But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge; And certes, that were an abusioun,
That god shuld han no parfit cleer witinge More than we men that han
doutous weninge.

But swich an errour up-on god to gesse Were fals and foul, and wikked
corsednesse.

`Eek this is an opinioun of somme

That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore; They seyn right thus, that
thing is not to come For that the prescience hath seyn bifore That it shal
come; but they seyn that therfore That it shal come, therfore the
purveyaunce Wot it biforn with-outen ignoraunce; `And in this manere this
necessitee Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.

For needfully bihoveth it not to be That thilke thinges fallen in certayn That
ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn, Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that
falle, That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.

`I mene as though I laboured me in this, To enqueren which thing cause of
which thing be; As whether that the prescience of god is The certayn cause
of the necessitee Of thinges that to comen been, pardee; Or if necessitee of
thing cominge

Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge.

`But now ne enforce I me nat in shewing How the ordre of causes stant;
but wel wot I, That it bihoveth that the bifallinge Of thinges wist biforen
certeynly

Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.

`For if ther sit a man yond on a see, Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be, That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And ferther-over now ayenward yit, Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; (now herkne, for I wol not tarie): `I seye, that if the opinioun of
thee Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this, That he mot sitten by
necessitee;

And thus necessitee in either is.

For in him nede of sittinge is, y-wis, And in thee nede of sooth; and thus,
forsothe, Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.

`But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore, That thyn opinioun of sitting
soth is; But rather, for the man sit ther bifore, Therefore is thyn opinioun
sooth, y-wis.

And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this Comth of his sitting, yet
necessitee Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.

`Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce, I may wel maken, as it semeth
me,

My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce, And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel y-see, That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle.

`For al-though that, for thing shal come, y-wis, Therefore is it purveyed,
certaynly, Nat that it comth for it purveyed is: Yet nathelees, bihoveth it
nedfully, That thing to come be purveyed, trewely; Or elles, thinges that
purveyed be, That they bityden by necessitee.

`And this suffyseth right y-now, certeyn, For to destroye our free chois
every del. — But now is this abusion, to seyn,

That fallinge of the thinges temporel Is cause of goddes prescience eternel.

Now trewely, that is a fals sentence, That thing to come sholde cause his
prescience.

`What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought, But that god purveyth
thing that is to come For that it is to come, and elles nought?

So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some, That whylom been bifalle and
over-come, Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce, That for-wot al
with-ouen ignoraunce.

`And over al this, yet seye I more herto, That right as whan I woot ther is a
thing, Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so; Eek right so, whan I woot a
thing coming, So mot it come; and thus the bifalling Of thinges that ben
wist bifore the tyde, They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.'

Than seyde he thus, `Almighty love in trone, That wost of al this thing the
soothfastnesse, Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone, Or bring Criseyde
and me fro this distresse.'

And whyl he was in al this hevynesse, Disputinge with himself in this
matere, Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here.

`O mighty god,' quod Pandarus, `in trone, Ey! Who seigh ever a wys man
faren so?

Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?

Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?

What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a-go!

Why list thee so thy-self for-doon for drede, That in thyn heed thyn eyen
semen dede?

`Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn With-uten hir, and ferd ful wel at
ese?

Artow for hir and for non other born?

Hath kinde thee wroughte al-only hir to plesse?

Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese.

That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces, Right so in love, ther come
and goon plesaunces.

`And yet this is a wonder most of alle, Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost
not yit, Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle, Ne if she can hir-self
distorben it.

Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.

A man may al by tyme his nekke bede Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the
nede.

`For-ty take hede of that that I shal seye; I have with hir y-spoke and longe
y-be, So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.

And ever-mor me thinketh thus, that she Hath somewhat in hir hertes
prevetee, Wher-with she can, if I shal right arede, Distorbe al this, of which
thou art in drede.

'For which my counseil is, whan it is night, Thou to hir go, and make of this
an ende; And blisful Iuno, thourgh hir grete mighte, Shal, as I hope, hir
grace un-to us sende.

Myn herte seyth, "Certeyn, she shal not wende;"
And for-thy put thyn herte a whyle in reste; And hold this purpos, for it is
the beste.'

This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore, 'Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do
right so;'

And what him liste, he seyde un-to it more.

And whan that it was tyme for to go, Ful prevely himself, with-outen mo,
Un-to hir com, as he was wont to done; And how they wroughte, I shal yow
telle sone.

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete, So gan the peyne hir hertes for
to twiste, That neither of hem other mighte grete, But hem in armes toke
and after kiste.

The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste Wher that he was, ne mighte o word
out-bringe, As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.

Tho woful teres that they leten falle As bittre weren, out of teres kinde, For
peyne, as is ligne aloes or galle.

So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde, The woful Myrra through the bark
and rinde.

That in this world ther nis so hard an herte, That nolde han rewed on hir
peynes smerte.

But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne Retorned been ther-as hem oughte
dwelle, And that somewhat to wayken gan the peyne By lengthe of pleynte,
and ebben gan the welle Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle, With broken
voys, al hoors for-shright, Criseyde To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde: 'O
love, I deye, and mercy I beseche!

Help, Troilus!' And therwith-al hir face Upon his brest she leyde, and loste
speche; Hir woful spirit from his propre place, Right with the word, alwey

up poynt to pace.

And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene, That whylom fresh and fairest
was to sene.

This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde, Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for
deed, With-oute answeere, and felte hir limes colde, Hir eyen thrown
upward to hir heed), This sorwful man can now noon other reed, But ofte
tyme hir colde mouth he kiste; Wher him was wo, god and himself it wiste!

He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde; For signe of lyf, for ought he
can or may, Can he noon finde in nothing on Criseyde, For which his song
ful ofte is `weylaway!'

But whan he saugh that specheles she lay, With sorwful voys and herte of
blisse al bare, He seyde how she was fro this world y-fare!

So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned, His hondes wrong, and seyde
that was to seye, And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned, He gan tho teris
wypen of ful dreye, And pitously gan for the soule preye, And seyde, `O
lord, that set art in thy trone, Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!'

She cold was and with-uten sentement, For aught he woot, for breeth ne
felte he noon; And this was him a preignant argument That she was forth
out of this world agoon; And whan he seigh ther was non other woon, He
gan hir limes dresse in swich manere As men don hem that shul be leyd on
bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte, His swerd a-noon out of his
shethe he twigte, Himself to sleen, how sore that him smerte, So that his
sowle hir sowle folwen mighte, Ther-as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
Sin love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde, That in this world he lenger liven
sholde.

Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn, `O cruel Iove, and thou,
Fortune adverse, This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn Criseyde, and
sin ye may do me no werse, Fy on your might and werkes so diverse!

Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne; Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady
twinne.

`For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus, Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit
lowe or hye; Shal never lover seyn that Troilus Dar not, for fere, with his
lady dye; For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.

But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here, Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-
fere.

`And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo, And thou, Pryam, and bretheren
al y-fere, And thou, my moder, farwel! For I go; And Attropos, make redy
thou my bere!

And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere, Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he
seye, With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye But as god wolde, of swough
therwith she abreyde, And gan to syke, and `Troilus' she cryde; And he
answerde, `Lady myn Criseyde, Live ye yet?' and leet his swerd doun glyde.

`Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!'

Quod she, and therwith-al she sore sighte; And he bigan to glade hir as he
mighte; Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte, And hir to glade he dide al
his entente; For which hir goost, that flikered ay on-lofte, In-to hir woful
herte ayein it wente.

But at the laste, as that hir eyen glente A-syde, anoon she gan his swerd
aspye, As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye, And asked him, why he it hadde
out-drawe?

And Troilus anoon the cause hir tolde, And how himself therwith he wolde
have slawe.

For which Criseyde up-on him gan biholde, And gan him in hir armes faste
folde, And seyde, `O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!

Allas! How neigh we were bothe dede!

`Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was, Ye wolde han slayn your-self
anoon?' quod she.

`Ye, douteless;' and she answerde, `Allas!

For, by that ilke lord that made me, I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,
After your deeth, to han been crowned quene Of al the lond the sonne on

shyneth shene.

'But with this selve swerd, which that here is, My-selve I wolde han slayn!
— quod she tho; 'But ho, for we han right y-now of this, And late us ryse
and streight to bedde go And there lat ys speken of oure wo.

For, by the mortar which that I see brenne, Knowe I ful wel that day is not
fer henne.'

Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde, Nought was it lyk tho nightes
here-biforn; For pitously ech other gan biholde, As they that hadden al hir
blisse y-lorn, Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.

Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde To Troilus these ilke wordes
seyde: — 'Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this,' quod she, 'That if a wight alwey
his wo compleyne, And seketh nought how holpen for to be, It nis but folye
and encrees of peyne; And sin that here assembled be we tweyne To finde
bote of wo that we ben inne, It were al tyme sone to biginne.

'I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot, And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.

Me thinketh thus, that nouthur ye nor I Oughte half this wo to make
skilfully.

For there is art y-now for to redresse That yet is mis, and sleen this
hevinesse.

'Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne, For ought I woot, for
nothing elles is But for the cause that we sholden twinne.

Considered al, ther nis no-more amis.

But what is thanne a remede un-to this, But that we shape us sone for to
mete?

This al and som, my dere herte swete.

'Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.

For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two, I shal ben here; and, that it may be
so By alle right, and in a wordes fewe, I shal yow wel an heep of weyes
shewe.

`For which I wol not make long sermoun, For tyme y-lost may not
recovered be; But I wol gon to my conclusioun,

And to the beste, in ought that I can see.

And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me If I speke ought ayein your hertes
reste; For trewely, I speke it for the beste; `Makinge alwey a protestacioun,

That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye, Nis but to shewe yow my
mocioun,

To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye; And taketh it non other wyse, I
preye.

For in effect what-so ye me comaunde, That wol I doon, for that is no
demaunde.

`Now herkneth this, ye han wel understonde, My goinge graunted is by
parlement So ferforth, that it may not be withstonde For al this world, as by
my Iugement.

And sin ther helpeth noon avysement To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
And lat us shape a better way to finde.

`The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne Wol us disese and cruelliche
anoye.

But him bihoveth som-tyme han a peyne, That serveth love, if that he wol
have Ioye.

And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye Than I may ryde ayein on half a
morwe, It oughte lesse causen us to sorwe.

`So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe, That day by day, myn owene herte
dere, Sin wel ye woot that it is now a trewe, Ye shal ful wel al myn estat y-
here.

And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here, And thanne have ye bothe
Antenor y-wonne And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne; `And thenk

right thus, "Criseyde is now agoon, But what! She shal come hastely
ayeyn;"

And whanne, allas? By god, lo, right anoon, Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly
seyn.

