

## TROIUS AND CRESSIDA

A line-by-line translation

## Act 1, Prologue

## Shakespeare

In Troy, there lies the scene. From isles of Greece  
 The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed,  
 Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,  
 Fraught with the ministers and instruments  
 5 Of cruel war: sixty and nine, that wore  
 Their crownets regal, from the Athenian bay  
 Put forth toward Phrygia; and their vow is made  
 To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures  
 The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,  
 10 With wanton Paris sleeps; and that's the quarrel.  
 To Tenedos they come;  
 And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge  
 Their warlike fraughtage: now on Dardan plains  
 The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch  
 15 Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,  
 Dardan, and Tymbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,  
 And Antenorides, with massy staples  
 And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,  
 Sperr up the sons of Troy.  
 20 Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits,  
 On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,  
 Sets all on hazard: and hither am I come  
 A prologue arm'd, but not in confidence  
 Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited  
 25 In like conditions as our argument,  
 To tell you, fair beholders, that our play  
 Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,  
 Beginning in the middle, starting thence away  
 To what may be digested in a play.  
 30 Like or find fault; do as your pleasures are:  
 Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war.

## Shakescleare Translation

This play is set in Troy. The proud princes of the Greek islands, their blood boiling, have sent their ships to Athens <sup>1</sup>, loaded with soldiers and weapons. Sixty nine royal rulers have set sail from Athens towards the Phrygian <sup>2</sup> sea. They have promised to ransack Troy, in the strong walls of which, Helen, the kidnapped wife of Menelaus, sleeps with Paris. This is why the two nations are at war. At first, the Greeks arrived at Tenedos <sup>3</sup>, their over-laden ships unloading their military cargo there. Next the fresh and untested Greeks set up their splendid tents on the fields surrounding Troy. King Priam's city <sup>4</sup> has six gates: the Dardan, Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien, and Antenorides, each one is fortified with large beams and bolt-holes: containing the citizens of Troy. A sense of excitement grips both sides, agitating the eager Trojan and Greek soldiers, who are prepared to risk everything in combat. I have come here, as a prologue, to tell you these things, not to brag about my author's talent <sup>5</sup> but dressed appropriately for the story. This play skips past beginnings of the conflict and begins in the middle of it, including in it as much as can be included in a play. Love it or hate it, do whatever you want: in war chance sometimes favors the good and sometimes the bad.

<sup>1</sup> Athens was the largest kingdom in Greece, but would have had allies in the surrounding islands and countryside.

<sup>2</sup> The sea around Troy.

<sup>3</sup> An island near Troy.

<sup>4</sup> King Priam's city is Troy.

<sup>5</sup> Another famous playwright of Shakespeare's day, Ben Jonson, is probably being satirized for his play *Poetaster*, in which a Prologue enters armed in order to praise the virtues of his playwright.

## Act 1, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter TROIUS armed, and PANDARUS*

## TROIUS

Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again:  
 Why should I war without the walls of Troy,  
 That find such cruel battle here within?  
 Each Trojan that is master of his heart,  
 5 Let him to field; Troilus, alas! hath none.

## PANDARUS

Will this gear ne'er be mended?

## TROIUS

The Greeks are strong and skilful to their strength,  
 Fierce to their skill and to their fierceness valiant;  
 But I am weaker than a woman's tear,  
 10 Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,  
 Less valiant than the virgin in the night  
 And skillless as unpractised infancy.

## Shakescleare Translation

*TROIUS carrying weapons and PANDARUS enter.*

## TROIUS

Come here servant, I'll take off my armour again. Why should I go outside Troy's walls to fight, when I have to fight such a cruel battle within them? Every Trojan that still is in control of his heart should go and fight, but I have lost mine!

## PANDARUS

Will this problem never be solved?

## TROIUS

The Greeks are strong, and they are also skillful, fierce, and brave. I am weaker than the sobbing of a woman, more tame than sleep, more foolish than ignorance, less brave than a virgin in the night, and less skilled than untrained infancy itself.

**PANDARUS**

Well, I have told you enough of this: for my part,  
I'll not meddle nor make no further. He that will  
15 have a cake out of the wheat must needs tarry the  
grinding.

**TROIUS**

Have I not tarried?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry  
the bolting.

**TROIUS**

20 Have I not tarried?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, the bolting, but you must tarry the leavening.

**TROIUS**

Still have I tarried.

**PANDARUS**

Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet in the word  
'hereafter' the kneading, the making of the cake, the  
25 heating of the oven and the baking; nay, you must  
stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your  
lips.

**TROIUS**

Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,  
Doth lesser blench at sufferance than I do.  
30 At Priam's royal table do I sit;  
And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts,--  
So, traitor! 'When she comes!' When is she thence?

**PANDARUS**

Well, she looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw  
her look, or any woman else.

**TROIUS**

35 I was about to tell thee:-- when my heart,  
As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,  
Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,  
I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,  
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile:  
40 But sorrow, that is couch'd in seeming gladness,  
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

**PANDARUS**

An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's--  
well, go to--there were no more comparison between  
the women: but, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I  
45 would not, as they term it, praise her: but I would  
somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I  
will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit, but--

**TROIUS**

O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus,--  
When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,  
50 Reply not in how many fathoms deep  
They lie indrench'd. I tell thee I am mad  
In Cressid's love: thou answer'st 'she is fair;'  
Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart  
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,  
55 Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,  
In whose comparison all whites are ink,  
Writing their own reproach, to whose soft seizure  
The cygnet's down is harsh and spirit of sense  
Hard as the palm of ploughman: this thou tell'st me,  
60 As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;  
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,

**PANDARUS**

I have given you enough advice on this matter. I will not  
involve myself any more than I have. If you want to bake a  
cake you have to be persistent enough to grind the  
wheat into flour.

**TROIUS**

Have I not been persistent?

**PANDARUS**

Yes, you've been persistent enough to grind the flour, but  
you must also be persistent enough to sift the flour.

**TROIUS**

Have I not been persistent?

**PANDARUS**

Yes, you've sifted the flour, but you must also be patient  
enough to let the the cake rise.

**TROIUS**

Even this have I endured.

**PANDARUS**

Yes, up to the rising of the cake. But there is always more to  
be done, the kneading of the dough, the making of the  
cake, the heating of the oven, and the baking of the cake  
itself. You must also wait for the cooling of the cake too, or  
you may burn your lips.

**TROIUS**

Patience personified, whatever kind of goddess she is, is  
able to endure less suffering than me. I sit at King Priam  
's royal table, but when beautiful Cressida comes into  
my thoughts... No! "When Cressida comes" is a treacherous  
phrase. For when is she not in my thoughts?

**PANDARUS**

Well, she was prettier last night than I ever saw her or any  
other woman look.

**TROIUS**


I was going to tell you this: my heart felt as if it was being  
forced apart by a sigh, as if it was going to split in two. But  
in order that Hector or my father did not see what I was  
feeling, I disguised my sigh with a smile, like when the sun  
lights up a storm. But the sorrow that is disguised by the  
appearance of happiness is just as false as the joy that  
suddenly turns into sadness.

**PANDARUS**


If Cressida's hair wasn't quite a bit darker than Helen's...  
well, never mind... she would be in a different league to  
Helen. But, as for me, she is family to me. I wouldn't want  
to, as they say, praise her. But I wish someone else had  
heard her talk yesterday. And I'm not trying to say your  
sister Cassandra's not clever, but Cressida is even cleverer...


**TROIUS**

Oh Pandarus! I'm telling you, Pandarus! When I tell you how  
my hope for success have sunk, do not go on to tell me how  
deep they are! I tell you I am madly in love with Cressida,  
and you reply that "she is beautiful". You pour into the open  
wound of my heart her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her step,  
her voice, when you talk about them. Oh, that hand of hers,  
which is so white it makes all other whites seem like ink, ink  
writing its own failure to be as white as her. Her hand is so  
soft that it makes a young swan's feathers seem as rough as  
the hands of a farm laborer. You tell me these things, and  
no less truly do I say that I love her. Speaking like this you  
don't heal my wounds with oil and balm, you stick the same  
knife that made the wounds into every one of them.

 As Pandarus lists the process of making a cake each action has a deliberate sexual innuendo.

 The King of Troy, father to Paris.

 Troilus is saying that he gives military advice to King Priam.

 Pandarus's speeches are full of moments like this, where he pretends that he does not want to say something and then finds a way of saying it.

Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me  
The knife that made it.

**PANDARUS**

I speak no more than truth.

**TROILUS**

65 Thou dost not speak so much.

**PANDARUS**

Faith, I'll not meddle in't. Let her be as she is:  
if she be fair, 'tis the better for her; an she be  
not, she has the mends in her own hands.

**TROILUS**

Good Pandarus, how now, Pandarus!

**PANDARUS**

70 I have had my labour for my travail; ill-thought on of  
her and ill-thought on of you; gone between and  
between, but small thanks for my labour.

**TROILUS**

What, art thou angry, Pandarus? what, with me?

**PANDARUS**

75 Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair  
as Helen: an she were not kin to me, she would be as  
fair on Friday as Helen is on Sunday. But what care  
I? I care not an she were a black-a-moor; 'tis all one  
to me.

**TROILUS**

Say I she is not fair?

**PANDARUS**

80 I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to  
stay behind her father; let her to the Greeks; and so  
I'll tell her the next time I see her: for my part,  
I'll meddle nor make no more i' the matter.

**TROILUS**

Pandarus,--

**PANDARUS**

85 Not I.

**TROILUS**

Sweet Pandarus,--

**PANDARUS**

Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all as I  
found it, and there an end.

*Exit PANDARUS. An alarum*

**TROILUS**

90 Peace, you ungracious clamours! peace, rude sounds!  
Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,  
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.  
I cannot fight upon this argument;  
It is too starved a subject for my sword.  
95 But Pandarus,--O gods, how do you plague me!  
I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;  
And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo.  
As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.  
Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,  
100 What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?  
Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:

**PANDARUS**

I only say what is true.

**TROILUS**

You can't describe all of her virtues.

**PANDARUS**

Honestly, I will not meddle in your problem anymore. Leave  
her alone, I say. If she is beautiful, good for her. If she isn't,  
she can sort it out herself.

**TROILUS**

Don't be so hasty, good Pandarus!

**PANDARUS**

I have had no reward for my hard work, which makes both  
you and her think badly of me. I have gone between and  
between you two, but nothing for my hard work.

**TROILUS**

Are you angry with me, Pandarus? Surely not with me?

**PANDARUS**

I say she's not as beautiful as Helen out of modesty,  
because Cressida is family to me. If she weren't my relative,  
she'd beat Helen any day of the week. But why should I  
care? I don't care if she is an African <sup>5</sup>, it's all the same to  
me.

**TROILUS**

Don't I say she is fair <sup>6</sup>?

**PANDARUS**

I don't care if you do or not. She's a fool to wait behind her  
father. Send her to the Greeks I say, and that's what I'll say  
to her next time I see her. I'm finished with this whole affair.

**TROILUS**

Pandarus...

**PANDARUS**

It's nothing to do with me.

**TROILUS**

Sweet Pandarus...

**PANDARUS**

I beg you, speak no more about it to me. I will leave you two  
as I found you <sup>7</sup>, and that's that.

*PANDARUS exits, an alarm bell rings.*

**TROILUS**

Be quiet, awful noises! Be quiet, unpleasant sounds! Both  
sides of this war are fools! Helen has to have a beautiful <sup>8</sup>  
face if her blush is painted on with your blood. I cannot fight  
for this cause, it is a weak reason for me to draw my sword.  
But Pandarus... Oh gods, you disturb me! I cannot meet  
Cressida without Pandarus's help, but he is as difficult to  
persuade to court Cressida as she is difficult to be courted.  
Tell me, Apollo, how should I understand Cressida,  
Pandarus and myself? <sup>9</sup> Cressida's bed is like India <sup>10</sup>,  
and she is like its jewel. The distance between my home  
and hers is like a vast ocean, and like a merchant <sup>11</sup> I must

<sup>5</sup> A "blackamoor" was a generic name for a black African person. This would make Cressida the opposite of Pandarus's ideal figure of white feminine beauty.

<sup>6</sup> Fairness here means pale-skinned, the Renaissance standard for beauty.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. single.

<sup>8</sup> A pale face that blushed was considered beautiful, Troilus is suggesting Helen's blush is painted on with the blood of soldiers.

<sup>9</sup> Troilus is likening himself to Apollo, who similarly struggled to convince Daphne to love him.

<sup>10</sup> The Renaissance was a period of colonisation, in which various new

Between our Ilium and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,  
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar  
105 Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

*Alarum. Enter AENEAS*

**AENEAS**

How now, Prince Troilus! wherefore not afield?

**TROILUS**

Because not there: this woman's answer sorts,  
For womanish it is to be from thence.  
What news, Aeneas, from the field to-day?

**AENEAS**

110 That Paris is returned home and hurt.

**TROILUS**

By whom, Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

Troilus, by Menelaus.

**TROILUS**

115 Let Paris bleed; 'tis but a scar to scorn;  
Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn.

*Alarum*

**AENEAS**

Hark, what good sport is out of town to-day!

**TROILUS**

Better at home, if 'would I might' were 'may,'  
But to the sport abroad: are you bound thither?

**AENEAS**

In all swift haste.

**TROILUS**

120 Come, go we then together.

*Exeunt*

invest my wealth in a risky venture, with Pandarus as my ship.

*An alarm is sounded. AENEAS enters.*

**AENEAS**

Hello, Prince Troilus! Why haven't you gone to battle?

**TROILUS**

Because I haven't. I only have a womanly <sup>12</sup> answer like this, and will always be womanly from this moment on. What news has come from the battlefield today, Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

That Paris has come back with an injury.

**TROILUS**

Who injured him, Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

Menelaus, Troilus.

**TROILUS**

Let Paris bleed, it's only a laughable injury <sup>13</sup> when Paris is injured with Menelaus's horn <sup>14</sup>.

*An alarm is sounded.*

**AENEAS**

Listen, there is good sport <sup>15</sup> outside the city walls today.

**TROILUS**

There would be sport inside the walls if I had what I wanted. But talking about the sport outside, are you going out to fight?

**AENEAS**

As quickly as I can.

**TROILUS**

Come, let's both go.

*They exit.*

*countries were being discovered and exploited by colonial Europeans.*

<sup>11</sup> Troilus is imagining himself as a merchant, who would send out ships carrying goods to other countries hoping that when they return he would be richer. In this metaphor Pandarus is like a ship, a man who goes between two places.

<sup>12</sup> Women weren't expected, or often allowed, to fight.

<sup>13</sup> Troilus is making a joke, saying that it must be a small injury and that it is a wound motivated by the scorn Paris showed for Menelaus when he stole Menelaus's wife.

<sup>14</sup> Renaissance audiences would be familiar with the idea that cuckolds grew horns out of their heads.

<sup>15</sup> Fighting or entertainment.

## Act 1, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter CRESSIDA and ALEXANDER*

**CRESSIDA**

Who were those went by?

**ALEXANDER**

Queen Hecuba and Helen.

### Shakescleare Translation

*CRESSIDA and ALEXANDER enter.*

**CRESSIDA**

Who were those men that passed?

**ALEXANDER**

Queen Hecuba and Helen.

**CRESSIDA**

And whither go they?

**ALEXANDER**

Up to the eastern tower,  
5 Whose height commands as subject all the vale,  
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience  
Is, as a virtue, fix'd, to-day was moved:  
He chid Andromache and struck his armourer,  
And, like as there were husbandry in war,  
10 Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,  
And to the field goes he; where every flower  
Did, as a prophet, weep what it foresaw  
In Hector's wrath.

**CRESSIDA**

What was his cause of anger?

**ALEXANDER**

15 The noise goes, this: there is among the Greeks  
A lord of Trojan blood, nephew to Hector;  
They call him Ajax.

**CRESSIDA**

Good; and what of him?

**ALEXANDER**

20 They say he is a very man per se,  
And stands alone.

**CRESSIDA**

So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs.