And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn, So as we shulle to-gederes ever
dwelle, That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.

`I see that ofte, ther-as we ben now, That for the beste, our counseil for to
hyde, Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow In fourtenight; ne see yow go
ne ryde.

May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde, For myn honour, in swich an aventure?

Y-wis, ye mowen elles lite endure!

`Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here, But-if that onliche it my fader be;
And eek myn othere thinges alle y-fere, And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,

Whom that I nolde leven for to see For al this world, as wyd as it hath
space; Or elles, see ich never Loves face!

`Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
Lest in this toun that folkes me dispyse By-cause of him, for his unhappy
dede?

What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?

For if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare, Us neded for my wending nought to
care.

`Ye seen that every day eek, more and more, Men trete of pees; and it
supposed is, That men the quene Eleyne shal restore, And Grekes us restore
that is mis.

So though ther nere comfort noon but this, That men purposen pees on
every syde, Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

`For if that it be pees, myn herte dere, The nature of the pees mot nedes
dryve That men moste entrecomunen y-fere, And to and fro eek ryde and
gon as blyve Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve; And every wight
han libertee to bleve Where-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.

`And though so be that pees ther may be noon, Yet hider, though ther never
pees ne were, I moste come; for whider sholde I goon, Or how mischaunce
sholde I dwelle there Among tho men of armes ever in fere?

For which, as wisly god my soule rede, I can not seen wher-of ye sholden
drede.

`Have here another wey, if it so be That al this thing ne may yow not
suffyse.

My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee, Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse,
And I right now have founden al the gyse, With-oute net, wher-with I shal
him hente; And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

`Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is The wolf ful, and the wether hool to
have; This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis, Mot spenden part, the
remenant for to save.

For ay with gold men may the herte grave Of him that set is up-on
coveityse; And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

`The moeble which that I have in this toun Un-to my fader shal I take, and
seye, That right for trust and for savacioun It sent is from a freend of his or
tweye, The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye To senden after more,
and that in hye, Whyl that this toun stant thus in Iupartye.

`And that shal been an huge quantitee, Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk
aspyde, This may be sent by no wight but by me; I shal eek shewen him, if
pees bityde, What freendes that ich have on every syde Toward the court, to
doon the wrathe pace Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

`So what for o thing and for other, swete, I shal him so enchaunten with my
sawes, That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he mete!

For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes, Or calculinge awayleth nought three
hawes; Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende, That, as me lyst, I shal wel
make an ende.

`And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve If that I lye, in certayn I shal
fonde Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve, Makinge his sort, and
beren him on honde, He hath not wel the goddes understonde.

For goddes speken in amphibologyes, And, for o sooth they tellen twenty
lyes.

`Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose, Thus shal I seyn, and that his
cowarde herte Made him amis the goddes text to glose, Whan he for ferde
out of his Delphos sterte.

And but I make him sone to converte, And doon my reed with-inne a day or
tweye, I wol to yow oblige me to deye.'

And treweliche, as writen wel I finde, That al this thing was seyde of good
entente; And that hir herte trewe was and kinde Towardes him, and spak
right as she mente, And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente, And
was in purpos ever to be trewe; Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde, Herde al this thing devysen to and
fro; And verraylich him semed that he hadde The selve wit; but yet to lete
hir go His herte misforyaf him ever-mo.

But fynally, he gan his herte wreste To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

For which the grete furie of his penaunce Was queynt with hope, and
therwith hem bitwene Bigan for Ioye the amoureuse daunce.

And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene, Delyten in hir song in leves
grene, Right so the wordes that they spake y-fere Delyted hem, and made
hir hertes clere.

But natheles, the wending of Criseyde, For al this world, may nought out of
his minde; For which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde, That of hir heste he
might hir trewe finde, And seyde hire, `Certes, if ye be unkinde, And but ye
come at day set in-to Troye, Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne Ioye.

`For al-so sooth as sonne up-rist on morwe, And, god! So wisly thou me,
woful wrecche, To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe, I wol my-selven slee
if that ye drecche.

But of my deeth though litel be to recche, Yet, er that ye me cause so to
smerte, Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

`For trewely, myn owene lady dere, Tho sleightes yet that I have herd yow
stere Ful shaply been to failen alle y-fere.

For thus men seyn, "That oon thenketh the bere, But al another thenketh his ledere."

Your sire is wys, and seyde is, out of drede, "Men may the wyse at-renne, and not at-rede."

`It is ful hard to halten unespied Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft; Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yed; For al be that his moeble is him biraft, His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft, Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede, Ne feyne a-right, and that is al my drede.

`I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde; But, pees or no, for earnest ne for game, I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekis syde Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name, He dar no more come here ayein for shame; For which that weye, for ought I can espye, To trusten on, nis but a fantasye.

`Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche, He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose, That ravisshen he shal yow with his speche, Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche.

And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe, Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

`And over al this, your fader shal despise Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn; And that thassege never shal aryse, For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.

And thus he shal yow with his wordes fere, That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.

`Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse, And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might To plesen yow don al his besinesse, That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse Of us sely Troianes, but-if routhe Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.

`And this to me so grevous is to thinke, That fro my brest it wol my soule rende; Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke A good opinioun, if that ye wende; For-why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.

And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore, So thenk I nam but deed, with-out more.

`For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte, A thousand tymes mercy
I yow preye; So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte, And doth somewhat, as
that I shal yow seye, And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye; And thenk that
folye is, whan man may chese, For accident his substaunce ay to lese.

`I mene this, that sin we mowe er day Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay, In cas ye sholden to your fader go, If
that ye mighte come ayein or no?

Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye To putte that sikernesse in Iupertye.

`And vulgarly to speken of substaunce Of tresour, may we bothe with us
lede Y-nough to live in honour and plesaunce, Til in-to tyme that we shal
ben dede; And thus we may eschewen al this drede.

For everich other wey ye can recorde, Myn herte, y-wis, may not therwith
acorde.

`And hardily, ne dredeth no poverte, For I have kin and freendes elles-
where That, though we comen in oure bare sherte, Us sholde neither lakke
gold ne gere, But been honored whyl we dwelten there.

And go we anon, for, as in myn entente, This is the beste, if that ye wole
assente.'

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse Answerde, `Y-wis, my dere herte
trewe, We may wel stele away, as ye devyse, And finde swich unthrifty
weyes newe; But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.

And help me god so at my moste nede As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

`For thilke day that I for cherisshinge Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge, Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Iuno, thorough hir might, As wood as Athamante do me
dwelle Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

`And this on every god celestial

I swere it yow; and eek on eche goddesse, On every Nympe and deite
infernall, On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse, That halve goddes been of
wildernesse; And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste If I be fals; now trowe
me if thow leste!

`And thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere Thorough Troye rennest ay
downward to the see, Ber witness of this word that seyde is here, That
thilke day that ich untrewe be To Troilus, myn owene herte free, That thou
retorne bakwarde to thy welle, And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

`But that ye speke, away thus for to go And leten alle your freendes, god
for-bede, For any womman, that ye sholden so, And namely, sin Troye hath
now swich nede Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede, If this were wist,
my lif laye in balaunce, And your honour; god shilde us fro mischaunce!

`And if so be that pees her-after take, As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, lord! The sorwe and wo ye wolden make, That ye ne dorste come
ayein for shame!

And er that ye Iupartien so your name, Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

`What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to
arede.

They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute, That love ne droof yow
nought to doon this dede, But lust voluptuous and coward drede.

Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere, Your honour, which that now
shyneth so clere.

`And also thenketh on myn honestee, That floureth yet, how foule I sholde
it shende, And with what filthe it spotted sholde be, If in this forme I sholde
with yow wende.

Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende, My name sholde I never
ayeinward winne; Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.

`And for-thy slee with reson al this hete; Men seyn, "The suffraunt
overcometh," pardee; Eek "Who-so wol han leef, he lief mot lete;"

Thus maketh vertue of necessitee

By pacience, and thenk that lord is he Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir
recche; And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.

`And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete, Er Phebus suster, Lucina the
shene, The Leoun passe out of this Ariete, I wol ben here, with-uten any
wene.

I mene, as helpe me Iuno, hevenes quene, The tenthe day, but-if that deeth
me assayle, I wol yow seen with-uten any fayle.'

`And now, so this be sooth,' quod Troilus, `I shal wel suffre un-to the tenthe
day, Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.

But, for the love of god, if it be may, So lat us stele prively away;

For ever in oon, as for to live in reste, Myn herte seyth that it wol been the
beste.'

`O mercy, god, what lyf is this?' quod she; `Allas, ye slee me thus for verray
tene!

I see wel now that ye mistrusten me; For by your wordes it is wel y-sene.

Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene, Mistrust me not thus causeles, for
routhe; Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe.

`And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit To spende a tyme, a tyme for to
winne; Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit, Though that we been a day
or two a-twinne.

Dryf out the fantasyes yow with-inne; And trusteth me, and leveth eek your
sorwe, Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.

`For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte, Ye wolde cesse of this; for god,
thou wost, The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte, To see yow wepen that I
love most, And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.

Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye

To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

`But certes, I am not so nyce a wight That I ne can imaginen a wey

To come ayein that day that I have hight.

For who may holde thing that wol a-way?

My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.

And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye Another day shal torne us alle
to loye.

`For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke, If that yow list don ought for my
preyere, And for the love which that I love yow eke, That er that I departe
fro yow here, That of so good a comfort and a chere I may you seen, that ye
may bringe at reste Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

`And over al this I pray yow,' quod she tho, `Myn owene hertes soothfast
suffisaunce, Sin I am thyn al hool, with-uten mo, That whyl that I am
absent, no plesaunce Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.

For I am ever a-gast, for-why men rede, That "love is thing ay ful of bisy
drede."

`For in this world ther liveth lady noon, If that ye were untrewe, as god
defende!

That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende, I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
For goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.'

To this answerde Troilus and seyde, `Now god, to whom ther nis no cause
y-wrye, Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde, Sin thilke day I saw hir
first with ye, Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.

At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve; I can no more, it shal be founde at
preve.'

`Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis,' quod she, `And blisful Venus lat me
never sterve Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree To quyte him wel, that
so wel can deserve; And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve, I shal so
doon, so trewe I have yow founde, That ay honour to me-ward shal
rebounde.

`For trusteth wel, that your estat royal Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial, Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek
richesse, Ne made me to rewe on your distresse; But moral vertue,
grounded upon trouthe, That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe!

`Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde, And that ye hadde, as me
thoughte, in despyt Every thing that souned in-to badde, As rudenesse and
poeplish appetyt; And that your reson brydled your delyt, This made,
aboven every creature, That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.

`And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do, Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Iuppiter, that of his might may do The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us
grace, Er nightes ten, to meten in this place, So that it may your herte and
myn suffyse; And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.'

And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde, And ofte y-kist, and streite in
armes folde, The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde, And rewwfulliche his
lady gan biholde, As he that felte dethes cares colde, And to hir grace he
gan him recomaunde; Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

For mannes heed imaginen ne can,

Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle The cruel peynes of this sorwful
man, That passen every torment doun in helle.

For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle, Which that his soule out of
his herte rente, With-uten more, out of the chaumbre he wente.

Explicit Liber Quartus.

BOOK V.

Incipit Liber Quintus.

Aprochen gan the fatal destinee
That Ioves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren three, Committeth, to don execucioun;
For which Criseyde moste out of the toun, And Troilus shal dwelle forth in
pyne Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne. — The golden-tressed Phebus
heighe on-lofte Thryes hadde alle with his bemes shene The snowes molte,
and Zephirus as ofte Y-brought ayein the tendre leves grene, Sin that the
sone of Ecuba the quene Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe Was al,
that she departe sholde a-morwe.

Ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
Criseyde un-to the Grekes ost to lede, For sorwe of which she felt hir herte
blede, As she that niste what was best to rede.

And trewely, as men in bokes rede, Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

This Troilus, with-uten reed or lore, As man that hath his Ioyes eek
forlore, Was waytinge on his lady evermore As she that was the soothfast
crop and more Of al his lust, or Ioyes here-tofore.

But Troilus, now farewell al thy Ioye, For shaltow never seen hir eft in
Troye!

Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere, He gan his wo ful manly for to
hyde.

That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere; But at the yate ther she sholde
oute ryde With certeyn folk, he hoved hir tabyde, So wo bigoon, al wolde
he nought him pleyne, That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.

For ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe, Whan Diomede on horse gan him
dresse, And seyde un-to him-self this ilke sawe, `Allas,' quod he, `thus foul
a wrecchednesse Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?

Were it not bet at ones for to dye Than evermore in langour thus to drye?
`Why nil I make at ones riche and pore To have y-nough to done, er that she
go?

Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?

Why nil I sleen this Diomedes also?

Why nil I rather with a man or two Stele hir a-way? Why wol I this endure?

Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?

But why he nolde doon so fel a dede, That shal I seyn, and why him liste it
spare; He hadde in herte alweyes a maner drede, Lest that Criseyde, in
rumour of this fare, Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.

And ellis, certeyn, as I seyde yore, He hadde it doon, with-outen wordes
more.

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde, Ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde
'Allas!'

But forth she moot, for ought that may bityde, And forth she rit ful
sorwfully a pas.

Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.

What wonder is though that hir sore smerte, Whan she forgoth hir owene
swete herte?

This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye, With hauke on hond, and with an huge
route Of knyghtes, rood and dide hir companye, Passinge al the valey fer
with-oute, And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute, Ful fayn, and wo was
him to goon so sone; But torne he moste, and it was eek to done.

And right with that was Antenor y-come Out of the Grekes ost, and every
wight Was of it glad, and seyde he was wel-come.

And Troilus, al nere his herte light, He peyned him with al his fulle might
Him to with-holde of wepinge at the leste, And Antenor he kiste, and made
feste.

And ther-with-al he moste his leve take, And caste his eye upon hir
pitously, And neer he rood, his cause for to make, To take hir by the honde
al sobrelly.

And lord! So she gan wepen tendrelly!

And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye, 'Now hold your day, and dooth
me not to deye.'

With that his courser torned he a-boute With face pale, and un-to Diomedes
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route; Of which the sone of Tydeus took
hede, As he that coude more than the crede In swich a craft, and by the
reynne hir hente; And Troilus to Troye homwarde he wente.

This Diomedes, that ladde hir by the brydel, Whan that he saw the folk of
Troye aweye, Thoughte, 'Al my labour shal not been on ydel, If that I may,
for somewhat shal I seye, For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.

I have herd seyde, eek tymes twyes twelve, "He is a fool that wol foryete
himselve."

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough, 'That certaynly I am aboute
nought, If that I speke of love, or make it tough; For douteles, if she have in
hir thought Him that I gesse, he may not been y-brought So sone away; but
I shal finde a mene, That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.'

This Diomedes, as he that coude his good, Whan this was doon, gan fallen
forth in speche Of this and that, and asked why she stood In swich disese,
and gan hir eek biseche, That if that he encrease mighte or eche With any
thing hir ese, that she sholde Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

For trewely he swoor hir, as a knight, That ther nas thing with whiche he
mighte hir plese, That he nolde doon his peyne and al his might To doon it,
for to doon hir herte an ese.

And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese, And seyde, 'Y-wis, we Grekes
con have Ioye To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.'

He seyde eek thus, 'I woot, yow thinketh straunge, No wonder is, for it is to
yow newe, Thaqueintaunce of these Troianis to chaunge, For folk of Grece,
that ye never knewe.

But wolde never god but-if as trewe A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Troian is, and eek as kinde.

'And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now, To been your freend, and
helply, to my might, And for that more aqueintaunce eek of yow Have ich

had than another straunger wight, So fro this forth, I pray yow, day and
night, Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte, To doon al that may lyke
un-to your herte; `And that ye me wolde as your brother trete, And taketh
not my frendship in despyt; And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt, Myn herte hath for to amende it
greet delyt.

And if I may your harmes not redresse, I am right sorry for your hevynesse,
`And though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe Han many a day be, alwey
yet, pardee, O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.

And, for the love of god, my lady free, Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth
with me.

For trewely, ther can no wight yow serve, That half so looth your wraththe
wolde deserve.

`And nere it that we been so neigh the tente Of Calkas, which that seen us
bothe may, I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente; But this enseled til
another day.

Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay, God help me so, whyl that my
lyf may dure, Your owene aboven every creature.

`Thus seyde I never er now to womman born; For god myn herte as wisly
glade so, I lovede never womman here-biforn As paramours, ne never shal
no mo.

And, for the love of god, beth not my fo; Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.

`And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright, Though that I speke of love to
you thus blyve; For I have herd or this of many a wight, Hath loved thing he
never saugh his lyve.

Eek I am not of power for to stryve Ayens the god of love, but him obeye I
wol alwey, and mercy I yow preye.

`Ther been so worthy knightes in this place, And ye so fair, that everich of
hem alle Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.

But mighte me so fair a grace falle, That ye me for your servaunt wolde
calle, So lowly ne so trewely you serve

Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.'

Criseide un-to that purpos lyte answerde, As she that was with sorwe
oppressed so That, in effect, she nought his tales herde, But here and there,
now here a word or two.

Hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast a-two.

For whan she gan hir fader fer aspye, Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan to
sye.

But natheles she thonked Diomede

Of al his travaile, and his goode chere, And that him liste his friendship hir
to bede; And she accepteth it in good manere, And wolde do fayn that is
him leef and dere; And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte, As
seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte.

Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome, And tweyntye tyme he kiste his
doughter swete, And seyde, 'O dere doughter myn, wel-come!'

She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete, And stood forth mewet,
milde, and mansuete.

But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle, And forth I wol of Troilus yow
telle.

To Troye is come this woful Troilus, In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,
With felon look, and face dispitous.

Tho sodeinly doun from his hors he sterte, And thorough his paleys, with a
swollen herte, To chambre he wente; of nothing took he hede, Ne noon to
him dar speke a word for drede.

And there his sorwes that he spared hadde He yaf an issue large, and
'Deeth!' he cryde; And in his throwes frenetyk and madde He cursed Iove,
Appollo, and eek Cupyde, He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde, His
burthe, him-self, his fate, and eek nature, And, save his lady, every creature.

To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth In furie, as dooth he, Ixion
in helle; And in this wyse he neigh til day soiorneth.

But tho bigan his herte a lyte unswelle Thorough teres which that gonnen up
to welle; And pitously he cryde up-on Criseyde, And to him-self right thus
he spak, and seyde: — 'Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere, Wher is hir
whyte brest, wher is it, where?

Wher ben hir armes and hir eyen clere, That yesternight this tyme with me
were?

Now may I wepe allone many a tere, And graspe aboute I may, but in this
place, Save a pilowe, I finde nought tenbrace.

‘How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn?

I noot, allas! Why leet ich hir to go?

As wolde god, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!

O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!

O lady myn, that I love and no mo!

To whom for ever-mo myn herte I dowe; See how I deye, ye nil me not
rescove!

‘Who seeth yow now, my righte lode-sterre?

Who sit right now or stant in your presence?

Who can conforten now your hertes werre?

Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?

Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?

Allas, no wight; and that is al my care; For wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare.

‘How sholde I thus ten dayes ful endure, Whan I the firste night have al this
tene?

How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?

For tendernesse, how shal she this sustene, Swich wo for me? O pitous,
pale, and grene Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face For langour, er
ye torne un-to this place.'

And whan he fil in any slomeringes, Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
And dremen of the dredfulleste thinges That mighte been; as, mete he were
allone In place horrible, makege ay his mone, Or meten that he was
amonges alle His enemys, and in hir hondes falle.

And ther-with-al his body sholde sterte, And with the stert al sodeinliche
awake, And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte, That of the feer his body
sholde quake; And there-with-al he sholde a noyse make, And seme as
though he sholde falle depe From heighe a-lofte; and than he wolde wepe,
And rewen on him-self so pitously, That wonder was to here his fantasye.

Another tyme he sholde mightily

Conforte him-self, and seyn it was folye, So causeles swich drede for to drye,
And eft biginne his aspre sorwes newe, That every man mighte on his sorwes rewe.

Who coude telle aright or ful discryve His wo, his pleynt, his langour, and his pyne?

Nought al the men that han or been on-lyve.

Thou, redere, mayst thy-self ful wel devyne That swich a wo my wit can not defyne.

On ydel for to wryte it sholde I swinke, Whan that my wit is wery it to thinke.

On hevne yet the sterres were sene, Al-though ful pale y-waxen was the mone;
And whyten gan the orisonte shene Al estward, as it woned is for to done.

And Phebus with his rosy carte sone Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of al the day biforn Ne mighte han comen Troilus to see,
Al-though he on his heed it hadde y-sworn, For with the king Pryam alday was he,
So that it lay not in his libertee No-wher to gon, but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.

For in his herte he coude wel devyne, That Troilus al night for sorwe wook;
And that he wolde telle him of his pyne, This knew he wel y-nough, withoute book.

For which to chaumbre streight the wey he took, And Troilus tho sobreliche he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.

'My Pandarus,' quod Troilus, 'the sorwe Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.

I trowe I shal not liven til to-morwe; For whiche I wolde alwey, on aventure,
To thee devysen of my sepulture

The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone Right as thee semeth best is for
to done.