**ALEXANDER**

This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion,  
25 churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attainment but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of every thing, but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

**CRESSIDA**

35 But how should this man, that makes me smile, make Hector angry?

**ALEXANDER**

They say he yesterday coped Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

**CRESSIDA**

40 Who comes here?

**ALEXANDER**

Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

*Enter PANDARUS*

**CRESSIDA**

Hector's a gallant man.

**ALEXANDER**

As may be in the world, lady.

**CRESSIDA**

And where are they going?

**ALEXANDER**

They are going to watch the battle from the top of the eastern tower, from where you can see the land outside the city, where the battle is happening. Even Hector, whose patience never fails, was angry today. He scolded Andromache and hit his armorer. Like a farmer, he was prepared to go into the battlefield before the dawn. He went into the field that was wet with dew, and every flower he passed wept, anticipating the lives that he would take.

**CRESSIDA**

Why was Hector so angry?

**ALEXANDER**

Rumor is that a soldier with Trojan ancestry named Ajax, a nephew of Hector's, has joined the Greek army.

**CRESSIDA**

Okay, so why is that a problem?

**ALEXANDER**

People say Ajax is an incredible soldier, and stands out.

**CRESSIDA**

All men may stand unless they are sick, drunk or have no legs.

**ALEXANDER**

This man is like a mix of beasts, my lady; he is as brave as a lion, as cruel as a bear, and as slow as an elephant. He is a man who has so many characteristics that his bravery has become foolishness, and his foolishness is mixed with some wisdom. There is no virtue that he doesn't have some of, and no flaw that he doesn't carry in some way. He is sad without a reason, and happy when others are sad. He contains something of everything but everything is so confused in him that he is like Briareus whose many hands were useless or Argus whose many eyes were all blind.

**CRESSIDA**

But why does this man, who sounds funny to me, make Hector angry?

**ALEXANDER**

Rumor is that yesterday he fought Hector and knocked him down. Ever since that, the anger and shame has stopped Hector from eating or sleeping.

**CRESSIDA**

Who's coming now?

**ALEXANDER**

Madam, that is your uncle Pandarus.

*PANDARUS enters.*

**CRESSIDA**

Hector is a brave man.

**ALEXANDER**

As brave as any man in the world.

**PANDARUS**

45 What's that? what's that?

**CRESSIDA**

Good morrow, uncle Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

Good morrow, cousin Cressid: what do you talk of?  
Good morrow, Alexander. How do you, cousin? When were you at Ilium?

**CRESSIDA**

50 This morning, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector armed and gone ere ye came to Ilium? Helen was not up, was she?

**CRESSIDA**

Hector was gone, but Helen was not up.

**PANDARUS**

55 Even so: Hector was stirring early.

**CRESSIDA**

That were we talking of, and of his anger.

**PANDARUS**

Was he angry?

**CRESSIDA**

So he says here.

**PANDARUS**

60 True, he was so: I know the cause too: he'll lay about him to-day, I can tell them that: and there's Troilus will not come far behind him: let them take heed of Troilus, I can tell them that too.

**CRESSIDA**

What, is he angry too?

**PANDARUS**

Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

**CRESSIDA**

65 O Jupiter! there's no comparison.

**PANDARUS**

What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

**CRESSIDA**

Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

**PANDARUS**

Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

70 Then you say as I say; for, I am sure, he is not Hector.

**PANDARUS**

No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

**PANDARUS**

What was that? What was that?

**CRESSIDA**

Good morning uncle Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

Good morning cousin Cressida, what are you talking about?  
Good morning Alexander. How are you, cousin? Since when were you in Ilium?

**CRESSIDA**

This morning, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

What were you talking about when I arrived? Had Hector woken up and left before you came to Ilium? Helen wasn't awake was she?

**CRESSIDA**

Hector has gone, but Helen wasn't awake.

**PANDARUS**

Ah I see, Hector got up early.

**CRESSIDA**

That was what we were talking about, that and his anger.

**PANDARUS**

Was he angry?

**CRESSIDA**

That's what Alexander told me.

**PANDARUS**

This is true, Hector was angry. I know the reason as well. Hector will attack everyone around him, I can say that. And Troilus will not be far behind him. The Greeks should beware of Troilus, I could say that too.

**CRESSIDA**

What? Is Troilus angry as well?

**PANDARUS**

Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

**CRESSIDA**

By Jupiter, you cannot compare the two men.

**PANDARUS**

What? No comparison between Troilus and Hector? Are you not able to recognize a man if you see him.

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, if I had seen the front of him and "knew" him <sup>1</sup>.

**PANDARUS**

Well, I say Troilus is Troilus <sup>2</sup>.

**CRESSIDA**

Then we agree, because he is certainly not Hector <sup>3</sup>.

**PANDARUS**

You're right he is not Hector, neither does Hector have the same qualities as Troilus in some ways.

<sup>1</sup> Cressida is playing with her words, "before" could mean "from the front", and knowing can have an intimate meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Pandarus is asserting that Troilus is the perfect man.

<sup>3</sup> Cressida is implying that Hector is the perfect man.

**CRESSIDA**

'Tis just to each of them; he is himself.

**PANDARUS**

Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were.

**CRESSIDA**

75 So he is.

**PANDARUS**

Condition, I had gone barefoot to India.

**CRESSIDA**

He is not Hector.

**PANDARUS**

80 Himself! no, he's not himself: would a' were himself! Well, the gods are above; time must friend or end: well, Troilus, well: I would my heart were in her body. No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Excuse me.

**PANDARUS**

He is elder.

**CRESSIDA**

85 Pardon me, pardon me.

**PANDARUS**

Th' other's not come to't; you shall tell me another tale, when th' other's come to't. Hector shall not have his wit this year.

**CRESSIDA**

He shall not need it, if he have his own.

**PANDARUS**

90 Nor his qualities.

**CRESSIDA**

No matter.

**PANDARUS**

Nor his beauty.

**CRESSIDA**

'Twould not become him; his own's better.

**PANDARUS**

95 You have no judgment, niece: Helen herself swore th' other day, that Troilus, for a brown favour--for so 'tis, I must confess,--not brown neither,--

**CRESSIDA**

No, but brown.

**PANDARUS**

'Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.

**CRESSIDA**

100 To say the truth, true and not true.

**CRESSIDA**

This is fair to both of them: they are both themselves.

**PANDARUS**

"Himself!" If only! Poor Troilus, I wish he were himself.

**CRESSIDA**

He is himself.

**PANDARUS**

As likely as me walking to India without shoes.

**CRESSIDA**

He is not Hector.

**PANDARUS**

Himself! No, he's not himself. I wish he would be himself. Oh Gods, time must either help Troilus to recover or end him. Oh, why could my heart not be in her body. No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Excuse me <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Cressida disagrees with Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

He is older.

**CRESSIDA**

Pardon?

**PANDARUS**

Troilus hasn't fully come of age. You will have a different view when Troilus he has come of age. By the end of the year Hector will not have the intelligence of Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Hector will not need Troilus's intelligence, if he has his own.

**PANDARUS**

Hector will not be able to match Troilus's qualities.

**CRESSIDA**

It wouldn't matter.

**PANDARUS**

Troilus will be the more beautiful.

**CRESSIDA**

Hector would look silly, since his beauty is better than Troilus's.

**PANDARUS**

You have no judgement, niece. The other day, Helen herself swore that Troilus <sup>5</sup>, even though he is a little dark, which I have to admit he is, although not really that dark...

<sup>5</sup> Pandarus is continuing to try to show Troilus as the perfect man. However, Pandarus becomes tangled when he admits that Troilus has darker skin than average, which was considered ugly.

**CRESSIDA**

No, he has dark skin.

**PANDARUS**

In truth, it is dark but not that dark.

**CRESSIDA**

In truth, true and not true. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Cressida mocks Pandarus for paradoxically saying Troilus has and does not have dark skin.

**PANDARUS**

She praised his complexion above Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

Why, Paris hath colour enough.

**PANDARUS**

So he has.

**CRESSIDA**

105 Then Troilus should have too much: if she praised him above, his complexion is higher than his; he having colour enough, and the other higher, is too flaming a praise for a good complexion. I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended Troilus for a copper nose.

**PANDARUS**

110 I swear to you. I think Helen loves him better than Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

**PANDARUS**

115 Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him th' other day into the compassed window,--and, you know, he has not past three or four hairs on his chin,--

**CRESSIDA**

Indeed, a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his particulars therein to a total.

**PANDARUS**

Why, he is very young: and yet will he, within three pound, lift as much as his brother Hector.

**CRESSIDA**

120 Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?

**PANDARUS**

But to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came and puts me her white hand to his cloven chin--

**CRESSIDA**

Juno have mercy! how came it cloven?

**PANDARUS**

125 Why, you know 'tis dimpled: I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia.

**CRESSIDA**

O, he smiles valiantly.

**PANDARUS**

Does he not?

**CRESSIDA**

O yes, an 'twere a cloud in autumn.

**PANDARUS**

130 Why, go to, then: but to prove to you that Helen loves Troilus,--

**CRESSIDA**

Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll prove it so.

**PANDARUS**

Helen praised Troilus's complexion more than she praised Paris's complexion.

**CRESSIDA**


I see, Paris has a good enough color.

**PANDARUS**

This is true.

**CRESSIDA**

Then Troilus has too much colour. If Helen praised Troilus's complexion above Paris, then his complexion is darker than Paris's. Since Paris has just enough color, it is not a compliment to say that Troilus has more color than Paris. I would rather Helen said Troilus had a red nose.

 A sign that Troilus was a drunk, had been beaten, or perhaps had a fake nose.

**PANDARUS**

I promise, I think Helen prefers Troilus to Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

Then Helen is truly promiscuous.

**PANDARUS**

I am quite sure she does prefer Troilus to Paris. They met in privacy the other day, and you know, he has not more than three or four hairs on his chin.

**CRESSIDA**



Even a barmaid could add them up.

**PANDARUS**

That is because he is very young, and yet he can lift as heavy a weight as his brother Hector... give or take three pounds.

**CRESSIDA**

He is a young man used to carrying other people's things?

  lifters were young thieves / pickpockets

**PANDARUS**

But, as proof that Helen loves him, she came and put her white hand on his split chin.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh God! Why is it split?

**PANDARUS**

You know full well it has a dimple. I think he smiles better than any man in all of Phrygia.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh, he smiles well.

**PANDARUS**

Right?

**CRESSIDA**


Yes, like a rain cloud in autumn.

**PANDARUS**

Oh shut up, but look, to prove to you that Helen loves Troilus...

**CRESSIDA**

If you can make that happen I am sure Troilus will stand happily to see it.

 Cressida's pun is obviously sexual.



**PANDARUS**

Troilus! why, he esteems her no more than I esteem an addle egg.

**CRESSIDA**

135 If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle head, you would eat chickens i' the shell.

**PANDARUS**

I cannot choose but laugh, to think how she tickled his chin: indeed, she has a marvellous white hand, I must needs confess,--

**CRESSIDA**

140 Without the rack.

**PANDARUS**

And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his chin.

**CRESSIDA**

Alas, poor chin! many a wart is richer.

**PANDARUS**

But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laughed that her eyes ran o'er.

**CRESSIDA**

145 With mill-stones.

**PANDARUS**

And Cassandra laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

But there was more temperate fire under the pot of her eyes: did her eyes run o'er too?

**PANDARUS**

And Hector laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

150 At what was all this laughing?

**PANDARUS**

Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus' chin.

**CRESSIDA**

An't had been a green hair, I should have laughed too.

**PANDARUS**

155 They laughed not so much at the hair as at his pretty answer.

**CRESSIDA**

What was his answer?

**PANDARUS**

Quoth she, 'Here's but two and fifty hairs on your chin, and one of them is white.

**CRESSIDA**

160 This is her question.

**PANDARUS**

That's true; make no question of that. 'Two and fifty hairs' quoth he, 'and one white: that white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons.' 'Jupiter!' quoth she, 'which of these hairs is Paris,

165

**PANDARUS**

Troilus! Why, Troilus doesn't think better of her than I think of a rotten egg.

**CRESSIDA**

If you loved rotten eggs as much as you love stupidity, you would eat nothing else.

**PANDARUS**

I have to laugh when I think of how Helen touched Troilus's chin. She has such a beautifully white hand, I must say...

**CRESSIDA**

Without any [provocation](#) <sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Cressida jokes that Pandarus doesn't need to be tortured into speaking.

**PANDARUS**

And she happens to see a white hair on his chin.

**CRESSIDA**

Poor chin, that has less hair than most warts.

**PANDARUS**

It was such a funny sight that Queen Hecuba wept with laughing.

**CRESSIDA**

[Wept stones](#) <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Cressida feels Pandarus's story isn't very funny.

**PANDARUS**

Cassandra also laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

She rarely laughs, did she weep as well?

**PANDARUS**

Hector also laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

Why were these people laughing at all?

**PANDARUS**

Well, at the white hair that Helen had seen on Troilus's chin.

**CRESSIDA**

If it was a green hair I might have laughed too.

**PANDARUS**

They weren't laughing at the hair, they laughed at his clever response.

**CRESSIDA**

What was his response?

**PANDARUS**

She said: "There are only fifty two hairs on your chin, but one of them is white."

**CRESSIDA**

That's what Helen said, not what Troilus said.

**PANDARUS**

True, I don't doubt that. "Fifty two hairs," he said, "and one is white? That white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons."

"Jupiter!" she said, "which of these hairs is Paris, my

my husband?' 'The forked one,' quoth he, 'pluck't out, and give it him.' But there was such laughing! and Helen so blushed, an Paris so chafed, and all the rest so laughed, that it passed.

**CRESSIDA**

So let it now; for it has been while going by.

**PANDARUS**

170 Well, cousin. I told you a thing yesterday; think on't.

**CRESSIDA**

So I do.

**PANDARUS**

I'll be sworn 'tis true; he will weep you, an 'twere a man born in April.

**CRESSIDA**

175 And I'll spring up in his tears, an 'twere a nettle against May.

*A retreat sounded*

**PANDARUS**

Hark! they are coming from the field: shall we stand up here, and see them as they pass toward Ilium? good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.

**CRESSIDA**

180 At your pleasure.

**PANDARUS**

Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may see most bravely: I'll tell you them all by their names as they pass by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

**CRESSIDA**

Speak not so loud.

185

*AENEAS passes*

**PANDARUS**

That's Aeneas: is not that a brave man? he's one of the flowers of Troy, I can tell you: but mark Troilus; you shall see anon.

*ANTENOR passes*

**CRESSIDA**

190 Who's that?

**PANDARUS**

195 That's Antenor: he has a shrewd wit, I can tell you; and he's a man good enough, he's one o' the soundest judgments in whosoever, and a proper man of person. When comes Troilus? I'll show you Troilus anon: if he see me, you shall see him nod at me.

**CRESSIDA**

Will he give you the nod?

**PANDARUS**

You shall see.

**CRESSIDA**

If he do, the rich shall have more.

husband?"

"The split one," he said, "pull it out and give it to him." Oh and there was so much laughter. And Helen blushed, and Paris was so angry, and all the others laughed, and so it ended.

**CRESSIDA**

Please let it stay ended, that story took ages.

**PANDARUS**

Right, cousin. I told you something yesterday, think about it.

**CRESSIDA**

I am thinking about it.

**PANDARUS**

It's all true, he will cry after you as if he were a man born in April <sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> April being a month with a lot of rain.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll grow in his tears like a nettle during May <sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> In England, nettles normally grow between May and September.

*The sound of trumpets signalling a retreat.*

**PANDARUS**

Listen, the soldiers are coming back from the battlefield. Let's stand up here and watch as they pass towards Troy? Be good and join me, Cressida my niece.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll do whatever you like.

**PANDARUS**

Here, here, this place will do. We will see them well from here. I'll point them all out as they pass, but watch for Troilus in particular.

**CRESSIDA**

Don't talk so loudly.

*AENEAS passes by.*

**PANDARUS**

That's Aeneas. Isn't he a brave man? He's one of the best soldiers of Troy, I promise, but wait, Troilus will come soon.