‘But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral In whiche my body brenne shal to
glede, And of the feste and pleyes palestral At my vigile, I prey thee tak
good hede That be wel; and offre Mars my stede, My swerd, myn helm,
and, leve brother dere, My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere.

‘The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal torne, That preye I thee thou
take and it conserve In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne, Of gold, and to
my lady that I serve, For love of whom thus pitously I sterve, So yeve it hir,
and do me this plesaunce, To preye hir kepe it for a remembraunce.

‘For wel I fele, by my maladye,

And by my dremes now and yore ago, Al certeinly, that I mot nedes dye.

The owle eek, which that hight Ascaphilo, Hath after me shrigh alle these
nightes two.

And, god Mercurie! Of me now, woful wrecche, The soule gyde, and, whan
thee list, it fecche!

Pandare answerde, and seyde, ‘Troilus, My dere freend, as I have told thee
yore, That it is folye for to sorwen thus, And causeles, for whiche I can no-
more.

But who-so wol not trowen reed ne lore, I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.

‘But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now, If that thou trowe, er this, that any
wight Hath loved paramours as wel as thou?

Ye, god wot, and fro many a worthy knight Hath his lady goon a
fourtenight, And he not yet made halvendel the fare.

What nede is thee to maken al this care?

‘Sin day by day thou mayst thy-selven see That from his love, or elles from
his wyf, A man mot twinnen of necessitee,

Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf; Yet nil he with him-self thus maken
stryf.

For wel thow wost, my leve brother dere, That alwey freendes may nought
been y-fere.

How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded By freendes might, as it bi-
tit ful ofte, And seen hem in hir spouses bed y-bedded?

God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe.

For-why good hope halt up hir herte on-lofte, And for they can a tyme of
sorwe endure; As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure.

So sholdestow endure, and late slyde The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and
light.

Ten dayes nis so longe not tabyde.

And sin she thee to comen hath bihight, She nil hir hestes breken for no
wight.

For dred thee not that she nil finden weye To come ayein, my lyf that dorste
I leye.

Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye Dryf out, and lat hem faren to
mischaunce; For they procede of thy malencolye, That doth thee fele in
sleep al this penaunce.

A straw for alle swevenes signifiaunce!

God helpe me so, I counte hem not a bene, Ther woot no man aright what
dremes mene.

For prestes of the temple tellen this, That dremes been the revelaciouns Of
goddes, and as wel they telle, y-wis, That they ben infernals illusiouns; And
leches seyn, that of complexiouns Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye.

Who woot in sooth thus what they signifye?

Eek othere seyn that thorough impressiouns, As if a wight hath faste a thing
in minde, That ther-of cometh swiche avisiouns; And othere seyn, as they in
bokes finde, That, after tymes of the yeer by kinde, Men dreme, and that
theeffect goth by the mone; But leve no dreem, for it is nought to done.

`Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves, And trowelicke eek augurie of
thise foules; For fere of which men wenen lese her lyves, As ravenes qualm,
or shryking of thise oules.

To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.

Allas, alas, so noble a creature As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!

`For which with al myn herte I thee beseche, Un-to thy-self that al this thou
foryive; And rys up now with-oute more speche, And lat us caste how forth
may best be drive This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live Whan that
she cometh, the which shal be right sone; God help me so, the beste is thus
to done.

`Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye That we han lad, and forth the tyme
dryve; And eek of tyme cominge us reioye, That bringen shal our blisse
now so blyve; And langour of these twyes dayes fyve We shal ther-with so
foryete or oppresse, That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse.

`This toun is ful of lordes al aboute, And trewes lasten al this mene whyle.

Go we pleye us in som lusty route To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.

And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle, And dryve it forth un-to that
blisful morwe, That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.

`Now rys, my dere brother Troilus; For certes, it noon honour is to thee To
wepe, and in thy bedde to iouken thus.

For trowely, of o thing trust to me, If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or three,
The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse, Thee feynest syk, and that thou
darst not ryse.'

This Troilus answerde, `O brother dere, This knowen folk that han y-suffred
peyne, That though he wepe and make sorwful chere, That feleth harm and
smert in every veyne, No wonder is; and though I ever pleyne, Or alwey
wepe, I am nothing to blame, Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.

`But sin of fyne force I moot aryse, I shal aryse as sone as ever I may; And
god, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse, So sende us hastely the tenthe day!

For was ther never fowl so fayn of May, As I shal been, whan that she
cometh in Troye, That cause is of my torment and my loye.

'But whider is thy reed,' quod Troilus, 'That we may pleye us best in al this
toun?'

'Bi god, my conseil is,' quod Pandarus, 'To ryde and pleye us with king
Sarpedoun.'

So longe of this they speken up and doun, Til Troilus gan at the laste
assente To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh
prowesse, With al that mighte y-served been on table, That deyntee was, al
coste it greet richesse, He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse, As
seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste, Was never er that day wist at any
feste.

Nor in this world ther is non instrument Delicious, through wind, or touche,
of corde, As fer as any wight hath ever y-went, That tonge telle or herte
may recorde, That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde; Ne of ladies eek so
fayr a companye On daunce, er tho, was never y-seyn with ye.

But what avayleth this to Troilus, That for his sorwe nothing of it roughte?

For ever in oon his herte pietous Ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.

On hir was ever al that his herte thoughte, Now this, now that, so faste
imaginige, That glade, y-wis, can him no festeyinge.

These ladies eek that at this feste been, Sin that he saw his lady was a-weye,
It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen, Or for to here on instrumentz so
pleye.

For she, that of his herte berth the keye, Was absent, lo, this was his
fantasye, That no wight sholde make melodye.

Nor ther nas houre in al the day or night, Whan he was ther-as no wight
mighte him here, That he ne seyde, 'O lufsom lady bright, How have ye
faren, sin that ye were here?'

Welcome, y-wis, myn owene lady dere.'

But welaway, al this nas but a mase; Fortune his howve entended bet to
glase.

The lettres eek, that she of olde tyme Hadde him y-sent, he wolde allone
rede, An hundred sythe, a-twixen noon and pryme; Refiguringe hir shap, hir
womanhede, With-inne his herte, and every word and dede That passed
was, and thus he droof to an ende The ferthe day, and seyde, he wolde
wende.

And seyde, `Leve brother Pandarus, Intendestow that we shal here bleve Til
Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?

Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve.

For goddes love, lat us now sone at eve Our leve take, and homward lat us
torne; For trewely, I nil not thus soiourne.'

Pandare answerde, `Be we comen hider To fecchen fyr, and rennen hoom
ayeyn?

God helpe me so, I can not tellen whider We mighten goon, if I shal soothly
seyn, Ther any wight is of us more fayn Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes
hye Thus sodeinly, I holde it vilanye.

`Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve With him a wouke; and now, thus
sodeinly, The ferthe day to take of him oure leve, He wolde wondren on it,
trewely!

Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely; And sin that ye bihighten him to
byde, Hold forward now, and after lat us ryde.'

Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo, Made him to dwelle; and at the
woukes ende, Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho, And on hir wey they
spedden hem to wende.

Quod Troilus, `Now god me grace sende, That I may finden, at myn hom-
cominge, Criseyde comen!' And ther-with gan he singe.

`Ye, hasel-wode!' thoughte this Pandare, And to him-self ful softly he
seyde, `God woot, refreyden may this hote fare, Er Calkas sende Troilus
Criseyde!'

But natheles, he Iaped thus, and seyde, And swor, y-wis, his herte him wel
bihighte, She wolde come as sone as ever she mighte.

Whan they un-to the paleys were y-comen Of Troilus, they doun of hors
alighte, And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen.

And in-to tyme that it gan to nighte, They spaken of Cryseyde the brighte.
And after this, whan that hem bothe leste, They spedde hem fro the soper
un-to reste.

On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere, This Troilus gan of his sleep
tabrayde, And to Pandare, his owene brother dere, 'For love of god,' ful
pitously he seyde, 'As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde; For sin we yet
may have namore feste, So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste.'

And ther-with-al, his meyne for to blende, A cause he fond in toune for to
go, And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.

But lord! This sely Troilus was wo!

Him thoughte his sorweful herte braste a-two.

For whan he saugh hir dores sperred alle, Wel neigh for sorwe a-doun he
gan to falle.

Therwith, whan he was war and gan biholde How shet was every windowe
of the place, As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde; For which with
chaunged deedlich pale face, With-uten word, he forth bigan to pace; And,
as god wolde, he gan so faste ryde, That no wight of his contenance aspyde.

Than seyde he thus; 'O paleys desolat, O hous, of houses whylom best y-
hight, O paleys empty and disconsolat,

O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light, O paleys, whylom day, that
now art night, Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye, Sin she is went that
wont was us to gye!

'O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle, Enlumined with sonne of alle
blisse!

O ring, fro which the ruby is out-falle, O cause of wo, that cause hast been
of lisse!

Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route; And farewell shryne, of which the seynt is oute!

Therwith he caste on Pandarus his ye With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde; And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye, Ay as he rood, to Pandarus he tolde His newe sorwe, and eek his Ioyes olde, So pitously and with so dede an hewe, That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe.

Fro thennesforth he rydeth up and doun, And every thing com him to remembraunce As he rood forbi places of the toun In whiche he whylom hadde al his plesaunce.

`Lo, yond saugh I myn owene lady daunce; And in that temple, with hir eyen clere, Me coughte first my righte lady dere.

`And yonder have I herd ful lustily My dere herte laugh, and yonder pleye Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully.

And yonder ones to me gan she seye, "Now goode swete, love me wel, I preye."

And yond so goodly gan she me biholde, That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde.

`And at that corner, in the yonder hous, Herde I myn alderlevest lady dere So wommanly, with voys melodious, Singen so wel, so goodly, and so clere, That in my soule yet me thinketh I here The blisful soun; and, in that yonder place, My lady first me took un-to hir grace.'

Thanne thoughte he thus, `O blisful lord Cupyde, Whanne I the proces have in my memorie, How thou me hast wereyed on every syde, Men might a book make of it, lyk a storie.

What nede is thee to seke on me victorie, Sin I am thyn, and hoolly at thy wille?

What Ioye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

`Wel hastow, lord, y-wroke on me thyn ire, Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve!

Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire Thy grace most, of alle lustes leve,
And live and deye I wol in thy bileve, For which I naxe in guerdon but a
bone, That thou Criseyde ayein me sende sone.

`Distreyne hir herte as faste to retorne As thou dost myn to longen hir to
see; Than woot I wel, that she nil nought soiorne.

Now, blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be Un-to the blood of Troye, I preye
thee, As Iuno was un-to the blood Thebane, For which the folk of Thebes
caughte hir bane.'

And after this he to the yates wente Ther-as Criseyde out-rood a ful good
paas, And up and down ther made he many a wente, And to him-self ful ofte
he seyde `Allas!

From hennes rood my blisse and my solas!

As wolde blisful god now, for his Ioye, I mighte hir seen ayein come in-to
Troye!

`And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde, Allas! And there I took of hir my
leve!

And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde, For sorwe of which myn herte shal
to-cleve.

And hider hoom I com whan it was eve; And here I dwelle out-cast from
alle Ioye, And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye.'

And of him-self imagened he ofte

To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse Than he was wont, and that men
seyden softe, `What may it be? Who can the sothe gesse Why Troilus hath
al this hevinesse?'

And al this nas but his malencolye, That he hadde of him-self swich
fantasye.

Another tyme imaginen he wolde

That every wight that wente by the weye Had of him routhe, and that they
seyen sholde, 'I am right sory Troilus wole deye.'

And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye.

As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede, As he that stood bitwixen hope
and drede.

For which him lyked in his songes shewe Thencheson of his wo, as he best
michte, And made a song of wordes but a fewe, Somwhat his woful herte
for to lighte.

And whan he was from every mannes sighte, With softe voys he, of his lady
dere, That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

'O sterre, of which I lost have al the light, With herte soor wel oughte I to
bewayle, That ever derk in torment, night by night, Toward my deeth with
wind in stere I sayle; For which the tenthe night if that I fayle The gyding of
thy bemes brighte an houre, My ship and me Caribdis wole devoure.'

This song whan he thus songen hadde, sone He fil ayein in-to his sykes
olde; And every night, as was his wone to done, He stood the brighte mone
to beholde, And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde; And seyde, 'Y-wis, whan
thou art horned newe, I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

'I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe, Whan hennes rood my righte
lady dere, That cause is of my torment and my sorwe; For whiche, O
brighte Lucina the clere, For love of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!

For whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe, Than shal she come, that may
my blisse bringe!'

The day is more, and lenger every night, Than they be wont to be, him
thoughte tho; And that the sonne wente his course unright By lenger wey
than it was wont to go; And seyde, 'Y-wis, me dredeth ever-mo, The sonnes
sone, Pheton, be on-lyve, And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.'

Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke, And on the Grekes ost he wolde
see, And to him-self right thus he wolde talke, 'Lo, yonder is myn owene
lady free, Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!

And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote, That in my soule I fele it doth
me bote.

`And hardely this wind, that more and more Thus stoundemele encreseth in
my face, Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore.

I preve it thus, for in non othere place Of al this toun, save onliche in this
space, Fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne; It seyth, "Allas! Why
twinned be we tweyne?"

This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus, Til fully passed was the nynthe
night; And ay bi-syde him was this Pandarus, That bisily dide alle his fulle
might Him to comforte, and make his herte light; Yevinge him hope alwey,
the tenthe morwe That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

Up-on that other syde eek was Criseyde, With wommen fewe, among the
Grekes stronge; For which ful ofte a day `Allas,' she seyde, `That I was
born! Wel may myn herte longe After my deeth; for now live I to longe!

Allas! And I ne may it not amende; For now is wors than ever yet I wende.

`My fader nil for nothing do me grace To goon ayein, for nought I can him
queme; And if so be that I my terme passe, My Troilus shal in his herte
deme That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.

Thus shal I have unthank on every syde; That I was born, so weylaway the
tyde!

`And if that I me putte in Iupartye, To stele away by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye; Or elles, lo, this drede I most of
alle, If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle, I am but lost, al be myn herte
trewe; Now mighty god, thou on my sorwe rewe!'

Ful pale y-waxen was hir brighte face, Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place Ther she was born, and ther
she dwelt hadde ay.

And al the night wepinge, allas! she lay.

And thus despeired, out of alle cure, She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.

Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse, And in hir-self she wente ay
portrayinge Of Troilus the grete worthinesse, And alle his goodly wordes
recordinge Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.

And thus she sette hir woful herte a-fyre Through remembraunce of that she
gan desyre.

In al this world ther nis so cruel herte That hir hadde herd compleynen in
hir sorwe, That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte, So tendrely she
weep, bothe eve and morwe.

Hir nedede no teres for to borwe.

And this was yet the worste of al hir peyne, Ther was no wight to whom she
dorste hir pleyne.

Ful rewfully she loked up-on Troye, Biheld the toures heighe and eek the
halles; `Allas!' quod she, `The plesaunce and the Ioye The whiche that now
al torned in-to galle is, Have I had ofte with-inne yonder walles!

O Troilus, what dostow now,' she seyde; `Lord! Whether yet thou thenke
up-on Criseyde?

`Allas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore, And went with yow, as ye me radde
er this!

Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.

Who mighte han seyde, that I had doon a-mis To stele away with swich on as
he is?

But al to late cometh the letuarie, Whan men the cors un-to the grave carie.

`To late is now to speke of this matere; Prudence, allas! Oon of thyn eyen
three Me lakked alwey, er that I come here; On tyme y-passed, wel
remembred me; And present tyme eek coude I wel y-see.

But futur tyme, er I was in the snare, Coude I not seen; that causeth now my
care.

`But natheles, bityde what bityde, I shal to-morwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde, And go with Troilus wher-as him
leste.

This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.

No fors of wikked tonges Ianglerye, For ever on love han wrecches had
envye.

'For who-so wole of every word take hede, Or rewlen him by every wightes
wit, Ne shal he never thryven, out of drede.

For that that som men blamen ever yit, Lo, other maner folk commenden it.

And as for me, for al swich variaunce, Felicitee clepe I my suffisaunce.

'For which, with-uten any wordes mo, To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.'

But god it wot, er fully monthes two, She was ful fer fro that entencioun.

For bothe Troilus and Troye toun

Shal knotteles through-out hir herte slyde; For she wol take a purpos for
tabyde.

This Diomede, of whom yow telle I gan, Goth now, with-inne him-self ay
arguinge With al the sleighte and al that ever he can, How he may best, with
shortest taryinge, In-to his net Criseydes herte bringe.

To this entente he coude never fyne; To fisshen hir, he leyde out hook and
lyne.

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte, That she nas nat with-oute a love
in Troye, For never, sithen he hir thennes broughte, Ne coude he seen her
laughe or make Ioye.

He nist how best hir herte for tacoye.

'But for to assaye,' he seyde, 'it nought ne greveth; For he that nought
nassayeth, nought nacheveth.'

Yet seide he to him-self upon a night, 'Now am I not a fool, that woot wel
how Hir wo for love is of another wight, And here-up-on to goon assaye hir
now?

I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow.

For wyse folk in bokes it expresse, "Men shal not wowe a wight in
hevinesse."

`But who-so mighte winnen swich a flour From him, for whom she morneth
night and day, He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.'

And right anoon, as he that bold was ay, Thoughte in his herte, `Happe how
happe may, Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche; I shal no more lesen
but my speche.'

This Diomede, as bokes us declare, Was in his nedes prest and corageous;
With sterne voys and mighty limes square, Hardy, testif, strong, and
chevalrous Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.

And som men seyn, he was of tunge large; And heir he was of Calidoine
and Arge.

Criseyde mene was of hir stature, Ther-to of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
Ther mighte been no fairer creature.

And ofte tyme this was hir manere, To gon y-tressed with hir heres clere
Doun by hir coler at hir bak bihinde, Which with a threde of gold she wolde
binde.

And, save hir browes ioyneden y-fere, Ther nas no lak, in ought I can
espyen; But for to speken of hir eyen clere, Lo, trewely, they writen that hir
syen, That Paradys stood formed in hir yen.

And with hir riche beautee evermore Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was
more.

She sobre was, eek simple, and wys with-al, The beste y-norissed eek that
mighte be, And goodly of hir speche in general, Charitable, estatliche, lusty,
and free; Ne never-mo ne lakkede hir pitee; Tendre-herted, slydinge of
corage; But trewely, I can not telle hir age.

And Troilus wel waxen was in highte, And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte; Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy
as lyoun; Trewe as steel in ech condicioun; On of the beste enteched
creature, That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

And certainly in storie it is y-founde, That Troilus was never un-to no
wight, As in his tyme, in no degree secoude In durring don that longeth to
a knight.

Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might, His herte ay with the firste and
with the beste Stood paregal, to durre don that him leste.

But for to tellen forth of Diomede: — It fil that after, on the tenthe day, Sin
that Criseyde out of the citee yede, This Diomede, as fresshe as braunche in
May, Com to the tente ther-as Calkas lay, And feyned him with Calkas han
to done; But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle, Welcomed him, and down by hir him
sette; And he was ethe y-nough to maken dwelle.

And after this, with-uten longe lette, The spyces and the wyn men forth
hem fette; And forth they speke of this and that y-fere, As freendes doon, of
which som shal ye here.

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye
toun; And of thassege he gan hir eek byseche, To telle him what was hir
opinioun.

Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun To asken hir, if that hir straunge
thoughte The Grekes gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?

And why hir fader tarieth so longe To wedden hir un-to som worthy wight?

Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge For love of Troilus, hir owene
knight, As ferforth as she conning hadde or might, Answerde him tho; but,
as of his entente, It semed not she wiste what he mente.

But natheles, this ilke Diomede

Gan in him-self assure, and thus he seyde, `If ich aright have taken of yow
hede, Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde, That sin I first hond on your
brydel leyde, Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe, Ne coude I never
seen yow but in sorwe.

`Can I not seyn what may the cause be But-if for love of som Troyan it
were, The which right sore wolde athinken me That ye, for any wight that

dwelleth there, Sholden spille a quarter of a tere, Or pitously your-selven so
bigyle; For dredelees, it is nought worth the whyle.

`The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some In preson been, as ye your-
selven see; Nor thennes shal not oon on-lyve come For al the gold bitwixen
sonne and see.

Trusteth wel, and understondeth me.

Ther shal not oon to mercy goon on-lyve, Al were he lord of worldes twyes
fyve!

`Swich wreche on hem, for fecching of Eleyne, Ther shal be take, er that we
hennes wende, That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne, Shal been
agast that Grekes wol hem shende.

And men shul drede, un-to the worldes ende, From hennesforth to ravishe
any quene, So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene.

`And but-if Calkas lede us with ambages, That is to seyn, with double
wordes slye, Swich as men clepe a "word with two visages,"

Ye shal wel knowen that I nought ne lye, And al this thing right seen it with
your ye, And that anoon; ye nil not trowe how sone; Now taketh heed, for it
is for to done.

`What wene ye your wyse fader wolde Han yeven Antenor for yow anoon,
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I
goon!