*ANTENOR passes by.*

**CRESSIDA**

Who's that?

**PANDARUS**

That's Antenor. He is very clever, I promise. He's a good soldier too, an excellent judge, and a noble man. Where's Troilus? I'll point out Troilus soon. If he sees me he'll nod at me.

**CRESSIDA**

Will he give you the nod?

**PANDARUS**

You'll see it.

**CRESSIDA**

It will only make you more insufferable <sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> A noddy was a fool, Cressida is implying Pandarus will become even more foolish if he is nodded to.

*HECTOR passes***PANDARUS**

200 That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks! there's a countenance! is't not a brave man?

**CRESSIDA**

O, a brave man!

**PANDARUS**

205 Is a' not? it does a man's heart good. Look you what hacks are on his helmet! look you yonder, do you see? look you there: there's no jesting; there's laying on, take't off who will, as they say: there be hacks!

**CRESSIDA**

210 Be those with swords?

**PANDARUS**

Swords! any thing, he cares not; an the devil come to him, it's all one: by God's lid, it does one's heart good. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

*PARIS passes***PANDARUS**

215 Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too, is't not? Why, this is brave now. Who said he came hurt home to-day? he's not hurt: why, this will do Helen's heart good now, ha! Would I could see Troilus now! You shall see Troilus anon.

*HELENUS passes***CRESSIDA**

220 Who's that?

**PANDARUS**

That's Helenus. I marvel where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day. That's Helenus.

**CRESSIDA**

Can Helenus fight, uncle?

**PANDARUS**

225 Helenus? no. Yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry 'Troilus'? Helenus is a priest.

**CRESSIDA**

What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

*TROILUS passes***PANDARUS**

230 Where? yonder? that's Deiphobus. 'Tis Troilus! there's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus! the prince of chivalry!

**CRESSIDA**

Peace, for shame, peace!

**PANDARUS**

235 Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece: look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he ne'er saw three and twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way!

*HECTOR passes by.***PANDARUS**

Look, there, that's Hector, he is a brave man! Go on Hector! He's a brave man, niece. Oh brave Hector! Look at his physique! Look at his face! Isn't he a brave man?

**CRESSIDA**

Oh, he is definitely a brave man!

**PANDARUS**

Isn't he? It makes me proud to see him. Look at those gashes on his helmet! Do you see them? You see that, you can't fake those gashes. I'm laying on the praise thick, but if anyone can do better, as they say, let them try. Look at those gashes!

**CRESSIDA**

Are they from swords?

**PANDARUS**

Swords or anything else, he wouldn't care if the devil attacked him, he can handle anything. By God, it makes my heart good to look at him. Look, there's Paris.

*PARIS passes by.***PANDARUS**

Look over there niece, isn't he also an impressive man? He is looking strong. Didn't somebody say he was injured today? He's not hurt at all! I am sure Helen will be overjoyed. I wish I could see Troilus. You'll see him soon.

*HELENUS passes by.***CRESSIDA**

Who's he?

**PANDARUS**

That's Helenus. I wonder where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I'm not sure he went out to fight today. That's Helenus.

**CRESSIDA**

Is Helenus a good fighter, uncle?

**PANDARUS**

Helenus? Oh, sure, he fights well enough. I do wonder where Troilus is though. Listen! Can't you hear the people shouting "Troilus?" Helenus is a priest.

**CRESSIDA**

Who is that skulking man over there?

*TROILUS passes by.***PANDARUS**

Where? Over there? That's Deiphobus. Oh that is Troilus! What a man, niece! Wow! Brave Troilus, a prince of chivalry!

**CRESSIDA**

Be quiet uncle, you're being embarrassing.

**PANDARUS**

Pay attention, look at him. Oh brave Troilus! Observe him, niece! Do you see how sword is covered in blood, and his helmet has more gashes than Hector's did, and how proudly he walks! Oh what a shining example for young men, and he isn't even twenty three! Go on Troilus, go on! If

240 Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess,  
he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris?  
Paris is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to  
change, would give an eye to boot.

**CRESSIDA**

Here come more.

*Forces pass*

**PANDARUS**

245 Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran!  
porridge after meat! I could live and die i' the  
eyes of Troilus. Ne'er look, ne'er look: the eagles  
are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws! I had  
rather be such a man as Troilus than Agamemnon and  
250 all Greece.

**CRESSIDA**

There is among the Greeks Achilles, a better man than  
Troilus.

**PANDARUS**

Achilles! a drayman, a porter, a very camel.

**CRESSIDA**

Well, well.

**PANDARUS**

255 'Well, well!' why, have you any discretion? have  
you any eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not  
birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood,  
learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality,  
and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

**CRESSIDA**

260 Ay, a minced man: and then to be baked with no date  
in the pie, for then the man's date's out.

**PANDARUS**

You are such a woman! one knows not at what ward you  
lie.

**CRESSIDA**

265 Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to  
defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine  
honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty; and you, to  
defend all these: and at all these wards I lie, at a  
thousand watches.

**PANDARUS**

Say one of your watches.

**CRESSIDA**

270 Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the  
chiefest of them too: if I cannot ward what I would  
not have hit, I can watch you for telling how I took  
the blow; unless it swell past hiding, and then it's  
past watching.

**PANDARUS**

275 You are such another!

*Enter Troilus's Boy*

I had the perfect sister, or a goddess of a daughter, he could  
choose between them! Oh what a man! Paris? Paris is dirt  
compared to him. I am sure Helen would give anything to  
have Troilus instead of Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

More soldiers are coming.

*Soldiers pass by.*

**PANDARUS**

Asses, fools, idiots! They are like eating porridge after meat.  
I would be happy having only seen Troilus. Oh don't look at  
these men, they are lesser men, like crows instead of  
eagles. I would rather be Troilus than Agamemnon or any  
other Greek.

**CRESSIDA**

Among the Greeks there is Achilles, who is a better man  
than Troilus.

**PANDARUS**

Achilles! Pah, Achilles is a cart-driver, a servant, a camel of a  
man.

**CRESSIDA**

If you say so.

**PANDARUS**

"If I say so!" What, are you a great judge now? Do you have  
eyes? Do you have any idea what makes a good man? Is it  
not parentage, beauty, a good figure, witty conversation,  
manliness, education, gentleness, strength, youth,  
generosity, and such virtues that are like spice and salt, the  
seasoning of a great man?

**CRESSIDA**

Ha, that would make an unmanly man, who has all the  
ingredients except for the most important one.

**PANDARUS**

Ahh! You are like other women, how is any man supposed  
to [understand](#) <sup>15</sup> you?

<sup>15</sup> Pandarus uses a fencing term, saying that he does not know which defense (ward) Cressida will adopt (lie).

**CRESSIDA**

I would [lie](#) <sup>16</sup> on my back to defend my [belly](#) <sup>17</sup>, I would  
rely on my wit to defend my desires, I would lie secretly to  
defend my honor, wear a mask to defend my beauty, and  
beat you down to defend these virtues. I will always guard  
myself in these ways.

<sup>16</sup> In the Original Text all of these phrases pun on the different meanings of "lie."

<sup>17</sup> From becoming pregnant, perhaps?

**PANDARUS**

Say one of your prayers for protection.

**CRESSIDA**

Don't ask me to talk about protection. I will make sure that  
you do not betray me by talking, which is one of the most  
important kinds of protection. If I cannot protect myself  
from being seduced, I can at least make sure you don't go  
around telling everyone! Unless it swells past the point  
where I can hide it, but in that case nothing can be done.

**PANDARUS**

You are an odd one [18](#).

<sup>18</sup> Pandarus' exclamation is very much like the modern phrase "You are something else'.

*TROIILUS's servant-boy enters.*

**BOY**

Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

**PANDARUS**

Where?

**BOY**

At your own house; there he unarms him.

**PANDARUS**

280 Good boy, tell him I come.

*Exit boy*

**PANDARUS**

I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

**CRESSIDA**

Adieu, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

285 I'll be with you, niece, by and by.

**CRESSIDA**

To bring, uncle?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, a token from Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

By the same token, you are a bawd.

*Exit PANDARUS*

**CRESSIDA**

290 Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,  
He offers in another's enterprise;  
But more in Troilus thousand fold I see  
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be;  
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:  
295 Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.  
That she beloved knows nought that knows not this:  
Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:  
That she was never yet that ever knew  
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue.  
300 Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:  
Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech:  
Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,  
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

*Exeunt*

**BOY**

Sir, my lord wants to speak to you urgently.

**PANDARUS**

Where?

**BOY**

At your house, he is removing his armor there.

**PANDARUS**

Good boy, tell him I am coming.

*The boy exits.*

**PANDARUS**

I fear he will be hurt. Good bye, niece.

**CRESSIDA**

Goodbye, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

I shall see you shortly.

**CRESSIDA**

Why?

**PANDARUS**

To give you a gift from Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

If you do that you are a pimp <sup>19</sup>.

*PANDARUS exits.*

**CRESSIDA**

All these things he does, he does for another man. I see a thousand times more in Troilus than Pandarus can praise, but still I don't admit it. When a man woos a woman he treats her like an angel, and then takes her for granted when he has won her, the happy part is being wooed. Any woman who has been in loved will know this: men value what they haven't had more than is worth. No woman is better off than when a man is trying to please her. I like to use this saying: when a man has a woman he controls her, but until then he must try to please her. Because of this, although in my heart I love him desperately, I shall not show him my love.

*They exit.*

<sup>19</sup> A bawd is a woman who runs a brothel.

## Act 1, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Sennet. Enter AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, MENELAUS, and others*

**AGAMEMNON**

Princes,  
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?  
The ample proposition that hope makes  
In all designs begun on earth below  
5 Fails in the promised largeness: cheques and disasters  
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,  
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,

### Shakescleare Translation

*Music plays and AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, MENELAUS and others enter.*

**AGAMEMNON**

Princes, what sadness has made you look so pale? All human projects fall short of what they promise to achieve. You should always expect obstacles even in the greatest undertakings. Nor should it come as a surprise that after seven years Troy's walls still stand, since we have been testing many ways of breaking the siege and each has met firm resistance. Why, then, do you great men feel so

Infect the sound pine and divert his grain  
 Tortive and errant from his course of growth.  
 10 Nor, princes, is it matter new to us  
 That we come short of our suppose so far  
 That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;  
 Sith every action that hath gone before,  
 Whereof we have record, trial did draw  
 15 Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,  
 And that unbodied figure of the thought  
 That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,  
 Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works,  
 And call them shames? which are indeed nought else  
 20 But the protractive trials of great Jove  
 To find persistive constancy in men:  
 The fineness of which metal is not found  
 In fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,  
 The wise and fool, the artist and unread,  
 25 The hard and soft seem all affined and kin:  
 But, in the wind and tempest of her frown,  
 Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,  
 Puffing at all, winnows the light away;  
 And what hath mass or matter, by itself  
 30 Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

**NESTOR**

With due observance of thy godlike seat,  
 Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply  
 Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance  
 Lies the true proof of men: the sea being smooth,  
 35 How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
 Upon her patient breast, making their way  
 With those of nobler bulk!  
 But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage  
 The gentle Thetis, and anon behold  
 40 The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,  
 Bounding between the two moist elements,  
 Like Perseus' horse: where's then the saucy boat  
 Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now  
 Co-rivall'd greatness? Either to harbour fled,  
 45 Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so  
 Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide  
 In storms of fortune; for in her ray and brightness  
 The herd hath more annoyance by the breeze  
 Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind  
 50 Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
 And flies fled under shade, why, then the thing of  
 courage  
 As roused with rage with rage doth sympathize,  
 And with an accent tuned in selfsame key  
 55 Retorts to chiding fortune.

**ULYSSES**

Agamemnon,  
 Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,  
 Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit.  
 In whom the tempers and the minds of all  
 60 Should be shut up, hear what Ulysses speaks.  
 Besides the applause and approbation To which,

*To AGAMEMNON*

**ULYSSES**

most mighty for thy place and sway,

*To NESTOR*

**ULYSSES**

And thou most reverend for thy stretch'd-out life  
 65 I give to both your speeches, which were such  
 As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece  
 Should hold up high in brass, and such again  
 As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,  
 Should with a bond of air, strong as the axle-tree  
 70 On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears  
 To his experienced tongue, yet let it please both,

ashamed of our attempts, and look down like you are  
 failures? Our attempts aren't failures, we are just being  
 tested by Jove, who does not give great men an easy time  
 or else everyone would appear to be a great man. Rather  
 Jove throws great men into a storm and tosses them, so  
 that they can prove their greatness!

**NESTOR**

With due respect to your office, great Agamemnon, I Nestor  
 shall continue your words. Only dire circumstances prove  
 the greatness of a soldier. After all, anyone is willing to go to  
 sea on a calm day. But if the Gods stir up a great storm, only  
 mighty vessels will sail between the earth and the sky and  
 appear godlike by doing so. The smaller boats are not out in  
 weather like this, are they? No, they flee to their harbors  
 and beg Neptune to show them mercy. Great men aren't  
 encouraged by timid quests, but excel when they are tested  
 by misfortune, their ferocity mirroring the storms they face.

**ULYSSES**

Great Agamemnon, mighty commander and example of  
 Greek strength. We all must give you our opinions. It is  
 proper that we all find strength in your words, although  
 please hear me. As well as praising you both for...

*ULYSSES speaks to AGAMEMNON*

**ULYSSES**

being a mighty and respected king...

*ULYSSES speaks to NESTOR*

**ULYSSES**

You are respected for being so old, and I want to voice my  
 agreement with your speeches. The words you spoke  
 deserved to be held in high esteem by Agamemnon and the  
 leadership of Greece. And similarly, your words should be  
 seen as great wisdom by all Greeks, as you are so wise and  
 knowledgeable, Nestor. But, even so, please listen great  
 man and wise man, to my speech.

Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.

**AGAMEMNON**

Speak, prince of Ithaca; and be't of less expect  
That matter needless, of importless burden,  
75 Divide thy lips, than we are confident,  
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,  
We shall hear music, wit and oracle .

**ULYSSES**

Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,  
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,  
80 But for these instances.  
The specialty of rule hath been neglected:  
And, look, how many Grecian tents do stand  
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions.  
When that the general is not like the hive  
85 To whom the foragers shall all repair,  
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre  
Observe degree, priority and place,  
90 Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order;  
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered  
Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye  
95 Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
And posts, like the commandment of a king,  
Sans cheque to good and bad: but when the planets  
In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!  
100 What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!  
Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,  
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
The unity and married calm of states  
Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shaken,  
105 Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
Then enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,  
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
The primogenitive and due of birth,  
110 Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
115 Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead:  
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,  
120 Between whose endless jar justice resides,  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.  
Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
125 So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,  
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,  
Follows the choking.  
130 And this neglect of degree it is  
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose  
It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd  
By him one step below, he by the next,  
That next by him beneath; so every step,  
135 Exemplified by the first pace that is sick  
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever  
Of pale and bloodless emulation:  
And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,  
Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,  
140 Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

**AGAMEMNON**

You may speak, Ithacan prince. You should know that I am confident you will not speak like Thersites, who is disgusting and harsh in his speech. From you we will hear beauty, intelligence and wisdom.

**ULYSSES**

Troy would have been razed and Hector would be dead if it were not for the following reasons. Military rank has not been respected enough. However many Greeks we send from our camp, we gain no advantage. There are too many empty tents in the camp and too many different factions. Would you expect to get honey from a hive in which the bees are not all working to one common purpose? If the rank has been hidden, the lowest seems not worse than the best. Even the planets show a respect for order, standing in a line before the glorious sun that sits in the best place in the sky. The sun is like a king whose gaze corrects the bad potential of the planets, which would otherwise become disordered. When the planets wander they bring with them plagues, mutinies, tempests, earthquakes, raging storms and other terrifying events. When rank, which is key to all great plans, is not respected, there can be no success. How could any community, from schools or guilds in cities, or ports by the sea, or siblings dividing an inheritance, or any monarchy survive without proper respect for rank? If you ignore rank, it is like you take the instrument of society out of tune, and you are guaranteed a disharmony. Everything will fall out of place, and we will face an apocalypse. There would be lawlessness, where men rule by might alone and morality is ignored. Justice would be lost as the powerful do as they please, and chaos, like an all-consuming wolf, would turn all humanity into its prey. If proper respect for rank is ignored, great Agamemnon, then this chaos must follow. A lack of respect for rank can spread from the top to the bottom of an army. First the second-in-command loses respect for his general, then his men lose respect for him, and their men for them as they learn to disrespect duty from their masters. A lack of respect grows like a great sickness of envy, and it is this sickness that keeps Troy from falling to us, not Troy's own strength. Troy is still standing, not because of its strength, but because of our weakness.