He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon That Trojan is; and for the grete
fere, He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there.

`What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?

Lat Troye and Trojan fro your herte pace!

Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere, And clepe ayein the beautee
of your face, That ye with salte teres so deface.

For Troye is brought in swich a Iupartye, That, it to save, is now no
remedye.

`And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes finde, A more parfit love, er it be
night, Than any Troian is, and more kinde, And bet to serven yow wol doon
his might.

And if ye vouche sauf, my lady bright, I wol ben he to serven yow my-
selve, Yee, lever than he lord of Greces twelve!

And with that word he gan to waxen reed, And in his speche a litel wight he
quook, And caste a-syde a litel wight his heed, And stinte a whyle; and
afterward awook, And sobreliche on hir he threw his look, And seyde, `I
am, al be it yow no Ioye, As gentil man as any wight in Troye.

`For if my fader Tydeus,' he seyde, `Y-lived hadde, I hadde been, er this, Of
Calidoine and Arge a king, Criseyde!

And so hope I that I shal yet, y-wis.

But he was slayn, allas! The more harm is, Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymites and many a man to scathe.

`But herte myn, sin that I am your man, And been the ferste of whom I
seche grace, To serven you as hertely as I can, And ever shal, whyl I to live
have space, So, er that I departe out of this place, Ye wol me graunte, that I
may to-morwe, At better leyser, telle yow my sorwe.'

What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?

He spak y-now, for o day at the meste; It preveth wel, he spak so that
Criseyde Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste, For to speken with him at
the leste, So that he nolde speke of swich matere; And thus to him she
seyde, as ye may here: As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus So faste, that
ther may it noon arace; And straungely she spak, and seyde thus; `O
Diomedes, I love that ilke place Ther I was born; and loves, for his grace,
Delivere it sone of al that doth it care!

God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!

`That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye wreke, If that they mighte, I
knowe it wel, y-wis.

But it shal not bifallen as ye speke; And god to-forn, and ferther over this, I
wot my fader wys and redy is;

And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde, So dere, I am the more un-to
him holde.

`That Grekes been of heigh condicioun, I woot eek wel; but certein, men
shal finde As worthy folk with-inne Troye toun, As conning, and as parfit
and as kinde, As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde.

And that ye coude wel your lady serve, I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to
deserve.

`But as to speke of love, y-wis,' she seyde, `I hadde a lord, to whom I
wedded was, The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde; And other love,
as helpe me now Pallas, Ther in myn herte nis, ne nevere was.

And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede, I have wel herd it tellen, out
of drede.

`And that doth me to han so gret a wonder, That ye wol scornen any
womman so.

Eek, god wot, love and I be fer a-sonder!

I am disposed bet, so mote I go,

Un-to my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo.

What I shal after doon, I can not seye; But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.

`Myn herte is now in tribulacioun, And ye in armes bisy, day by day.

Here-after, whan ye wonnen han the toun, Paraunter, thanne so it happen
may, That whan I see that I never er say, Than wole I werke that I never
wroughte!

This word to yow y-nough suffysen oughte.

`To-morwe eek wol I speken with yow fayn, So that ye touchen nought of
this matere.

And whan yow list, ye may come here ayeyn; And, er ye gon, thus muche I
seye yow here; As help me Pallas with hir heres clere, If that I sholde of any

Greek han routhe, It sholde be your-selven, by my trouthe!

`I sey not therfore that I wol yow love, Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by god that sit above:' — And ther-with-al she caste hir eyen
doun, And gan to syke, and seyde, `O Troye toun, Yet bidde I god, in quiete
and in reste I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste.'

But in effect, and shortly for to seye, This Diomedes al freshly newe ayeyn
Gan pressen on, and faste hir mercy preyed; And after this, the sothe for to
seyn, Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.

And fynally, whan it was waxen eve, And al was wel, he roos and took his
leve.

The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte The wey, ther brode Phebus doun
alight; And Cynthea hir char-hors over-raughte To whirle out of the Lyon,
if she mighte; And Signifer his candelse shewed brighte, Whan that
Criseyde un-to hir bedde wente In-with hir fadres faire brighte tente.

Retorning in hir soule ay up and doun The wordes of this sodein Diomedes,
His greet estat, and peril of the toun, And that she was allone and hadde
nede Of freendes help; and thus bigan to brede The cause why, the sothe for
to telle, That she tok fully purpos for to dwelle.

The morwe com, and goostly for to speke, This Diomedes is come un-to
Criseyde, And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke, So wel he for himselve
spak and seyde, That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde.

And fynally, the sothe for to seyne, He refte hir of the grete of al hir peyne.

And after this the story telleth us, That she him yaf the faire baye stede, The
which he ones wan of Troilus; And eek a broche (and that was litel nede)
That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomedes.

And eek, the bet from sorwe him to releve, She made him were a pencil of
hir sleve.

I finde eek in stories elles-where, Whan through the body hurt was
Diomedes Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere, Whan that she saugh his
wyde woundes blede; And that she took to kepen him good hede, And for to
hele him of his sorwes smerte.

Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte.

But trewely, the story telleth us, Ther made never womman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.

She seyde, `Allas! For now is clene a-go My name of trouthe in love, for
ever-mo!

For I have falsed oon, the gentileste That ever was, and oon the worthieste!

`Allas, of me, un-to the worldes ende, Shal neither been y-writen nor y-
songe No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.

O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge; Through-out the world my belle shal
be ronge; And wommen most wol hate me of alle.

Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!

`They wol seyn, in as mucche as in me is, I have hem don dishonour,
weylawey!

Al be I not the first that dide amis, What helpeth that to do my blame away?

But sin I see there is no bettre way, And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomedes algate I wol be trewe.

`But Troilus, sin I no better may, And sin that thus departen ye and I, Yet
preye I god, so yeve yow right good day As for the gentileste, trewely,

That ever I say, to serven feithfully, And best can ay his lady honour kepe:
— And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

`And certes yow ne haten shal I never, And freendes love, that shal ye han
of me, And my good word, al mighte I liven ever.

And, trewely, I wolde sory be

For to seen yow in adversitee.

And giltelees, I woot wel, I yow leve; But al shal passe; and thus take I my
leve.'

But trewely, how longe it was bitwene, That she for-sook him for this
Diomedes, Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.

Take every man now to his bokes hede; He shal no terme finden, out of drede.

For though that he bigan to wowe hir sone, Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde Ferther than the story wol devyse.

Hir name, allas! Is publissed so wyde, That for hir gilt it oughte y-noe suffyse.

And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse, For she so sory was for hir untrouthe, Y-wis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe.

This Troilus, as I biforn have told, Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might.

But often was his herte hoot and cold, And namely, that ilke nynthe night, Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight To come ayein: god wot, ful litel reste Hadde he that night; nothing to slepe him leste.

The laurer-crowned Phebus, with his hete, Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente, To warmen of the est see the waves wete, And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente, Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente; And on the walles of the toun they pleyde, To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde.

Til it was noon, they stoden for to see Who that ther come; and every maner wight, That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she, Til that they coude knowen him a-right.

Now was his herte dul, now was it light; And thus by-iaped stonden for to stare Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde, `For ought I wot, bi-for noon, sikerly, In-to this toun ne comth nought here Criseyde.

She hath y-now to done, hardily,

To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I; Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne Er that she go; god yeve his herte pyne!

Pandare answerde, `It may wel be, certeyn; And for-thy lat us dyne, I thee biseche; And after noon than maystw thou come ayeyn.'

And hoom they go, with-oute more speche; And comen ayein, but longe
may they seche Er that they finde that they after cape; Fortune hem bothe
thinketh for to Iape.

Quod Troilus, 'I see wel now, that she Is taried with hir olde fader so, That
er she come, it wole neigh even be.

Com forth, I wol un-to the yate go.

This portours been unkonninge ever-mo; And I wol doon hem holden up
the yate As nought ne were, al-though she come late.'

The day goth faste, and after that comth eve, And yet com nought to Troilus
Criseyde.

He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve, And fer his heed over the wal
he leyde.

And at the laste he torned him, and seyde.

'By god, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!

Al-most, y-wis, al newe was my care.

'Now douteles, this lady can hir good; I woot, she meneth ryden prively.

I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood!

She wol not maken peple nycely

Gaure on hir, whan she comth; but softly By nighte in-to the toun she
thinketh ryde.

And, dere brother, think not longe to abyde.

'We han nought elles for to don, y-wis.

And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?

Have here my trouthe, I see hir! Yond she is.

Heve up thyn eyen, man! Maystow not see?'

Pandare answerde, 'Nay, so mote I thee!

Al wrong, by god; what seystow, man, wher art?

That I see yond nis but a fare-cart.'

'Allas, thou seist right sooth,' quod Troilus; 'But, hardely, it is not al for
nought That in myn herte I now reioyse thus.

It is ayein som good I have a thought.

Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought, Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I
seye; She comth to-night, my lyf, that dorste I leye!

Pandare answerde, 'It may be wel, y-nough'; And held with him of al that
ever he seyde; But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough, And to him-
self ful sobrely he seyde: 'From hasel-wode, ther Ioly Robin pleyde, Shal
come al that thou abydest here; Ye, farewell al the snow of ferne yere!'

The wardein of the yates gan to calle The folk which that with-oute the
yates were, And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle, Or al the night they
moste bleven there.

And fer with-in the night, with many a tere, This Troilus gan hoomward for
to ryde; For wel he seeth it helpeth nought tabyde.

But natheles, he gladded him in this; He thoughte he misaccounted hadde his
day, And seyde, 'I understonde have al a-mis.

For thilke night I last Criseyde say, She seyde, "I shal ben here, if that I
may, Er that the mone, O dere herte swete!

The Lyon passe, out of this Ariete."

'For which she may yet holde al hir biheste.'

And on the morwe un-to the yate he wente, And up and down, by west and
eek by este, Up-on the walles made he many a wente.

But al for nought; his hope alwey him blente; For which at night, in sorwe
and sykes sore, He wente him hoom, with-outen any more.

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde, He nath wher-on now lenger for
to honge; But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde, So were his
throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.

For when he saugh that she abood so long, He niste what he iuggen of it
might, Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.

The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay, Yet somewhat trustinge on hir hestes
olde.

But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde, He can now seen non other
remedye, But for to shape him sone for to dye.

Therwith the wikked spirit, god us blesse, Which that men clepeth wode
Ialousye, Gan in him crepe, in al this hevinesse; For which, by-cause he
wolde sone dye, He ne eet ne dronk, for his malencolye, And eek from
every companye he fledde; This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

He so defet was, that no maner man Unneth mighte him knowe ther he
wente; So was he lene, and ther-to pale and wan, And feble, that he walketh
by potente; And with his ire he thus himselven shente.