**NESTOR**

Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd  
The fever whereof all our power is sick.

**AGAMEMNON**

The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,  
What is the remedy?

**ULYSSES**

145 The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs: with him Patroclus  
150 Upon a lazy bed the livelong day  
Breaks scurril jests;  
And with ridiculous and awkward action,  
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls,  
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,  
155 Thy topless deputation he puts on,  
And, like a strutting player, whose conceit  
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich  
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound  
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage,--  
160 Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming  
He acts thy greatness in: and when he speaks,  
'Tis like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquared,  
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd  
Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff  
165 The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,  
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;  
Cries 'Excellent! 'tis Agamemnon just.  
Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,  
As he being drest to some oration.'  
170 That's done, as near as the extremest ends  
Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife:  
Yet god Achilles still cries 'Excellent!  
'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,  
Arming to answer in a night alarm.'  
175 And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age  
Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit,  
And, with a palsy-fumbling on his gorget,  
Shake in and out the rivet: and at this sport  
Sir Valour dies; cries 'O, enough, Patroclus;  
180 Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all  
In pleasure of my spleen.' And in this fashion,  
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,  
Severals and generals of grace exact,  
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,  
185 Excitements to the field, or speech for truce,  
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves  
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

**NESTOR**

And in the imitation of these twain--  
Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns  
190 With an imperial voice--many are infect.  
Ajax is grown self-will'd, and bears his head  
In such a rein, in full as proud a place  
As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him;  
Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war,  
195 Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,  
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,  
To match us in comparisons with dirt,  
To weaken and discredit our exposure,  
How rank soever rounded in with danger.

**ULYSSES**

200 They tax our policy, and call it cowardice,  
Count wisdom as no member of the war,  
Forestall prescience, and esteem no act  
But that of hand: the still and mental parts,  
That do contrive how many hands shall strike,  
205 When fitness calls them on, and know by measure  
Of their observant toil the enemies' weight,--

**NESTOR**

Ulysses has very wisely revealed the cause of our weakness.

**AGAMEMNON**

If this is our sickness, Ulysses, what is our cure?

**ULYSSES**

Achilles, who is considered our best soldier, has been made complacent by his fame, and sits in his tent refusing to aid our plans. He lies there all day with Patroclus laughing disobediently, and Patroclus impersonates us in the most rude way. Sometimes, great Agamemnon, he pretends to be you. Like a prancing actor, who loves nothing more than the sound of his own voice, and with none of your genius, he mimics your greatness pitifully and poorly. He speaks ridiculously, like a bad actor on the stage. Lying on his bed, the great Achilles laughs heartily at this ridiculous impersonation, and says: "Excellent, this is just like Agamemnon. Now pretend to be Nestor, say ahem and stroke your beard, and dress like you were going to speak to the king." When Patroclus does this, even though he gets the part totally wrong, the god-like Achilles shouts out "Excellent, this is just like Nestor. Now, Patroclus, pretend to be Nestor if he thinks we are being ambushed at night." With this instruction, your old age is made fun of, and Patroclus pretends to cough, spit, fumble like an old man, and shake with fear. At this depiction Sir Valor cannot control his laughter, saying: "Oh, that is enough, Patroclus. My ribs ache from laughing, and if I laugh anymore I will split in two from it." And in this way all of our abilities, strengths, appearances, general and specific parts of our character, our achievements, plans, orders, commandments, eagerness for battle or discussion of peace is mocked by those two.

There is obvious irony here, given the speeches that the actors playing Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses have just given.

As a demi-god Ulysses description of the 'god Achilles' is both accurate and dripping with venom.

Ulysses descriptions of Achilles build from 'large', to 'god', to 'Sir Valor' getting increasingly sarcastic and hateful.

**NESTOR**

By these two men's mockery, two men who you rightly say are perceived to be our best soldiers, are many other soldiers infected. Ajax refuses to follow orders, and, having grown as proud as Achilles, also refuses to leave his tent. He makes the same slanders as Achilles, speaks poorly of our chances as if he was an oracle. And he has Thersites, a slave who produces slanders like a mint makes coins, mimic us with cheap comparisons, and leaves us undefended.

Nestor returns to the sickness metaphor Ulysses used earlier.

**ULYSSES**

They say our careful planning is only done to avoid fighting, they say we do not show any wisdom in how we fight this war, ignore our plans, and say that nothing but swordsmanship is worthy of men. Whilst we consider our army's numbers, tactics, timing, and enemies, they say that this has no dignity at all. They call us armchair generals. It is like saying that the battering ram, because it hits hard,



Why, this hath not a finger's dignity:  
 They call this bed-work, mappery, closet-war;  
 So that the ram that batters down the wall,  
 210 For the great swing and rudeness of his poise,  
 They place before his hand that made the engine,  
 Or those that with the fineness of their souls  
 By reason guide his execution.

**NESTOR**

Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse  
 215 Makes many Thetis' sons.

*A tucket*

**AGAMEMNON**

What trumpet? look, Menelaus.

**MENELAUS**

From Troy.

*Enter AENEAS*

**AGAMEMNON**

220 What would you 'fore our tent?

**AENEAS**

Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?

**AGAMEMNON**

Even this.

**AENEAS**

May one, that is a herald and a prince,  
 Do a fair message to his kingly ears?

**AGAMEMNON**

225 With surety stronger than Achilles' arm  
 'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice  
 Call Agamemnon head and general.

**AENEAS**

Fair leave and large security. How may  
 A stranger to those most imperial looks  
 230 Know them from eyes of other mortals?

**AGAMEMNON**

How!

**AENEAS**

Ay;  
 I ask, that I might waken reverence,  
 And bid the cheek be ready with a blush  
 235 Modest as morning when she coldly eyes  
 The youthful Phoebus:  
 Which is that god in office, guiding men?  
 Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

**AGAMEMNON**

240 This Trojan scorns us; or the men of Troy  
 Are ceremonious courtiers.

**AENEAS**

Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,  
 As bending angels; that's their fame in peace:  
 But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,  
 245 Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and,  
 Jove's accord,  
 Nothing so full of heart. But peace, Aeneas,  
 Peace, Trojan; lay thy finger on thy lips!  
 The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
 If that the praised himself bring the praise forth:  
 250 But what the repining enemy commends,

deserves all the credit, and refusing to acknowledge the  
 engineer who created it or the commander who deployed  
 it.

**NESTOR**

If this is how they behave Achilles's horse is worth much  
 more than him.

*A trumpet can be heard.*

**AGAMEMNON**

What? A trumpet? Look Menelaus.

**MENELAUS**

Men are coming from Troy.

*AENEAS enters.*

**AGAMEMNON**

Why are you stood before our tent?

**AENEAS**

Please tell me, is this mighty Agamemnon's tent <sup>5</sup>?

<sup>5</sup> Aeneas clearly does not recognize Agamemnon from sight.

**AGAMEMNON**

It is.

**AENEAS**

May I, as a messenger and as a prince, deliver a message to  
 the king?

**AGAMEMNON**

You certainly may. Announce your message before the  
 Greek commanders loyal to Agamemnon.

**AENEAS**

You are kind and generous. How should I know which of  
 these men are the princes?

**AGAMEMNON**

What?

**AENEAS**

Yes, I ask so that I may show them proper respect and work  
 out in advance who to treat with blushing respect: who is  
 the divine king? Who is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

**AGAMEMNON**

This Trojan either mocks us, or the Trojans are very polite  
 courtiers.

**AENEAS**

As ambassadors we are polite, courteous, and as friendly as  
 bowing angels, this is how we are known in peace-times.  
 However, as soldiers, Trojans are strong willed, able-  
 bodied, capable, and skilled with swords, and, by Jove,  
 show no love or mercy. But I should not talk like this, it is  
 immodest to praise yourself. The only worthy praise comes  
 reluctantly from our enemies.

That breath fame blows; that praise, sole sure,  
transcends.

**AGAMEMNON**

Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

Ay, Greek, that is my name.

**AGAMEMNON**

255 What's your affair I pray you?

**AENEAS**

Sir, pardon; 'tis for Agamemnon's ears.

**AGAMEMNON**

He hears naught privately that comes from Troy.

**AENEAS**

260 Nor I from Troy come not to whisper him:  
I bring a trumpet to awake his ear,  
To set his sense on the attentive bent,  
And then to speak.

**AGAMEMNON**

265 Speak frankly as the wind;  
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour:  
That thou shalt know. Trojan, he is awake,  
He tells thee so himself.

**AENEAS**

Trumpet, blow loud,  
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;  
And every Greek of mettle, let him know,  
What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.

*Trumpet sounds*

**AENEAS**

270 We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy  
A prince call'd Hector,--Priam is his father,--  
Who in this dull and long-continued truce  
Is rusty grown: he bade me take a trumpet,  
And to this purpose speak. Kings, princes, lords!  
275 If there be one among the fair'st of Greece  
That holds his honour higher than his ease,  
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,  
That knows his valour, and knows not his fear,  
That loves his mistress more than in confession,  
280 With truant vows to her own lips he loves,  
And dare avow her beauty and her worth  
In other arms than hers,--to him this challenge.  
Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,  
Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,  
285 He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,  
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms,  
And will to-morrow with his trumpet call  
Midway between your tents and walls of Troy,  
To rouse a Grecian that is true in love:  
290 If any come, Hector shall honour him;  
If none, he'll say in Troy when he retires,  
The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth  
The splinter of a lance. Even so much.

**AGAMEMNON**

295 This shall be told our lovers, Lord Aeneas;  
If none of them have soul in such a kind,  
We left them all at home: but we are soldiers;  
And may that soldier a mere recreant prove,  
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!  
If then one is, or hath, or means to be,  
300 That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he.

**AGAMEMNON**

Sir, Trojan, are you Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

Yes, Greek, that is my name.

**AGAMEMNON**

Why are you here?

**AENEAS**

Sir, I may not say, I must speak only to Agamemnon.


**AGAMEMNON**


No news arrives from Troy that he does not hear.

**AENEAS**

I do not come to whisper privately with him, rather I will  
wake him with my trumpet, and then I will speak to him.

**AGAMEMNON**

Speak then. Agamemnon isn't asleep, in fact he is telling  
you this himself .

 Here Agamemnon reveals his  
identity to Aeneas.

**AENEAS**

Be loud trumpet. Wake the Greek tents, so that any worthy  
Greek might know what the Trojan king would say.

*A trumpet is played.*

**AENEAS**

In Troy, great Agamemnon, there is a prince called Hector,  
the son of Priam, who is growing rusty in this long truce. He  
told me to take this trumpet and to say this: "Kings, princes,  
lords! If there is anyone among the best of the Greeks who  
values his honor more than an easy life, who seeks glory  
more than he fears death, that is is brave and unafraid, who  
is willing to actually defend his mistress's honor rather than  
merely promise to do so, and will fight for her, I have this  
challenge for such a man. Hector, in front of both Trojans  
and Greeks, shall prove that he has a wiser, more beautiful,  
and more truer lady than any Greek has ever had.  
Tomorrow he will sound this trumpet as he stands halfway  
between your tents and our walls, hoping to wake a  
chivalrous Greek. If any Greek like this comes, Hector shall  
fight him honorably. If no such many comes, when he  
returns to Troy he shall say that Grecian women are  
sunburned and worthless." This is his message.

**AGAMEMNON**

Our soldiers in love shall be told this, lord Aeneas. If none of  
them are brave enough to come forward, we must have left  
the brave Greeks at home. But listen, we are soldiers, and a  
soldier is worthless if he is not in love! If one of them  
accepts your challenge he will meet Hector. If none will, I  
will volunteer myself.

**NESTOR**

Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man  
 When Hector's grandsire suck'd: he is old now;  
 But if there be not in our Grecian host  
 One noble man that hath one spark of fire,  
 305 To answer for his love, tell him from me  
 I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver  
 And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,  
 And meeting him will tell him that my lady  
 Was fairer than his grandam and as chaste  
 310 As may be in the world: his youth in flood,  
 I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.

**AENEAS**

Now heavens forbid such scarcity of youth!

**ULYSSES**

Amen.

**AGAMEMNON**

Fair Lord Aeneas, let me touch your hand;  
 315 To our pavilion shall I lead you, sir.  
 Achilles shall have word of this intent;  
 So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent:  
 Yourself shall feast with us before you go  
 And find the welcome of a noble foe.

*Exeunt all but ULYSSES and NESTOR*

**ULYSSES**

320 Nestor!

**NESTOR**

What says Ulysses?

**ULYSSES**

I have a young conception in my brain;  
 Be you my time to bring it to some shape.

**NESTOR**

What is't?

**ULYSSES**

325 This 'tis:  
 Blunt wedges rive hard knots: the seeded pride  
 That hath to this maturity blown up  
 In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd,  
 Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil,  
 330 To overbulk us all.

**NESTOR**

Well, and how?

**ULYSSES**

This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,  
 However it is spread in general name,  
 Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

**NESTOR**

335 The purpose is perspicuous even as substance,  
 Whose grossness little characters sum up:  
 And, in the publication, make no strain,  
 But that Achilles, were his brain as barren  
 As banks of Libya,--though, Apollo knows,  
 340 'Tis dry enough,--will, with great speed of judgment,  
 Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose  
 Pointing on him.

**ULYSSES**

And wake him to the answer, think you?

**NESTOR**

Deliver him a message from Nestor, who was a man when  
 Hector's grandfather was being breast-fed. He is old now  
 but if there is not one man in the Greek army whose heart is  
 filled with the passion to fight for his love, tell Hector from  
 me that I will hide my white beard in a golden helmet and in  
 my armor hide these withered muscles, and when I meet  
 him I will tell him that my lady was fairer than his  
 grandmother and as chaste as anyone in the world. I'll  
 challenge him in his prime with the little life that is left to  
 me.

**AENEAS**

Heaven forbid such a lack of young, eager men.

**ULYSSES**

Amen.

**AGAMEMNON**

Fair lord Aeneas, give me your hand, that I may guide you to  
 my tent. Achilles will hear about this challenge, as will every  
 Greek lord. You must feast with us before you go, and be the  
 guest of your worthy enemy.

*Everyone exits except ULYSSES and NESTOR.*

**ULYSSES**

Nestor!

**NESTOR**

What are you thinking, Ulysses?

**ULYSSES**

I've just had an idea, help me to develop it.

**NESTOR**

What is it?

**ULYSSES**

It is this, the pride that has grown hugely in Achilles must be  
 dealt with now. If we ignore it, it will cause lots of problems  
 and ruin us all.

**NESTOR**

I agree, but how?

**ULYSSES**

Although the brave, young Hector offered this challenge to  
 everyone he intended it only for Achilles.

**NESTOR**

That is so obvious it may as well have been said in the  
 message. Even if Achilles was a moron - and lord knows he  
 is not very clever - he will quickly figure out that Hector's  
 purpose is to engage him.

**ULYSSES**

And do you think he will rise to the challenge?

**NESTOR**

Yes, 'tis most meet: whom may you else oppose,  
 345 That can from Hector bring his honour off,  
 If not Achilles? Though't be a sportful combat,  
 Yet in the trial much opinion dwells;  
 For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute  
 With their finest palate: and trust to me, Ulysses,  
 350 Our imputation shall be oddly poised  
 In this wild action; for the success,  
 Although particular, shall give a scantling  
 Of good or bad unto the general;  
 And in such indexes, although small pricks  
 355 To their subsequent volumes, there is seen  
 The baby figure of the giant mass  
 Of things to come at large. It is supposed  
 He that meets Hector issues from our choice  
 And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,  
 360 Makes merit her election, and doth boil,  
 As 'twere from us all, a man distill'd  
 Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,  
 What heart receives from hence the conquering part,  
 To steel a strong opinion to themselves?  
 365 Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,  
 In no less working than are swords and bows  
 Directive by the limbs.

**ULYSSES**

Give pardon to my speech:  
 Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector.  
 370 Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,  
 And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not,  
 The lustre of the better yet to show,  
 Shall show the better. Do not consent  
 That ever Hector and Achilles meet;  
 375 For both our honour and our shame in this  
 Are dogg'd with two strange followers.

**NESTOR**

I see them not with my old eyes: what are they?

**ULYSSES**

What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,  
 Were he not proud, we all should share with him:  
 380 But he already is too insolent;  
 And we were better parch in Afric sun  
 Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
 Should he 'scape Hector fair: if he were foil'd,  
 Why then, we did our main opinion crush  
 385 In taint of our best man. No, make a lottery;  
 And, by device, let blockish Ajax draw  
 The sort to fight with Hector: among ourselves  
 Give him allowance for the better man;  
 For that will physic the great Myrmidon  
 390 Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
 His crest that prouder than blue Iris bends.  
 If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,  
 We'll dress him up in voices: if he fail,  
 Yet go we under our opinion still  
 395 That we have better men. But, hit or miss,  
 Our project's life this shape of sense assumes:  
 Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.

**NESTOR**

Ulysses,  
 Now I begin to relish thy advice;  
 400 And I will give a taste of it forthwith  
 To Agamemnon: go we to him straight.  
 Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone  
 Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 'twere their bone.

*Exeunt*

**NESTOR**

Yes, it is almost certain, who else could possibly defeat Hector apart from Achilles? Although it is not a major battle much honor hangs in the balance, as the Trojans will send their best against ours, our ability shall be greatly judged. Victory, although the fight is only between two men, shall reflect either for better or for worse upon the whole army. And this small demonstration shall be used to predict future battles and even the war as a whole. We must assume that the person who meets Hector is our choice, and they will only deserve selection if they are our very best, because the victorious side would gain such a boost to their morale. Bolstered by strong morale, soldiers fight better and harder, like their weapons are extensions of their arms.

**ULYSSES**

Allow me to suggest something: it is because of what you have said that Achilles should not meet Hector. Let us, like merchants, show our worst merchandise in the hope that that it will sell. If it doesn't sell, our best will seem even better when it is compared to the first. Do not allow Hector and Achilles to fight. Both our victory and defeat will be determined by the two strange followers of this fight.

**NESTOR**

I do not know who these strange followers are, what are you talking about?

**ULYSSES**

If Achilles were not so proud, the glory he would take from defeating Hector would be shared between us all. But he is too insolent already, and we would suffer his pride and scorn if he defeats Hector. If he were beaten, then our reputation would be crushed alongside our best soldier. No, I think we should hold a lottery <sup>7</sup> and make sure that by some underhand method the brutish Ajax has the ticket to fight Hector. We and the other generals should all pretend that Ajax is the best soldier we have. This will cure our other champion of his pride, Achilles is too used to being praised and it is time for him to feel passed over. If the idiot Ajax wins, we'll praise him as our greatest hero, and if he doesn't succeed we will say we still have better soldiers. But either way our main victory will be having Ajax humble Achilles.

<sup>7</sup> Ulysses could be suggesting that there is a vote among the generals to decide who should fight Hector or a competition similar to drawing a short straw.

**NESTOR**

Ulysses, I am starting to appreciate your plan. I'll go and tell Agamemnon about it. Let's go there together immediately. We'll have our two troublesome dogs <sup>8</sup> solve each other, their pride will be the bone that the two dogs fight over.

<sup>8</sup> Achilles and Ajax.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter AJAX and THERSITES*

**AJAX**  
Thersites!

**THERSITES**  
Agamemnon, how if he had boils? full, all over, generally?

**AJAX**  
Thersites!

**THERSITES**  
5 And those boils did run? say so: did not the general run then? were not that a botchy core?

**AJAX**  
Dog!

**THERSITES**  
Then would come some matter from him; I see none now.

**AJAX**  
10 Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear?

*Beating him*

**AJAX**  
Feel, then.

**THERSITES**  
The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted lord!

**AJAX**  
15 Speak then, thou vinewedst leaven, speak: I will beat thee into handsomeness.

**THERSITES**  
I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness: but, I think, thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike,  
20 canst thou? a red murrain o' thy jade's tricks!

**AJAX**  
Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

**THERSITES**  
Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

**AJAX**  
The proclamation!

## Shakescleare Translation

*AJAX and THERSITES enter.*

**AJAX**  
Thersites!

**THERSITES**  
What if Agamemnon had boils all over him <sup>1</sup>?

<sup>1</sup> Thersites puns on the word 'generally' that both links to Agamemnon's rank and to the idea of the people he rules.

**AJAX**  
Thersites!

**THERSITES**  
If those pus-filled boils ran would that not mean that the general was running <sup>2</sup>? Wouldn't that be a sight.

<sup>2</sup> Thersites is suggesting that Agamemnon could not survive without the men around him, the idea of running or bleeding boils symbolises his men fleeing.

**AJAX**  
You dog!

**THERSITES**  
If that happened we might finally see something meaningful <sup>3</sup> coming from him.

<sup>3</sup> 'matter' means both the liquid emitted from boils and sensible thought, i.e. running away.

**AJAX**  
You son of a bitch, are you ignoring me?

*AJAX hits THERSITES.*

**AJAX**  
If you won't listen to me, I'll beat my meaning into you.

**THERSITES**  
Curse you, you thick mongrel <sup>4</sup> of a lord.

<sup>4</sup> As mentioned earlier Ajax was part Trojan, hence mongrel would have been a slur that picks up on his parentage.

**AJAX**  
If you talk, you rotten yeast, I will beat you back into shape <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Thersites is supposed to be deformed.

**THERSITES**  
It would be easier for me to talk you into being clever and righteous, but it's more likely your horse will deliver a speech that you will be able to recite a prayer by heart. You can hit things can you? A plague on your pathetic <sup>6</sup> actions.

<sup>6</sup> Thersites implies Ajax is both womanly and less than human.

**AJAX**  
Toadstool <sup>7</sup>, tell me what the proclamation <sup>8</sup> says.

<sup>7</sup> A generic insult.

<sup>8</sup> The proclamation is Agamemnon's message to all Greek soldiers about the fight with Hector.

**THERSITES**  
Do you think I have no feelings? Is that why you hit me like this?

**AJAX**  
Read the proclamation!

**THERSITES**

Thou art proclaimed a fool, I think.

**AJAX**

25 Do not, porpentine, do not: my fingers itch.

**THERSITES**

I would thou didst itch from head to foot and I had the scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

**AJAX**

30 I say, the proclamation!

**THERSITES**

Thou grumblest and railest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpine's beauty, ay, that thou barkest at him.

**AJAX**

35 Mistress Thersites!

**THERSITES**

Thou shouldest strike him.

**AJAX**

Cobloaf!

**THERSITES**

He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

**AJAX**

40 *[Beating him]* You whoreson cur!

**THERSITES**

Do, do.

**AJAX**

Thou stool for a witch!

**THERSITES**

Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinego may tutor thee: thou scurvy-valiant ass! thou art here but to thrash Trojans; and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave. If thou use to beat me, I will begin at thy heel, and tell what thou art by inches, thou thing of no bowels, thou!

**AJAX**

You dog!

**THERSITES**

You scurvy lord!

**AJAX**

*[Beating him]* You cur!

**THERSITES**

Mars his idiot! do, rudeness; do, camel; do, do.

55

**THERSITES**

You are proclaimed <sup>9</sup> to be a fool, I think.

**AJAX**

Do not push me, little satirist, my hands are itching to beat you again.

**THERSITES**

I wish you itched from head to toe and that it was my job to scratch you, I'd scratch you until you were the most disgusting scab in Greece. When you are actually out in the battlefield you are no quicker to engage than anyone else.

**AJAX**

I am telling you, read the proclamation!

**THERSITES**

You spend all day insulting Achilles, yet you only bark at him out of jealousy <sup>10</sup>.

**AJAX**

Mistress <sup>11</sup> Thersites.

**THERSITES**

You should hit Achilles.

**AJAX**

Worthless creature!

**THERSITES**

He would pound you into pieces with his fists, just like a sailor breaking a biscuit <sup>12</sup>.

**AJAX**

*[Beating Thersites]* You son of a whore!

**THERSITES**

Oh go ahead.

**AJAX**

You toadstool!

**THERSITES**

Go on, you brutish lump. You have less intellect in your head than I have in my elbows. A small donkey is brighter than you, you mock-brave ass! You are only here to beat Trojans, traded like a slave by brighter men than you. Hit me again and I'll tell you exactly what you're worth, you gutless wretch, from bottom to top.

**AJAX**

You dog!

**THERSITES**

You worthless lord!

**AJAX**

*[Beating him]* You worthless creature!

**THERSITES**

Brainless brawler, go ahead idiot, go on, you camel, go on.

<sup>9</sup> 'The proclamation' could mean the general rumors in the camp, Thersites is saying that everyone laughs at Ajax.

<sup>10</sup> Thersites alludes to the myth of Cerberus, the three-headed dog, and Proserpine, the beautiful wife of the god of the underworld. Again Thersites uses bestial imagery, saying Ajax acts like a vicious dog.

<sup>11</sup> Ajax is implying that Thersites is being difficult by saying he is acting like a woman.

<sup>12</sup> Sailors used to eat hard loaves of bread that needed to be hit to break them.

Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS

**ACHILLES**

Why, how now, Ajax! wherefore do you thus? How now, Thersites! what's the matter, man?

**THERSITES**

You see him there, do you?

**ACHILLES**

Ay; what's the matter?

**THERSITES**

60 Nay, look upon him.

**ACHILLES**

So I do: what's the matter?

**THERSITES**

Nay, but regard him well.

**ACHILLES**

'Well!' why, I do so.

**THERSITES**

65 But yet you look not well upon him; for whosoever you take him to be, he is Ajax.

**ACHILLES**

I know that, fool.

**THERSITES**

Ay, but that fool knows not himself.

**AJAX**

Therefore I beat thee.

**THERSITES**

70 Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters! his evasions have ears thus long. I have bobbed his brain more than he has beat my bones: I will buy nine sparrows for a penny, and his pia mater is not worth the ninth part of a sparrow. This lord, Achilles, Ajax, who wears his wit in his belly and  
75 his guts in his head, I'll tell you what I say of him.

**ACHILLES**

What?

**THERSITES**

I say, this Ajax--

*Ajax offers to beat him*

**ACHILLES**

80 Nay, good Ajax.

**THERSITES**

Has not so much wit--

**ACHILLES**

Nay, I must hold you.

ACHILLES and PATROCLUS enter.

**ACHILLES**

Woah there, Ajax! Why are you hitting him? Why, Thersites, what is wrong?

**THERSITES**

You see that man, yes?

**ACHILLES**

Yes, what is the problem.

**THERSITES**

Look at him.

**ACHILLES**

I am, what is the problem?

**THERSITES**

No, really look at him.

**ACHILLES**

Well, I am looking at him.

**THERSITES**

You can't look well upon him <sup>13</sup>, for he is Ajax.

**ACHILLES**

I know that, fool <sup>14</sup>.

**THERSITES**

Yes well the fool does not know himself <sup>15</sup>.

**AJAX**

Which is why I hit you <sup>16</sup>.

**THERSITES**

Oh look here, what small pieces of wit come out of his mouth! He has the wit of a donkey. I have made him look like a fool more than he has beaten me physically. If I buy nine sparrows for a penny I could not buy a ninth of a sparrow with all his wit. This man Ajax, Achilles, has no thoughts beyond basic impulses. I'll tell you what I think of him.

**ACHILLES**

What do you think of him?

**THERSITES**

I think this Ajax...

*AJAX looks like he will strike THERSITES.*

**ACHILLES**

Be gentle, good Ajax.

**THERSITES**

Has not got enough wit.

**ACHILLES**

Leave it Thersites.

<sup>13</sup> Thersites puns on Achilles' 'well'. Thersites joke reads: 'Either you are not looking at him properly, or you must look at him with hatred, because he is Ajax and anyone who looks at him must hate him.'

<sup>14</sup> Thersites will deliberately mistake this as 'I know that fool'.

<sup>15</sup> Thersites is saying Ajax is an unaware fool.

<sup>16</sup> Ajax either deliberately or accidentally misinterprets Thersites, thinking that Thersites is calling himself a fool.

**THERSITES**

As will stop the eye of Helen's needle, for whom he comes to fight.

**ACHILLES**

85 Peace, fool!

**THERSITES**

I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will not: he there: that he: look you there.

**AJAX**

O thou damned cur! I shall--

**ACHILLES**

Will you set your wit to a fool's?

**THERSITES**

90 No, I warrant you; for a fool's will shame it.

**PATROCLUS**

Good words, Thersites.

**ACHILLES**

What's the quarrel?

**AJAX**

I bade the vile owl go learn me the tenor of the proclamation, and he rails upon me.

**THERSITES**

95 I serve thee not.

**AJAX**

Well, go to, go to.

**THERSITES**

I serve here voluntarily.

**ACHILLES**

Your last service was sufferance, 'twas not voluntary: no man is beaten voluntary: Ajax was here the voluntary, and you as under an impress.

**THERSITES**

E'en so; a great deal of your wit, too, lies in your sinews, or else there be liars. Hector have a great catch, if he knock out either of your brains: a' were as good crack a fusty nut with no kernel.

**ACHILLES**

105 What, with me too, Thersites?

**THERSITES**

There's Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy ere your grandsires had nails on their toes, yoke you like draught-oxen and make you plough up the wars.

**ACHILLES**

What, what?

**THERSITES**

110 Yes, good sooth: to, Achilles! to, Ajax! to!

**THERSITES**

To fill the eye of Helen's needle, who is the only reason he was brought here.

**ACHILLES**

Be silent, fool.

**THERSITES**

I would happily live in peace and quiet, but the fool will not, he is the fool, look at him.

**AJAX**

Oh you cursed wretch! I shall...

**ACHILLES**

Will you set your wit against that of a fool?

**THERSITES**

I doubt he will, because my wit will make him look stupid again.

**PATROCLUS**

Good one, Thersites.

**ACHILLES**

Why are you arguing?

**AJAX**

I asked the stupid creature to tell me what the proclamation said, and he started insulting me.

**THERSITES**

I am not your servant.

**AJAX**

Well then, go away, begone.

**THERSITES**

I serve in the army as a volunteer.

**ACHILLES**

You last task wasn't voluntary it was forced upon you, no one chooses to be beaten up. Ajax volunteered for his role, you were forced <sup>17</sup> into yours.

**THERSITES**

Even so. If most of your intelligence does not reside in your muscles, then people were lying about you. If Hector cracks open either of your heads it would be like cracking open a nut to find nothing inside

**ACHILLES**

Are you mocking me too now, Thersites?

**THERSITES**

Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy by the time your grandfathers had toenails, are still able to get you two to be like ploughmen for their wars.

**ACHILLES**

Pardon?

**THERSITES**

Oh yes <sup>18</sup>, hya Achilles, hya hya Ajax.

<sup>17</sup> 'impress' carries a pun on conscription (people who had coins forced into their hands by military officers had to serve in the army) and on beating (Thersites was pressed with Ajax's punches).

<sup>18</sup> Thersites previous speech employed the metaphor of oxen pulling a plow, and here Thersites mimics a farmer encouraging oxen onwards.



**AJAX**

I shall cut out your tongue.

**THERSITES**

'Tis no matter! I shall speak as much as thou afterwards.

**PATROCLUS**

No more words, Thersites; peace!

**THERSITES**

115 I will hold my peace when Achilles' brach bids me, shall I?

**ACHILLES**

There's for you, Patroclus.