But who-so axed him wher-of him smerte, He seyde, his harm was al
aboute his herte.

Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere, His bretheren and his sustren gonne
him freyne Why he so sorwful was in al his chere, And what thing was the
cause of al his peyne?

But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne, But seyde, he felte a grevous
maladye A-boute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.

So on a day he leyde him down to slepe, And so bifel that in his sleep him
thoughte, That in a forest faste he welk to wepe For love of hir that him
these peynes wroughte; And up and down as he the forest soughte, He mette
he saugh a boor with tuskes grete, That sleep ayein the brighte sonnes hete.

And by this boor, faste in his armes folde, Lay kissing ay his lady bright
Criseyde: For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde, And for despyt, out
of his slepe he breyde, And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde, `O
Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!

I nam but deed; ther nis non other bote!

`My lady bright Criseyde hath me bitrayed, In whom I trusted most of any
wight, She elles-where hath now hir herte apayed; The blisful goddes,
through hir grete might, Han in my dreem y-shewed it ful right.

Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde' — And al this thing to Pandarus
he tolde.

`O my Criseyde, allas! What subtiltee.

What newe lust, what beautee, what science, What wratthe of iuste cause
have ye to me?

What gilt of me, what fel experience Hath fro me raft, allas! Thyn
advertence?

O trust, O feyth, O depe aseuraunce, Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my
plesaunce?

`Allas! Why leet I you from hennes go, For which wel neigh out of my wit I
breyde?

Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?

God wot I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde, That every word was gospel that
ye seyde!

But who may bet bigylen, yf him liste, Than he on whom men weneth best
to triste?

`What shal I doon, my Pandarus, allas!

I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne, Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne My-selven slow, than alwey
thus to pleyne.

For through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende, Ther every day with lyf
my-self I shende.'

Pandare answerde and seyde, `Allas the whyle That I was born; have I not
seyd er this, That dremes many a maner man bigyle?

And why? For folk expounden hem a-mis.

How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is, For any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?

Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.

`Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor, It may so be that it may signifye Hir fader, which that old is and eek hoor, Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye, And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye, And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde; Thus shuldestow thy dreem a-right expounde.'

`How mighte I thanne do?' quod Troilus, `To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?'

`Now seystow wysly,' quod this Pandarus, `My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte, That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte, Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute, To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute.

`And see now why; for this I dar wel seyn, That if so is that she untrew be, I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayeyn.

And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see, As whether she hath any libertee To come ayein, or ellis in som clause, If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

`Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente, Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye, Ther may swich cause been in hir entente, That hardely thou wolt thy-selven seye, That hir a-bood the beste is for yow tweye.

Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone A sothe of al; ther is no more to done.'

Acorded been to this conclusioun, And that anoon, these ilke lordes two; And hastely sit Troilus adoun,

And rolleth in his herte to and fro, How he may best discryven hir his wo. And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere, He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

`Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal, With-uten part of elles-where servyse, With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al; I, woful wight, in every humble wyse That tonge telle or herte may devyse, As ofte as matere occupyeth place, Me recomaunde un-to your noble grace.

`Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte, As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon That ye me lefte in aspre peynes smerte, Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon Fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle, While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle.

`For which to yow, with dredful herte trewe, I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte, My wo, that every houre encreseth newe, Compleyninge as I dar or can endyte.

And that defaced is, that may ye wyte The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne, That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.

`Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere To look on this defouled ye not holde; And over al this, that ye, my lady dere, Wol vouche-sauf this lettre to biholde.

And by the cause eek of my cares colde, That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte, For-yeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

`If any servant dorste or oughte of right Up-on his lady pitously compleyne, Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight, Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne, But dayes ten ye nolde in ost sojourne, But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.

`But for-as-muche as me mot nedes lyke Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more, But humbely with sorwful sykes syke; Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore, Fro day to day desyring evermore To knowen fully, if your wil it were, How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.

`The whos wel-fare and hele eek god encresse In honour swich, that upward in degree It growe alwey, so that it never cesse; Right as your herte ay can, my lady free, Devyse, I prey to god so mote it be.

And graunte it that ye sone up-on me rewe As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

`And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve, I can no more but, cheste of every care, At wrytinge of this lettre I was on-lyve, Al redy out my woful gost to dryve; Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde, Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.

`Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see, Of sorweful teres salte arn waxen
welles; My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee; My good, in harm; myn ese
eek waxen helle is.

My Ioye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles, But turned is, for which my lyf
I warie, Everich Ioye or ese in his contrarie.

`Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye Ye may redresse, and,
more a thousand sythe Than ever ich hadde, encressen in me Ioye.

For was ther never herte yet so blythe To han his lyf, as I shal been as
swythe As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe Commeve yow, yet
thinketh on your trouthe.

`And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved, Or if yow list no more up-on me
see, In guerdon yet of that I have you served, Biseche I yow, myn hertes
lady free, That here-upon ye wolden wryte me, For love of god, my righte
lode-sterre, Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.

`If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle, That with your lettre ye me
recomforte; For though to me your absence is an helle, With pacience I wol
my wo comorte, And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.

Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne; With hope, or deeth,
delivereth me fro peyne.

`Y-wis, myn owene dere herte trewe, I woot that, whan ye next up-on me
see, So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe, Criseyde shal nought conne
knowe me!

Y-wis, myn hertes day, my lady free, So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unnethe I holde.

`I sey no more, al have I for to seye To you wel more than I telle may; But
whether that ye do me live or deye, Yet pray I god, so yeve yow right good
day.

And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may, As ye that lyf or deeth me may
comaunde; And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde `With hele swich that,
but ye yeven me The same hele, I shal noon hele have.

In you lyth, whan yow liste that it so be, The day in which me clothen shal
my grave.

In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save Me from disese of alle peynes
smerte; And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte!

Le vostre T.'

This lettre forth was sent un-to Criseyde, Of which hir answeere in effect
was this; Ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde, That also sone as that she
might, y-wis, She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.

And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne, She wolde come, ye, but she
niste whenne.

But in hir lettre made she swich festes, That wonder was, and swereth she
loveth him best, Of which he fond but botmelees bihestes.

But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west, Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee
lest; Thus gooth the world; god shilde us fro mischaunce, And every wight
that meneth trouthe avaunce!

Encresen gan the wo fro day to night Of Troilus, for taryinge of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might, For which al doun he in his bed
him leyde; He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde, Imagininge ay
that she was unkinde; For which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.

This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn, May never come out of his
remembraunce; He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn, And that Loves,
of his purveyaunce, Him shewed hadde in sleep the signiffiaunce Of hir
untrouthe and his disaventure, And that the boor was shewed him in figure.

For which he for Sibille his suster sente, That called was Cassandre eek al
aboute; And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente, And hir bisoughte
assoilen him the doute Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute; And fynally,
with-inne a litel stounde, Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde, `O brother dere, If thou a sooth of this
desyrest knowe, Thou most a fewe of olde stories here, To purpos, how that
fortune over-throwe Hath lordes olde; through which, with-inne a throwe,

Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kinde He comen is, as men in
bokes finde.

`Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire For Grekes nolde doon hir
sacrifyse, Ne encens up-on hir auter sette a-fyre, She, for that Grekes gonne
hir so dispyse, Wrak hir in a wonder cruel wyse.

For with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle She made up frete hir corn and
vynes alle.

`To slee this boor was al the contree reysed, Amonges which ther com, this
boor to see, A mayde, oon of this world the best y-preysed; And Meleagre,
lord of that contree, He lovede so this fresshe mayden free That with his
manhod, er he wolde stente, This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;
`Of which, as olde bokes tellen us, Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye; But
how this Meleagre gan to dye

Thorough his moder, wol I yow not telle, For al to long it were for to dwelle.'

[Argument of the Books of Statius' "Thebais"]

Associat profugum Tideo primus Polimitem; Tidea legatum docet
insidiasque secundus; Tercius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes; Quartus
habet reges ineuntes prelia septem; Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et
anguis; Archimori bustum sexto ludique leguntur; Dat Graios Thebes et
vatem septimus vmbria; Octauo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgia;
Ypomedon nono moritur cum Parthonopeo; Fulmine percussus, decimo
Capaneus superatur; Vndecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres; Argiuam
flentem narrat duodenus et igneum.

She tolde eek how Tydeus, er she stente, Un-to the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyme kingdom of the citee, wente, For his felawe, daun Polymites,
Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles, Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the
strengthe; This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.

She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte, Whan Tydeus slough fifty knightes
stoute.

She tolde eek al the prophesyys by herte, And how that sevene kinges, with
hir route, Bisegeden the citee al aboute;

And of the holy serpent, and the welle, And of the furies, al she gan him
telle.

Of Archimoris buryinge and the pleyes, And how Amphiorax fil through
the grounde, How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes, And how
Ypomedoun in litel stounde Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Cappaneus the proude With thonder-dint was slayn, that
cryde loude.

She gan eek telle him how that either brother, Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other, And of Argyves wepinge and hir
wo; And how the town was brent she tolde eek tho.

And so descendeth doun from gestes olde To Diomede, and thus she spak
and tolde.

`This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede, Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.

And thy lady, wher-so she be, y-wis, This Diomede hir herte hath, and she
his.

Weep if thou wolt, or leef; for, out of doute, This Diomede is inne, and thou
art oute.'

`Thou seyst nat sooth,' quod he, `thou sorceresse, With al thy false goost of
prophesye!

Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse; Now seestow not this fool of
fantasye Peyneth hir on ladyes for to lye?

Away!' quod he. `Ther Loves yeve thee sorwe!

Thou shalt be fals, paraunter, yet to-morwe!

`As wel thou mightest lyen on Alceste, That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste.

For whanne hir housbonde was in Iupartye To dye him-self, but-if she
wolde dye, She chees for him to dye and go to helle, And starf anoon, as us
the bokes telle.'

Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte For-yat his wo, for angre of hir
speche; And from his bed al sodeinly he sterte, As though al hool him
hadde y-mad a leche.

And day by day he gan enquire and seche A sooth of this, with al his fulle
cure; And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.

Fortune, whiche that permutacioun Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun Of heighe Iove, as regnes shal ben
flitted Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted, Gan pulle away the
fetheres brighte of Troye Fro day to day, til they ben bare of Ioye.

Among al this, the fyn of the parodie Of Ector gan approchen wonder
blyve; The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie, And shapen hadde a mene
it out to dryve; Ayeins which fate him helpeth not to stryve; But on a day to
fighten gan he wende, At which, allas! He coughte his lyves ende.