**THERSITES**

120 I will see you hanged, like clotpoles, ere I come any more to your tents: I will keep where there is wit stirring and leave the faction of fools.

*Exit*

**PATROCLUS**

A good riddance.

**ACHILLES**

125 Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host: That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun, Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy To-morrow morning call some knight to arms That hath a stomach; and such a one that dare Maintain--I know not what: 'tis trash. Farewell.

**AJAX**

Farewell. Who shall answer him?

**ACHILLES**

130 I know not: 'tis put to lottery; otherwise He knew his man.

**AJAX**

O, meaning you. I will go learn more of it.

*Exeunt*

**AJAX**

I shall cut out your tongue.

**THERSITES**

It doesn't matter, afterwards I'll still speak as much sense as you.

**PATROCLUS**

Okay stop now Thersites, be silent.

**THERSITES**

I'll be silent on the orders of Achilles's bitch, shall I?

**ACHILLES**

That's what you get for helping him, Patroclus.

**THERSITES**

I'll never come to your tent again unless it is to see you thickheads hanged. I will go where there is more wit and leave you fools behind.

*THERSITES leaves.*

**PATROCLUS**

Good riddance.

**ACHILLES**

Indeed, Ajax this is what was proclaimed through our camp: Hector, five hours after sunrise tomorrow, will come with a trumpet to the ground between our tents and Troy and call out to fight him any knights who are brave enough, and whoever dares... whatever, it doesn't matter, the whole thing is trash. Goodbye.

**AJAX**

Goodbye, who shall fight him?

**ACHILLES**

I don't know, it will be a matter of chance, otherwise his opponent would be obvious.

**AJAX**

Oh, you mean yourself. I will go find out more.

*They leave.*

## Act 2, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter PRIAM, HECTOR, TROILUS, PARIS, and HELENUS*

**PRIAM**

After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,  
Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:  
'Deliver Helen, and all damage else--  
As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,  
5 Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed  
In hot digestion of this cormorant war--  
Shall be struck off.' Hector, what say you to't?

### Shakescleare Translation

*PRIAM, HECTOR, TROILUS, PARIS, and HELENUS enter.*

**PRIAM**

Even after all the time, lives, and messages that have gone by Nestor still sends the message from the Greeks: "Deliver Helen, and all other damage, all honor, wasted time, effort, money, wounds, friends, and whatever else that is wasted in this war, shall be forgotten." Hector, what do you think of this?

**HECTOR**

Though no man lesser fears the Greeks than I  
 As far as toucheth my particular,  
 10 Yet, dread Priam,  
 There is no lady of more softer bowels,  
 More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,  
 More ready to cry out 'Who knows what follows?'  
 Than Hector is: the wound of peace is surety,  
 15 Surety secure; but modest doubt is call'd  
 The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches  
 To the bottom of the worst. Let Helen go:  
 Since the first sword was drawn about this question,  
 Every tithes soul, 'mongst many thousand dismes,  
 20 Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours:  
 If we have lost so many tenths of ours,  
 To guard a thing not ours nor worth to us,  
 Had it our name, the value of one ten,  
 What merit's in that reason which denies  
 25 The yielding of her up?

**TROILUS**

Fie, fie, my brother!  
 Weigh you the worth and honour of a king  
 So great as our dread father in a scale  
 Of common ounces? will you with counters sum  
 30 The past proportion of his infinite?  
 And buckle in a waist most fathomless  
 With spans and inches so diminutive  
 As fears and reasons? fie, for godly shame!

**HELENUS**

No marvel, though you bite so sharp at reasons,  
 35 You are so empty of them. Should not our father  
 Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,  
 Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

**TROILUS**

You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest;  
 You fur your gloves with reason. Here are  
 40 your reasons:  
 You know an enemy intends you harm;  
 You know a sword employ'd is perilous,  
 And reason flies the object of all harm:  
 Who marvels then, when Helenus beholds  
 45 A Grecian and his sword, if he do set  
 The very wings of reason to his heels  
 And fly like chidden Mercury from Jove,  
 Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,  
 Let's shut our gates and sleep: manhood and honour  
 50 Should have hare-hearts, would they but fat  
 their thoughts  
 With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect  
 Make livers pale and lustihood deject.

**HECTOR**

Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost  
 55 The holding.



**TROILUS**


What is aught, but as 'tis valued?


**HECTOR**

But value dwells not in particular will;  
 It holds his estimate and dignity  
 As well wherein 'tis precious of itself  
 60 As in the prizer: 'tis mad idolatry  
 To make the service greater than the god  
 And the will dotes that is attributive  
 To what infectiously itself affects,  
 Without some image of the affected merit.

**HECTOR**

Although no one is less afraid of the Greeks than I am  
 regarding the chance of being killed, yet, powerful Priam,  
 there is no compassionate or concerned woman more eager  
 to cry out "How will this end?" than I am. Peace is  
 dangerous because it makes us complacent in our security.  
 A little doubt is known as the beacon of the wise, it is like a  
 surgical probe  that searches a wound. Let Helen leave,  
 since we first begun this battle, every sacrificed  soul,  
 each of the many thousands, has been as important as  
 Helen's. I mean the souls of our soldiers, not the Greeks. If  
 we have lost so many men guarding something that is not  
 Trojan nor worth as much to us a Trojan life, why shouldn't  
 we just hand her over?

 A tent is a medical instrument used for examining wounds.

 Hector refers to 'tithes' which were a form of tax in which a tenth of a harvest was paid to the local church or lawmen, this theme of tithes continues throughout his speech.

**TROILUS**

Away, away, brother! Do you value the king's honor as lowly  
 as common soldier's lives? Are you going to try to count out  
 his infinite worth with the worthless lives of soldiers? Are  
 you going to let down the infinite respect he is due for petty  
 concerns and fears? Away, this shame is unbearable!

**HELENUS**

It is no wonder you are so dismissive of concern and reason,  
 you are empty of such things. Shouldn't our father rely on  
 reasons to make his judgments, seeing as you have nothing  
 reasonable to say?


**TROILUS**


You only care about dreaming and sleeping, priest and  
 brother of mine. You invent reasons for living comfortably.  
 Here are those reasons: You know an enemy wants to hurt  
 you, you know fighting them is risky, and that logically you  
 should avoid being hurt. Who is surprised then that when  
 Helenus sees a Greek with a sword, he uses reason as an  
 excuse to run away like a shooting star or Mercury the  
 messenger god away from Jupiter? No, if we only care  
 about logic let's close the gates and go to sleep. Brave and  
 honorable people would live in fear if they allowed reason  
 to govern them. Reason and logic make men into impotent  
 cowards.

**HECTOR**

Brother, Helen is not worth the price of keeping her.

**TROILUS**

What is anything worth except what we decide it is  ?

 Troilus is suggesting that it is only human desire that gives things value.

**HECTOR**

But value isn't decided by one man's will, value exists in the  
 object as well as the person who desires it. It is mad  
 idolatry to give more in sacrifice than the god is worth, and  
 the desire that is too strong is like a sickness when it cannot  
 see the object's true worth.

**TROILUS**

65 I take to-day a wife, and my election  
Is led on in the conduct of my will;  
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,  
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores  
Of will and judgment: how may I avoid,  
70 Although my will distaste what it elected,  
The wife I chose? there can be no evasion  
To blench from this and to stand firm by honour:  
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant,  
When we have soil'd them, nor the remainder viands  
75 We do not throw in unrespective sieve,  
Because we now are full. It was thought meet  
Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks:  
Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;  
The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce  
80 And did him service: he touch'd the ports desired,  
And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive,  
He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness  
Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning.  
Why keep we her? the Grecians keep our aunt:  
85 Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl,  
Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,  
And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.  
If you'll avouch 'twas wisdom Paris went--  
As you must needs, for you all cried 'Go, go,'--  
90 If you'll confess he brought home noble prize--  
As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands  
And cried 'Inestimable!'--why do you now  
The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,  
And do a deed that fortune never did,  
95 Beggar the estimation which you prized  
Richer than sea and land? O, theft most base,  
That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep!  
But, thieves, unworthy of a thing so stol'n,  
That in their country did them that disgrace,  
100 We fear to warrant in our native place!

**CASSANDRA**

*[Within] Cry, Trojans, cry!*

**PRIAM**

What noise? what shriek is this?

**TROILUS**

'Tis our mad sister, I do know her voice.

**CASSANDRA**

*[Within] Cry, Trojans!*

**HECTOR**

105 It is Cassandra.

*Enter CASSANDRA, raving*

**CASSANDRA**

Cry, Trojans, cry! lend me ten thousand eyes,  
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

**HECTOR**

Peace, sister, peace!

**CASSANDRA**

110 Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld,  
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,  
Add to my clamours! let us pay betimes  
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.  
Cry, Trojans, cry! practise your eyes with tears!  
115 Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilium stand;  
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.  
Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:  
Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go.

*Exit*

**TROILUS**

If I get married today, my choice was decided by my will. My will is kindled by my eyes and ears, which are like sea-captains navigating a narrow passage between the two dangerous shores of desire and good judgement. How could I choose as a wife anyone other than the person I desired? There is no honorable way to turn away from choosing the person you desire once you desire them. We don't return silks to the merchant we bought them from once we have made them dirty, nor do we throw away our food stores when we are full <sup>4</sup>. We all thought it was appropriate that Paris takes revenge upon the Greeks, your voices were like a wind of consent that blew his ship to Greece, the seas and winds even helped him on his way. He got to his destination, and because the Greeks held one of his old aunts captive, he stole the Greek queen, who is more youthful than Apollo and who makes the morning seem old. Why do we keep her? Because the Greeks keep our aunt. Is Helen worth keeping? She a pearl, so valuable that the Greeks launched over a thousand ships to get her back, making settled kings into merchants who would risk everything on the water. If you admit that it was wise Paris went, which you must because you all told him to go; if you admit he brought home a prize worth having, which you must because you all clapped and called his prize unbelievable; why do you now question what you once thought was wise, and do something never before done, question the value of something that was once worth more than the world? Oh it was a stupid theft if we stole something we are too afraid to keep! Even more ridiculous, we are thieves unworthy of such a thing, that are willing to disgrace the Greeks in Greece, but are afraid of our treasure when we are back home.

<sup>4</sup> These metaphors link to the following speech not to what Troilus has just said.

**CASSANDRA**

*[Speaking offstage] Cry, Trojans, cry!*

**PRIAM**

What is that noise? Who is screaming?

**TROILUS**

It is our mad sister, I recognize her voice.

**CASSANDRA**

*[Speaking offstage] Cry, Trojans!*

**HECTOR**

It is Cassandra.

*Cassandra enters appearing mad.*

**CASSANDRA**

Cry, Trojans, cry! Give me ten thousand eyes, and I will have them all weep for what will happen.

**HECTOR**

Be quiet, sister, calm down!

**CASSANDRA**

Virgins and boys, the middle-aged and the wrinkled elderly, young children that can do nothing but cry, join me in moaning! Let us begin early to pay off the debt of tears we will have. Cry, Trojans, cry! Get your eyes used to tears! Troy will be destroyed, and Ilium will fall. Our hot-headed brother Paris will be the ruin of us all. Cry Trojans, cry! Cry because of Helen and misery! Troy will burn if Helen is not let go.

*CASSANDRA exits.*

**HECTOR**

Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains  
 120 Of divination in our sister work  
 Some touches of remorse? or is your blood  
 So madly hot that no discourse of reason,  
 Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,  
 Can qualify the same?

**TROILUS**

125 Why, brother Hector,  
 We may not think the justness of each act  
 Such and no other than event doth form it,  
 Nor once deject the courage of our minds,  
 Because Cassandra's mad: her brain-sick raptures  
 130 Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel  
 Which hath our several honours all engaged  
 To make it gracious. For my private part,  
 I am no more touch'd than all Priam's sons:  
 And Jove forbid there should be done amongst us  
 135 Such things as might offend the weakest spleen  
 To fight for and maintain!

**PARIS**

Else might the world convince of levity  
 As well my undertakings as your counsels:  
 But I attest the gods, your full consent  
 140 Gave wings to my propension and cut off  
 All fears attending on so dire a project.  
 For what, alas, can these my single arms?  
 What Propugnation is in one man's valour,  
 To stand the push and enmity of those  
 145 This quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest,  
 Were I alone to pass the difficulties  
 And had as ample power as I have will,  
 Paris should ne'er retract what he hath done,  
 Nor faint in the pursuit.

**PRIAM**

150 Paris, you speak  
 Like one besotted on your sweet delights:  
 You have the honey still, but these the gall;  
 So to be valiant is no praise at all.

**PARIS**

Sir, I propose not merely to myself  
 155 The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;  
 But I would have the soil of her fair rape  
 Wiped off, in honourable keeping her.  
 What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,  
 Disgrace to your great worths and shame to me,  
 160 Now to deliver her possession up  
 On terms of base compulsion! Can it be  
 That so degenerate a strain as this  
 Should once set footing in your generous bosoms?  
 There's not the meanest spirit on our party  
 165 Without a heart to dare or sword to draw  
 When Helen is defended, nor none so noble  
 Whose life were ill bestow'd or death unfamed  
 Where Helen is the subject; then, I say,  
 Well may we fight for her whom, we know well,  
 170 The world's large spaces cannot parallel.

**HECTOR**

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well,  
 And on the cause and question now in hand  
 Have glozed, but superficially: not much  
 Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
 175 Unfit to hear moral philosophy:  
 The reasons you allege do more conduce  
 To the hot passion of distemper'd blood  
 Than to make up a free determination  
 'Twixt right and wrong, for pleasure and revenge  
 180 Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice  
 Of any true decision. Nature craves  
 All dues be render'd to their owners: now,

**HECTOR**

Now, young Troilus, do our sister's prophecies not make  
 you doubt yourself? Or are you so madly excited that no  
 amount of reason, nor fear of defeat or moral wrong-doing,  
 can make you change your mind?

**TROILUS**

Brother Hector, we mustn't decide what is right or wrong  
 only from the results nor stop being brave just because  
 Cassandra is mad. Her unhinged prophecies don't change  
 the morality of a cause that we all fighting for properly.  
 Personally, I am no more passionate than any of Priam's  
 sons, and God forbid we would fight for anything that any  
 of us are too afraid to fight for and win!

**PARIS**

Otherwise the world will think your wisdom and my actions  
 were worthless, but I swear that it was your agreement that  
 made me hurry to ignore my fears and embark on my  
 dangerous task. I couldn't have done all this on my own.  
 How could I have started this war on my own? Yet even  
 without your support if I had as much strength as I have will  
 power I wouldn't do anything differently and would  
 continue the war.

**PRIAM**


Paris you are speaking like a man who is drunk on their  
 delight. You have the sweetness of Helen, and these men  
 have the bitterness of war, so it is hardly brave of you to  
 want to continue.

**PARIS**

Sir, I'm not only concerned with the pleasures I take from  
 her beauty, but would rather our actions be proved  
 honorable by us keeping her. It would be a kind of treason  
 to Helen, disgraceful for you all, and shameful for me, to  
 give her up because of shameful obligation! Surely such  
 cowardly thoughts would never enter your gracious minds?  
 There is no creature so pathetic on our side that they do not  
 have the heart or sword to defend Helen, nor is there  
 anyone so worthy that they would be shamed by dying for  
 Helen. I say it is a proper thing to fight for someone who is  
 without comparison throughout the world.

**HECTOR**

Paris and Troilus you have both given good speeches even if  
 they were superficial, like the young men who Aristotle  
 thought were unfit to be part of moral debates. The reasons  
 you give are full of passion rather than an unbiased  
 decision between right and wrong, after all pleasure and  
 revenge are deaf, like a snake is, to logic. Nature demands  
 that all debts are settled, and what debt could be greater  
 than a wife being kept from her husband? If natural law is  
 upset by a man's lust, and great minds resist natural law  
 because of their weak will, there are laws in each nation to  
 stop those whose appetites cannot be controlled. If  
 Helen is the wife of Menelaus, as we all know she is, the

 Hector is saying there are laws  
 against stealing other peoples' wives.