For which me thinketh every maner wight That haunteth armes oughte to
biwayle The deeth of him that was so noble a knight; For as he drough a
king by thaventayle, Unwar of this, Achilles through the mayle And
through the body gan him for to ryve; And thus this worthy knight was
brought of lyve.

For whom, as olde bokes tellen us, Was mad swich wo, that tonge it may
not telle; And namely, the sorwe of Troilus, That next him was of
worthinesse welle.

And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle, That, what for sorwe, and love, and
for unreste, Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.

But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre, And dradde ay that his lady was
untrewe, Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre.

And as these loveres doon, he soughte ay newe To gete ayein Criseyde,
bright of hewe.

And in his herte he wente hir excusinge, That Calkas causede al hir
taryinge.

And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete Himselven lyk a pilgrim to disgyse,
To seen hir; but he may not contrefete To been unknowen of folk that weren
wyse, Ne finde excuse aright that may suffyse, If he among the Grekes
knowen were; For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.

To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe Ful pitously, he lefte it nought for
slouthe, Biseching hir that, sin that he was trewe, She wolde come ayein
and holde hir trouthe.

For which Criseyde up-on a day, for routhe, I take it so, touchinge al this
matere, Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here.

‘Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlihede, O swerd of knighthod, sours of
gentillesse!

How might a wight in torment and in drede And helelees, yow sende as yet
gladnesse?

I hertelees, I syke, I in distresse; Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele.

‘Your lettres ful, the papir al y-pleynted, Conceyved hath myn hertes pietee;
I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted Your lettre, and how that ye
requeren me To come ayein, which yet ne may not be.

But why, lest that this lettre founden were, No mencion ne make I now, for
fere.

‘Grevous to me, god woot, is your unreste, Your haste, and that, the goddes
ordenaunce, It semeth not ye take it for the beste.

Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce, As thinketh me, but only your
plesaunce.

But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche; For that I tarie, is al for
wikked speche.

‘For I have herd wel more than I wende, Touchinge us two, how thinges han
y-stonde; Which I shal with dissimulinge amende.

And beth nought wrooth, I have eek understonde, How ye ne doon but
holden me in honde.

But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse But alle trouthe and alle gentillesse.

`Comen I wol, but yet in swich disioynte I stonde as now, that what yeer or
what day That this shal be, that can I not apoynte.

But in effect, I prey yow, as I may, Of your good word and of your
frendship ay.

For trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure, As for a freend, ye may in me
assure.

`Yet preye I yow on yvel ye ne take, That it is short which that I to yow
wryte; I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make, Ne never yet ne coude I wel
endyte.

Eek greet effect men wryte in place lite.

Thentente is al, and nought the lettres space; And fareth now wel, god have
you in his grace!

La vostre C.'

This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge, Whan he it saugh, and
sorwefully he sighte; Him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of change; But
fynally, he ful ne trowen mighte That she ne wolde him holden that she
highte; For with ful yvel wil list him to leve That loveth wel, in swich cas,
though him greve.

But natheles, men seyn that, at the laste, For any thing, men shal the sothe
see; And swich a cas bitidde, and that as faste, That Troilus wel understood
that she Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be.

And fynally, he woot now, out of doute, That al is lost that he hath been
aboute.

Stood on a day in his malencolye

This Troilus, and in suspecioun

Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.

And so bifel, that through-out Troye toun, As was the gyse, y-bore was up
and doun A maner cote-armure, as seyth the storie, Biforn Deiphebe, in
signe of his victorie, The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius, Deiphebe it hadde
y-rent from Diomede The same day; and whan this Troilus It saugh, he gan
to taken of it hede, Avysing of the lengthe and of the brede, And al the
werk; but as he gan biholde, Ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde, As he that
on the coler fond with-inne A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe That
she from Troye moste nedes twinne, In remembraunce of him and of his
sorwe; And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe To kepe it ay; but now,
ful wel he wiste, His lady nas no lenger on to triste.

He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende For Pandarus; and al this newe
chaunce, And of this broche, he tolde him word and ende, Compleyninge of
hir hertes variaunce, His longe love, his trouthe, and his penaunce; And
after deeth, with-outen wordes more, Ful faste he cryde, his reste him to
restore.

Than spak he thus, `O lady myn Criseyde, Wher is your feyth, and wher is
your biheste?

Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe,' he seyde; `Of Diomede have ye
now al this feste!

Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste.

That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde, That ye thus nolde han holden
me in honde!

`Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?

Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this, That ye, Criseyde, coude han
chaunged so; Ne, but I hadde a-gilt and doon amis, So cruel wende I not
your herte, y-wis, To slee me thus; allas, your name of trouthe Is now for-
doon, and that is al my routhe.

`Was ther non other broche yow liste lete To feffe with your newe love,'
quod he, `But thilke broche that I, with teres wete, Yow yaf, as for a
remembraunce of me?

Non other cause, allas, ne hadde ye But for despyt, and eek for that ye
mente Al-outrely to shewen your entente!

`Through which I see that clene out of your minde Ye han me cast, and I ne
can nor may, For al this world, with-in myn herte finde To unloven yow a
quarter of a day!

In cursed tyme I born was, weylaway!

That ye, that doon me al this wo endure, Yet love I best of any creature.

`Now god,' quod he, `me sende yet the grace That I may meten with this
Diomedede!

And trewely, if I have might and space, Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes
blede.

O god,' quod he, `that oughtest taken hede To fortheren trouthe, and
wronges to punyce, Why niltow doon a vengeaunce of this vyce?

`O Pandare, that in dremes for to triste Me blamed hast, and wont art oft up-
breyde, Now maystow see thy-selve, if that thee liste, How trewe is now thy
nece, bright Criseyde!

In sondry formes, god it woot,' he seyde, `The goddes shewen bothe Ioye
and tene In slepe, and by my dreme it is now sene.

`And certaynly, with-oute more speche, From hennesforth, as ferforth as I
may, Myn owene deeth in armes wol I seche; I recche not how sone be the
day!

But trewely, Criseyde, swete may, Whom I have ay with al my might y-
served, That ye thus doon, I have it nought deserved.'

This Pandarus, that alle these thinges herde, And wiste wel he seyde a sooth
of this, He nought a word ayein to him answerde; For sory of his frendes
sorwe he is, And shamed, for his nece hath doon a-mis; And stant, astoned
of these causes tweye, As stille as stoon; a word ne coude he seye.

But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde, `My brother dere, I may thee do no-
more.

What shulde I seyn? I hate, y-wis, Criseyde!

And, god wot, I wol hate hir evermore!

And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore, Havinge un-to myn honour ne
my reste Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.

'If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee, It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is un-to me!

And dredelees, for hertes ese of yow, Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I
how.

And fro this world, almighty god I preye, Deliverere hir sone; I can no-more
seye.'

Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus; But forth hir cours fortune ay gan
to holde.

Criseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus, And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; who-so it can biholde, In eche estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!

In many cruel batayle, out of drede, Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight, As
men may in these olde bokes rede, Was sene his knighthod and his grete
might.

And dredelees, his ire, day and night, Ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboughte;
And alwey most this Diomedede he soughte.

And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette With blody strokes and with wordes
grete, Assayinge how hir speres weren whette; And god it woot, with many
a cruel hete Gan Troilus upon his helm to bete.

But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde, Of others hond that either deyen
sholde. — And if I hadde y-taken for to wryte The armes of this ilke worthy
man, Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.

But for that I to wryte first bigan Of his love, I have seyde as that I can.
His worthy dedes, who-so list hem here, Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle
y-fere.

Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe, And every gentil womman, what she
be, That al be that Criseyde was untrewede, That for that gilt she be not
wrooth with me.

Ye may hir gilt in othere bokes see; And gladlier I wole wryten, if yow
leste, Penolopees trouthe and good Alceste.

Ne I sey not this al-only for these men, But most for wommen that bitrayسد
be Through false folk; god yeve hem sorwe, amen!

That with hir grete wit and subtiltee Bitrayse yow! And this comveveth me
To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye, Beth war of men, and herkeneth
what I seye! — Go, litel book, go litel myn tragedie, Ther god thy maker
yet, er that he dye, So sende might to make in som comedie!

But litel book, no making thou nenvye, But subgit be to alle poesye;
And kis the steppes, wher-as thou seest pace Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan,
and Stace.

And for ther is so greet diversitee In English and in wryting of our tonge,
So preye I god that noon miswryte thee, Ne thee mismetre for defaute of
tonge.

And red wher-so thou be, or elles songe, That thou be understonde I god
beseche!

But yet to purpos of my rather speche. — The wraththe, as I began yow for
to seye, Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere; For thousandes his hondes
maden deye, As he that was with-outen any pere, Save Ector, in his tyme, as
I can here.

But weylawey, save only goddes wille, Dispitously him slough the fiers
Achille.

And whan that he was slayn in this manere, His lighte goost ful blisfully is
went Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere, In convers letinge every
element; And ther he saugh, with ful avysement, The erratik sterres,
herkeninge armonye With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.

And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse This litel spot of erthe, that with
the see Embraced is, and fully gan despyse This wrecched world, and held
al vanitee To respect of the pleyn felicitee That is in hevене above; and at
the laste, Ther he was slayn, his loking doun he caste; And in him-self he
lough right at the wo Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste; And

dampned al our werk that folweth so The blinde lust, the which that may
not laste, And sholden al our herte on hevене caste.

And forth he wente, shortly for to telle, Ther as Mercurie sorted him to
dwelle. — Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love, Swich fyn hath al his
grete worthinesse; Swich fyn hath his estat real above, Swich fyn his lust,
swich fyn hath his noblesse; Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse.

And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde, As I have told, and in this wyse he
deyde.

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she, In which that love up groweth with your
age, Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee, And of your herte up-casteth
the visage To thilke god that after his image Yow made, and thinketh al nis
but a fayre This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

And loveth him, the which that right for love Upon a cros, our soules for to
beye, First starf, and roos, and sit in hevене a-bove; For he nil falsen no
wight, dar I seye, That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.

And sin he best to love is, and most meke, What nedeth feyned loves for to
seke?

Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes, Lo here, what alle hir goddes may
availle; Lo here, these wrecched worldes appetytes; Lo here, the fyn and
guerdon for travaille Of Iove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!

Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche.
— O moral Gower, this book I directe To thee, and to the philosophical
Strode, To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte, Of your benignitees and
zeles gode.

And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode, With al myn herte of mercy
ever I preye; And to the lord right thus I speke and seye: Thou oon, and
two, and three, eterne on-lyve, That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscript, and al mayst circumscrieve, Us from visible and invisible
foon Defende; and to thy mercy, everichoon, So make us, Iesus, for thy
grace digne, For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne! Amen.



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