What nearer debt in all humanity  
 Than wife is to the husband? If this law  
 185 Of nature be corrupted through affection,  
 And that great minds, of partial indulgence  
 To their benumbed wills, resist the same,  
 There is a law in each well-order'd nation  
 To curb those raging appetites that are  
 190 Most disobedient and refractory.  
 If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,  
 As it is known she is, these moral laws  
 Of nature and of nations speak aloud  
 To have her back return'd: thus to persist  
 195 In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,  
 But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion  
 Is this in way of truth; yet ne'ertheless,  
 My spritely brethren, I propend to you  
 In resolution to keep Helen still,  
 200 For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependance  
 Upon our joint and several dignities.

**TROILUS**

Why, there you touch'd the life of our design:  
 Were it not glory that we more affected  
 Than the performance of our heaving spleens,  
 205 I would not wish a drop of Trojan blood  
 Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,  
 She is a theme of honour and renown,  
 A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,  
 Whose present courage may beat down our foes,  
 210 And fame in time to come canonize us;  
 For, I presume, brave Hector would not lose  
 So rich advantage of a promised glory  
 As smiles upon the forehead of this action  
 For the wide world's revenue.

**HECTOR**

215 I am yours,  
 You valiant offspring of great Priamus.  
 I have a roisting challenge sent amongst  
 The dun and factious nobles of the Greeks  
 Will strike amazement to their drowsy spirits:  
 220 I was advertised their great general slept,  
 Whilst emulation in the army crept:  
 This, I presume, will wake him.

*Exeunt*

moral laws of nature and society say that she must be returned. To continue doing an immoral act does not make it better but worse. This is my honest opinion, but nonetheless, my youthful brothers, I feel like agreeing that we keep Helen, because it would reflect so badly on us if we did not.

**TROILUS**

That's exactly what I was trying to say, if there was no glory in carrying on the fight I wouldn't want another drop of Trojan blood to be spilled in her defense. But, worthy Hector, she is a legendary prize, proof of our excellence and bravery, and if we are courageous enough to defeat our enemies we will become famous heroes. I presume brave Hector would not give up this promise of fame for all the wealth in the world.

**HECTOR**

I will help you, brave son of Priam. I have sent a rousing challenge to the slow and in-fighting Greek nobility that will rouse them. I was told that their great champion, Achilles, refused to fight, whilst the others sought to imitate him. I presume that my challenge will wake him.

*They exit.*

## Act 2, Scene 3

### Shakespeare






*Enter THERSITES, solus***THERSITES**

How now, Thersites! what lost in the labyrinth of thy fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? He beats me, and I rail at him: O, worthy satisfaction! would it were otherwise; that I could beat him,  
 5 whilst he railed at me. 'Sfoot, I'll learn to conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful execrations. Then there's Achilles, a rare engineer! If Troy be not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus,  
 10 forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little, little less than little wit from them that they have! which short-armed ignorance itself knows is so abundant  
 15 scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and

### Shakescleare Translation

*THERSITES enters alone.***THERSITES**

Oh Thersites! What, are you stuck in a maze of your own hate? Will the elephant Ajax win over you like this? He hits me and I insult him, oh that's a worthy payback! I wish it were the other way around, and I could hit him whilst he shouted at me. God's foot, if I have to learn magic and how to conjure demons I will do it, to make my hatred productive. Then there's Achilles, a strange sapper. If Troy isn't taken by these two, it won't be until the walls fall over on their own. Oh Jupiter give up your thunderbolts, and Mercury give up your medicine, if you don't take the last of Ajax and Achilles' pathetic wit from them. Those stupid creatures couldn't think of a way of saving a fly from a spider without drawing their swords and cutting the web apart. After these two, I'd put a plague on the whole camp! Or I'd make their bones ache, a suitable curse for those that go to war over a woman. I have said my prayers and

 Thersites is being sarcastic. Sappers would dig underneath a city's walls and either burn, explode or cave them in. The caduceus is a staff with two snakes wrapped around it, the symbol of medicine. Aching bones was a sign of syphilis a common venereal disease in the period. Placket could imply a woman, an opening in the front of a skirt, or the female sexual organs.

cutting the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or rather, the bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse dependent on those that war for a placket. I have said my prayers and devil Envy say Amen. What ho! my Lord Achilles!

Enter PATROCLUS

**PATROCLUS**

Who's there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail.

**THERSITES**

If I could have remembered a gilt counterfeit, thou wouldst not have slipped out of my contemplation: but it is no matter; thyself upon thyself! The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be thine in great revenue! heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death! then if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corse, I'll be sworn and sworn upon't she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen. Where's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

**THERSITES**

Ay: the heavens hear me!

Enter ACHILLES

**ACHILLES**

Who's there?

**PATROCLUS**

Thersites, my lord.

**ACHILLES**

Where, where? Art thou come? why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals? Come, what's Agamemnon?

**THERSITES**

Thy commander, Achilles. Then tell me, Patroclus, what's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

Thy lord, Thersites: then tell me, I pray thee, what's thyself?

**THERSITES**

Thy knower, Patroclus: then tell me, Patroclus, what art thou?

**PATROCLUS**

Thou mayst tell that knowest.

**ACHILLES**

O, tell, tell.

**THERSITES**

I'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon commands Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am Patroclus' knower, and Patroclus is a fool.

**PATROCLUS**

You rascal!


now only need the devil of Envy to agree. What's this, my lord Achilles.

PATROCLUS enters.

**PATROCLUS**

Who's there? Thersites! Oh good, come in and start complaining.

**THERSITES**

If my memory  was able to remember a gilded fake you would not have left my prayers: but it's not important. Be true to yourself! May you be kept wealthy by the common failings of mankind, stupidity and ignorance. May the gods give you the wisdom of a tutor, and you never experience punishment. Be guided by your passions until you die, and if the woman who prepares your body when you die calls you beautiful, then I was a liar and swore that she never prepared anyone who wasn't a leper. Amen. Where's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

What, are you devout? Were you praying?

**THERSITES**

Yes, may the heavens hear me!

ACHILLES enters.


**ACHILLES**

Who's there?

**PATROCLUS**

Thersites, my lord.

**ACHILLES**

Where, where? Have you arrived? Oh, my entertainment, my comedian whilst I eat, why haven't you performed whilst I eat for so long? Come on then, what is Agamemnon like ?

**THERSITES**

He is your commander, Achilles. Now tell me, Patroclus, what's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

He is your lord, Thersites. Now tell me, please, what are you?

**THERSITES**

I am the one who understands you, Patroclus. Now tell me, Patroclus, what are you?

**PATROCLUS**

You can tell me if you know me.

**ACHILLES**


Tell him, tell him.


**THERSITES**

I'll begin from the beginning. Agamemnon commands Achilles, Achilles is my lord, I am Patroclus's knower, and Patroclus is a fool.

**PATROCLUS**

You rascal!

 This whole passage has a second meaning: If I could have remembered someone as useless as you I would have put you in my curses, but it's no big deal. I have no curse worse for you than to be you. May you be filled with folly and ignorance, kept away from anyone who may teach you wisdom or discipline. May your lust be all that guides you, and if she that sleeps with you says you are beautiful, I swear that she must only have slept with lepers. Amen. Where's Achilles?

 Achilles asks Thersites to impersonate Agamemnon.

**THERSITES**

55 Peace, fool! I have not done.

**ACHILLES**

He is a privileged man. Proceed, Thersites.

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites is a fool, and, as aforesaid, Patroclus is a fool.

**ACHILLES**

Derive this; come.

**THERSITES**

60 Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool, and Patroclus is a fool positive.

**PATROCLUS**

Why am I a fool?

**THERSITES**

65 Make that demand of the prover. It suffices me thou art. Look you, who comes here?

**ACHILLES**

Patroclus, I'll speak with nobody.  
Come in with me, Thersites.

*Exit*

**THERSITES**

70 Here is such patchery, such juggling and such knavery! all the argument is a cuckold and a whore; a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon. Now, the dry serpigo on the subject! and war and lechery confound all!

*Exit*

*Enter AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and AJAX*

**AGAMEMNON**

75 Where is Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

Within his tent; but ill disposed, my lord.

**AGAMEMNON**

Let it be known to him that we are here.  
He shent our messengers; and we lay by  
Our appertainments, visiting of him:

80 Let him be told so; lest perchance he think  
We dare not move the question of our place,  
Or know not what we are.

**PATROCLUS**

I shall say so to him.

*Exit*

**ULYSSES**

85 We saw him at the opening of his tent:  
He is not sick.

**THERSITES**

Be quiet, fool! I am not finished.

**ACHILLES**

He is allowed to speak <sup>8</sup>. Go on, Thersites.

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon is a fool, Achilles is a fool, Thersites is a fool, and as I have already said, Patroclus is a fool.

**ACHILLES**

How did you figure this out, then?

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon is a fool to try and command Achilles. Achilles is a fool because he is commanded by Agamemnon. Thersites is a fool because he serves such a fool. And Patroclus is definitely a fool.

**PATROCLUS**

Why am I a fool?

**THERSITES**

Ask God, who will be your judge. <sup>9</sup> It is enough for me that you are. Who is coming here?

**ACHILLES**

Patroclus I do not want to speak to anyone, come into the tent Thersites.

*ACHILLES exits.*

**THERSITES**

These are good tricks and traps. My argument was a baseless show, a clever argument that will make these men argue and fight to the death. Now, a plague <sup>10</sup> on the subject! Let war and greed ensnare everyone!

*THERSITES exits.*

*AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and AJAX enter.*

**AGAMEMNON**

Where is Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

He's in the tent, but he's ill, my lord.

**AGAMEMNON**

Let him know we are here. He has shamefully turned away our messengers, and we are willing to forget our rank by visiting him. Tell him this so that he does not think we aren't willing to pull rank on him or that we do not know our power.

**PATROCLUS**

I will tell him this.

*PATROCLUS exits.*

**ULYSSES**

We saw him at the entrance of his tent so he can't be sick.

<sup>8</sup> Court clowns were allowed to make fun of their betters and were common in most courts in Christendom.

<sup>9</sup> Thersites literally says that Patroclus should ask the person responsible for proving this, in other editions of the text the word Creator rather than "prover" is used, and this seems more likely.

<sup>10</sup> "Serpigo" is the generic name for a creeping skin disease such as ringworm.

**AJAX**

90 Yes, lion-sick, sick of proud heart: you may call it melancholy, if you will favour the man; but, by my head, 'tis pride: but why, why? let him show us the cause. A word, my lord.

*Takes AGAMEMNON aside*

**NESTOR**

What moves Ajax thus to bay at him?

**ULYSSES**

Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him.

**NESTOR**

Who, Thersites?

**ULYSSES**

95 He.

**NESTOR**

Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his argument.

**ULYSSES**

No, you see, he is his argument that has his argument, Achilles.

**NESTOR**

100 All the better; their faction is more our wish than their faction: but it was a strong composure a fool could disunite.

**ULYSSES**

The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie. Here comes Patroclus.

105

*Re-enter PATROCLUS*

**NESTOR**

No Achilles with him.

**ULYSSES**

The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy: his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure.

**PATROCLUS**

110 Achilles bids me say, he is much sorry, If any thing more than your sport and pleasure Did move your greatness and this noble state To call upon him; he hopes it is no other But for your health and your digestion sake, And after-dinner's breath.

**AGAMEMNON**

115 Hear you, Patroclus:  
We are too well acquainted with these answers:  
But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn,  
Cannot outfly our apprehensions.  
Much attribute he hath, and much the reason  
120 Why we ascribe it to him; yet all his virtues,  
Not virtuously on his own part beheld,  
Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,  
Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,  
Are like to rot untasted. Go and tell him,  
125 We come to speak with him; and you shall not sin,  
If you do say we think him over-proud  
And under-honest, in self-assumption greater  
Than in the note of judgment; and worthier  
than himself  
130 Here tend the savage strangeness he puts on,  
Disguise the holy strength of their command,  
And underwrite in an observing kind

**AJAX**

He's got the sickness of a lion, he's sick from pride. If you want to make him feel better call it sadness. But I know it is pride. But why is he proud? Let him show us a reason for his pride. A word with you, my lord.

*AJAX takes AGAMEMNON aside.*

**NESTOR**

Why is Ajax so angry at Achilles?

**ULYSSES**

Achilles has taken his fool from him.

**NESTOR**

Who do you mean, Thersites?

**ULYSSES**

Yes.

**NESTOR**

Ajax probably has nothing to think about, without Thersites to argue with.

**ULYSSES**

No, the fool takes his argument from his keeper. So now Achilles has become Thersites's argument.

**NESTOR**

This is good, their division is better to us than their alliance. It must have been a strong bond <sup>11</sup> that a fool could break up.

<sup>11</sup> Nestor is being sarcastic.

**ULYSSES**

A friendship that isn't wise can be easily broken by folly. Patroclus is coming back.

*PATROCLUS re-enters.*

**NESTOR**

Without Achilles.

**ULYSSES**

The elephant has joints but no knees <sup>12</sup> to bow with, its legs are only for walking, not for showing respect.

<sup>12</sup> Believed to be true at the time.

**PATROCLUS**

Achilles asked me to say that he is very sorry if you had any serious business to come all this way to him. He hopes you only came this way as part of a leisurely walk after dinner.

**AGAMEMNON**

Listen, Patroclus, we know these responses very well. But his desire to avoid us, sent with such scorn, can't escape our notice. He has a great reputation, and it is well deserved, but all his virtues begin to seem less impressive to us if he does nothing, just as fresh fruit placed in a rotten meal won't be eaten. Go and tell him we want to speak to him, and don't be afraid to tell him we think he has grown too proud and dishonest. He thinks he is better than he is. Tell him that while he acts aloof a better man is waiting outside, a man who is pretending not to be a divine king, a man who is willingly waiting for him to get off his high horse. I am watching his sulking and pathetic self-assured demeanor. Go, and tell him these things, and say that if he thinks too much of himself we will not see him, but rather we will let him lie here like a siege engine without wheels and place a note outside his tent: "Unless the fighting comes here, this engine cannot go to war, we would rather take an active dwarf than a sleeping giant." Tell him this.



His humorous predominance; yea, watch  
 His pettish luns, his ebbs, his flows, as if  
 135 The passage and whole carriage of this action  
 Rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and add,  
 That if he overhold his price so much,  
 We'll none of him; but let him, like an engine  
 Not portable, lie under this report:  
 140 'Bring action hither, this cannot go to war:  
 A stirring dwarf we do allowance give  
 Before a sleeping giant.' Tell him so.

**PATROCLUS**

I shall; and bring his answer presently.

*Exit*

**AGAMEMNON**

145 In second voice we'll not be satisfied;  
 We come to speak with him. Ulysses, enter you.

*Exit ULYSSES*

**AJAX**

What is he more than another?

**AGAMEMNON**

No more than what he thinks he is.

**AJAX**

150 Is he so much? Do you not think he thinks himself a  
 better man than I am?

**AGAMEMNON**

No question.

**AJAX**

Will you subscribe his thought, and say he is?

**AGAMEMNON**

155 No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant, as  
 wise, no less noble, much more gentle, and altogether  
 more tractable.

**AJAX**

Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I  
 know not what pride is.

**AGAMEMNON**

160 Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your virtues the  
 fairer. He that is proud eats up himself: pride is  
 his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle;  
 and whatever praises itself but in the deed, devours  
 the deed in the praise.

**AJAX**

165 I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of  
 toads.

**NESTOR**

*[Aside]* Yet he loves himself: is't not strange?

*Re-enter ULYSSES*

**ULYSSES**

Achilles will not to the field to-morrow.

**AGAMEMNON**

What's his excuse?

**PATROCLUS**

I will, and I will tell you what he says as soon as possible.

*PATROCLUS exits.*

**AGAMEMNON**

I don't want to speak to a middle man, we will come in too.  
 Ulysses, go in.

*ULYSSES exits.*

**AJAX**

Is he better than anyone else?

**AGAMEMNON**

He thinks he is.

**AJAX**

And is he as good as he thinks he is? Do you think he thinks  
 he is better than me?

**AGAMEMNON**

Undoubtedly.

**AJAX**

Do you agree with him, and think he is better than me?

**AGAMEMNON**

No, noble Ajax, you are as strong, valiant, wise, noble, and  
 more gentle than he, and much more easily ordered to do  
 things.

**AJAX**

Why is anyone proud? Where does pride come from? I don't  
 even know what pride is.

**AGAMEMNON**

Your smarter and more virtuous for being that way, Ajax,  
 proud men tarnish themselves. Pride is like a mirror to  
 itself, its own trumpet, and its own biography. Anything that  
 honors itself except by acting well ruins the action.

**AJAX**

I hate proud men as much as I hate the reproduction of  
 toads <sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> This saying would likely have  
 been as ridiculous to a renaissance  
 audience as a modern one.

**NESTOR**

*[Aside]* Yet he is a proud man, what does that imply?

*ULYSSES re-enters.*

**ULYSSES**

Achilles will not fight tomorrow.

**AGAMEMNON**

What's his excuse?

**ULYSSES**

He doth rely on none,

- 170 But carries on the stream of his dispose  
Without observance or respect of any,  
In will peculiar and in self-admission.

**AGAMEMNON**

Why will he not upon our fair request  
Untent his person and share the air with us?

**ULYSSES**

- 175 Things small as nothing, for request's sake only,  
He makes important: possess'd he is with greatness,  
And speaks not to himself but with a pride  
That quarrels at self-breath: imagined worth  
Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse  
180 That 'twixt his mental and his active parts  
Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages  
And batters down himself: what should I say?  
He is so plaguy proud that the death-tokens of it  
Cry 'No recovery.'

**AGAMEMNON**

- 185 Let Ajax go to him.  
Dear lord, go you and greet him in his tent:  
'Tis said he holds you well, and will be led  
At your request a little from himself.

**ULYSSES**

- O Agamemnon, let it not be so!  
190 We'll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes  
When they go from Achilles: shall the proud lord  
That bastes his arrogance with his own seam  
And never suffers matter of the world  
Enter his thoughts, save such as do revolve  
195 And ruminates himself, shall he be worshipp'd  
Of that we hold an idol more than he?  
No, this thrice worthy and right valiant lord  
Must not so stale his palm, nobly acquired;  
Nor, by my will, assubjugate his merit,  
200 As amply titled as Achilles is,  
By going to Achilles:  
That were to enlarge his fat already pride  
And add more coals to Cancer when he burns  
With entertaining great Hyperion.  
205 This lord go to him! Jupiter forbid,  
And say in thunder 'Achilles go to him.'

**NESTOR**

*[Aside to DIOMEDES]* O, this is well; he rubs the  
vein of him.

**DIOMEDES**

- [Aside to NESTOR]* And how his silence drinks up  
210 this applause!

**AJAX**

If I go to him, with my armed fist I'll pash him o'er  
the face.

**AGAMEMNON**

O, no, you shall not go.

**AJAX**

- 215 An a' be proud with me, I'll pheeze his pride:  
Let me go to him.

**ULYSSES**

Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel.

**AJAX**

A paltry, insolent fellow!

**ULYSSES**

He doesn't have one, but carries on acting as he has been  
without respect for anyone else, solely on his own  
authority.

**AGAMEMNON**

Why won't he, when we have so politely asked him, leave  
his tent and talk with us?

**ULYSSES**

He pretends trivial requests are important, purely because  
they are asked of him. He is so certain of his greatness he is  
not even satisfied with his own praises of himself, his sense  
of self worth has such a grip on him that the mental  
landscape of Achilles is in a state of civil war. What else is  
there to say? He is so sickeningly proud that his symptoms  
cry out: "No recovery is possible."

**AGAMEMNON**

Let Ajax go to see him. Dear lord, go and greet him in his  
tent, it is said that he respects you, and will at your request  
be persuaded to make some small change in his behaviour.

**ULYSSES**

Oh Agamemnon, don't let that happen! We should treasure  
every step that Ajax takes away from Achilles. The proud  
lord that stewes in his arrogant pride and is incapable of  
thinking about anyone other than himself shouldn't be  
given the honor of a visit from a man we worship more than  
himself. No this very worthy and truly valiant lord must not  
have his deserved honor sullied. Nor would I want to see his  
merit, that is as great as Achilles's, treated as worse by  
making him go to Achilles. That would be like pumping up  
his already massive ego or throwing fuel into a mid-summer  
sun of pride. That Ajax should go to him? May Jupiter forbid  
it and shout down with thunder "Achilles go him!"

**NESTOR**

*[Aside to DIOMEDES]* Oh this is excellent, Ulysses is playing  
Ajax perfectly.

**DIOMEDES**

*[Aside to NESTOR]* Look at how he silently enjoys this  
applause.

**AJAX**

If I go to him, I'll smash him in the face with my armored  
fist.

**AGAMEMNON**

Oh no, you mustn't go in.

**AJAX**

If he is proud to me, I'll sort his pride out. Let me go to him.

**ULYSSES**

Not for all the honor of defeating Troy.

**AJAX**

He is a small, insolent man.

**NESTOR**

How he describes himself!

**AJAX**

Can he not be sociable?

**ULYSSES**

220 The raven chides blackness.

**AJAX**

I'll let his humours blood.

**AGAMEMNON**

He will be the physician that should be the patient.

**AJAX**

An all men were o' my mind,--

**ULYSSES**

Wit would be out of fashion.

**AJAX**

225 A' should not bear it so, a' should eat swords first:  
shall pride carry it?

**NESTOR**

An 'twould, you'd carry half.

**ULYSSES**

A' would have ten shares.

**AJAX**

I will knead him; I'll make him supple.

**NESTOR**

230 He's not yet through warm: force him with praises:  
pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry.

**ULYSSES**

[To AGAMEMNON] My lord, you feed too much on this  
dislike.

**NESTOR**

Our noble general, do not do so.

**DIOMEDES**

235 You must prepare to fight without Achilles.

**ULYSSES**

Why, 'tis this naming of him does him harm.  
Here is a man--but 'tis before his face;  
I will be silent.

**NESTOR**

240 Wherefore should you so?  
He is not emulous, as Achilles is.

**ULYSSES**

Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

**NESTOR**

[Aside] Ajax <sup>14</sup> could be describing himself!

**AJAX**

Is it so much for him to come out?

**ULYSSES**

[Aside] The pot is calling the kettle black <sup>15</sup>.

**AJAX**

I'll spill his arrogant blood <sup>16</sup>.

**AGAMEMNON**

[Aside] He should be the patient, but wants to be the  
doctor.

**AJAX**

If all men thought like me...

**ULYSSES**

[Aside] Being witty would no longer be in fashion.

**AJAX**

He should eat swords before he acts like this. Will pride be  
allowed to win <sup>17</sup>?

**NESTOR**

[Aside] If it was allowed to win it'd half be your fault.

**ULYSSES**

[Aside] He would have ten portions of pride.

**AJAX**

I will pound him like bread <sup>18</sup>, I'll make him give in.

**NESTOR**

[Aside] He's not ambitious enough yet, stuff him with more  
praise, go, go, he's not ready.

**ULYSSES**

[To AGAMEMNON] My lord you let Achilles's snubbing of you  
play too heavily on your mind.

**NESTOR**

Noble general, do not think about it.

**DIOMEDES**

You must prepare for the battle with Hector without  
Achilles.

**ULYSSES**

Saying Achilles's name is upsetting Agamemnon. Here is a  
man who could be our champion... but I should not discuss  
this whilst he is here, I will be silent.

**NESTOR**

Why shouldn't you speak of it? Ajax isn't as proud as  
Achilles is.

**ULYSSES**

But the whole world knows he is as brave.

<sup>14</sup> The Greek generals clearly do not speak in front of Ajax, and either speak to the audience or to each other.

<sup>15</sup> The original saying involves birds. Ulysses is noting that earlier Ajax refused to follow orders just as Achilles does.

<sup>16</sup> Blood-letting was a medical procedure supposed to effect people's moods or cure their sicknesses.

<sup>17</sup> Ajax uses the word 'carry' as in 'carry the day' meaning to win, which is punned on by Nestor.

<sup>18</sup> Compare with Pandarus's discussion of women.

**AJAX**

A whoreson dog, that shall pelter thus with us!  
Would he were a Trojan!

**NESTOR**

What a vice were it in Ajax now,--

**ULYSSES**

245 If he were proud,--

**DIOMEDES**

Or covetous of praise,--

**ULYSSES**

Ay, or surly borne,--

**DIOMEDES**

Or strange, or self-affected!

**ULYSSES**

250 Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure;  
Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck:  
Famed be thy tutor, and thy parts of nature  
Thrice famed, beyond all erudition:  
But he that disciplined thy arms to fight,  
Let Mars divide eternity in twain,  
255 And give him half: and, for thy vigour,  
Bull-bearing Milo his addition yield  
To sinewy Ajax. I will not praise thy wisdom,  
Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines  
Thy spacious and dilated parts: here's Nestor;  
260 Instructed by the antiquary times,  
He must, he is, he cannot but be wise:  
Put pardon, father Nestor, were your days  
As green as Ajax' and your brain so temper'd,  
You should not have the eminence of him,  
265 But be as Ajax.

**AJAX**

Shall I call you father?

**NESTOR**

Ay, my good son.

**DIOMEDES**

Be ruled by him, Lord Ajax.

**ULYSSES**

270 There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles  
Keeps thicket. Please it our great general  
To call together all his state of war;  
Fresh kings are come to Troy: to-morrow  
We must with all our main of power stand fast:  
And here's a lord,--come knights from east to west,  
275 And cull their flower, Ajax shall cope the best.

**AGAMEMNON**

Go we to council. Let Achilles sleep:  
Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep.

*Exeunt*

**AJAX**

That son of a bitch, how dare he swindle us like this? I wish  
he were a Trojan.

**NESTOR**

How terrible would it be if Ajax now...

**ULYSSES**

If he were proud...

**DIOMEDES**

Or sought after praise...

**ULYSSES**

Yes, or if he was aloof...

**DIOMEDES**

Or refused to be sociable.

**ULYSSES**

Thank heavens, lord Ajax, that you are such a great man,  
and may the gods bless your father and mother! Your  
education must have been magnificent, but no education  
could teach you to be as great as you naturally are. The man  
who taught you to fight should be blessed by Mars <sup>19</sup>, even  
the mighty athlete Milo <sup>20</sup> seems weak next to Ajax. I  
cannot praise the wisdom which disciplines <sup>21</sup> your body,  
but might compare it to Nestor, who is so old that must be  
wise. I'm sorry father <sup>22</sup> Nestor, but I think if you were as  
young as Ajax, your natural wit would not exceed his, but  
would be its equal.

<sup>19</sup> The God of War.

<sup>20</sup> Milo was a Greek athlete who famously competed whilst carrying a bull.

<sup>21</sup> The original text here could be said to subtly imply that Ajax is limited by his intelligence, rather than his strength kept in check by it.

<sup>22</sup> 'Father' is not used literally, but as a sign of respect.

**AJAX**

Will you be my father and mentor?

**NESTOR**

Yes, my good son <sup>23</sup>.

**DIOMEDES**

Follow his directions, lord Ajax.

**ULYSSES**

We shouldn't wait around here, the unsociable Achilles  
won't come into the open. If it pleases our great general we  
should call together the war council as more Greek kings  
have arrived to help us. Tomorrow morning we should  
assemble the men on the field of battle. Even if all of the  
knights in the world came here, and we had our choice of  
them all, Ajax will perform best.

**AGAMEMNON**

Let's go to the council. Let Achilles sleep, he will only weigh  
us down <sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Again, son is not being used literally, instead showing that Nestor is willing (or pretends to be willing) to teach Ajax and develop his 'natural' talents.

<sup>24</sup> In the original Achilles is seen as unnecessary cargo that stops a ship from sailing quickly.

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 1

Enter a Servant and PANDARUS

**PANDARUS**

Friend, you! pray you, a word: do not you follow the young Lord Paris?

**SERVANT**

Ay, sir, when he goes before me.

**PANDARUS**

You depend upon him, I mean?

**SERVANT**

5 Sir, I do depend upon the lord.

**PANDARUS**

You depend upon a noble gentleman; I must needs praise him.

**SERVANT**

The lord be praised!

**PANDARUS**

You know me, do you not?

**SERVANT**

10 Faith, sir, superficially.

**PANDARUS**

Friend, know me better; I am the Lord Pandarus.

**SERVANT**

I hope I shall know your honour better.

**PANDARUS**

I do desire it.

**SERVANT**

You are in the state of grace.

**PANDARUS**

15 Grace! not so, friend: honour and lordship are my titles.

*Music within*

**PANDARUS**

What music is this?

**SERVANT**

20 I do but partly know, sir: it is music in parts.

**PANDARUS**

Know you the musicians?

**SERVANT**

Wholly, sir.

PANDARUS and a SERVANT enter.

**PANDARUS**

You there, friend! I wish to speak with you, aren't you follower <sup>1</sup> of the young lord Paris?

<sup>1</sup> This means that he is Paris's servant.

**SERVANT**

Yes, sir, I follow him when he walks in front of me <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The servant twists Pandarus's term 'follow' (meaning serve) to mean literally walk behind.

**PANDARUS**

He provides your livelihood, I mean?

**SERVANT**

Sir, I am provided for by the lord <sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> The lord here could be a reference to either Paris or God/the gods. The servant is deliberately back-chatting Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

You are provided for by a noble gentleman, who deserves praise.

**SERVANT**

The lord <sup>4</sup> be praised.

<sup>4</sup> Again, the servant could mean Paris, God, or the gods.

**PANDARUS**

You know who I am, right?

**SERVANT**

Honestly, sir, only vaguely.

**PANDARUS**

Friend, we should know each other better. I am the lord Pandarus.

**SERVANT**

I hope we can be better friends <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> There is a second meaning here that continues the religious imagery: 'I hope that I will one day hear that you are a better Christian/Pagan, honorable gentleman.'

**PANDARUS**

I hope so.

**SERVANT**

Are you in a state of grace <sup>6</sup>?

<sup>6</sup> Either: 'Are you a Duke?' or 'Are you trying to improve your spirituality?'

**PANDARUS**

A grace <sup>7</sup>? No, friend, I am called 'your honor' and am only a lord.

<sup>7</sup> A duke?

*Music comes from off-stage.*

**PANDARUS**

What is this music?

**SERVANT**

I only partly know, sir, but the music has many parts <sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> The servant continues to make musical jokes in order to play with Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

Do you know the musicians?

**SERVANT**

Yes, sir.

**PANDARUS**

Who play they to?

**SERVANT**

To the hearers, sir.

**PANDARUS**

25 At whose pleasure, friend

**SERVANT**

At mine, sir, and theirs that love music.

**PANDARUS**

Command, I mean, friend.

**SERVANT**

Who shall I command, sir?

**PANDARUS**

30 Friend, we understand not one another: I am too courtly and thou art too cunning. At whose request do these men play?

**SERVANT**

35 That's to 't indeed, sir: marry, sir, at the request of Paris my lord, who's there in person; with him, the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's invisible soul,--

**PANDARUS**

Who, my cousin Cressida?

**SERVANT**

No, sir, Helen: could you not find out that by her attributes?

**PANDARUS**

40 It should seem, fellow, that thou hast not seen the Lady Cressida. I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus: I will make a complimentary assault upon him, for my business seethes.

**SERVANT**

Sodden business! there's a stewed phrase indeed!

*Enter PARIS and HELEN, attended*

**PANDARUS**

45 Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them! especially to you, fair queen! fair thoughts be your fair pillow!

**HELEN**

Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

**PANDARUS**

50 You speak your fair pleasure, sweet queen. Fair prince, here is good broken music.

**PANDARUS**

Who are they playing for?

**SERVANT**

They are playing to the people that are listening, sir.

**PANDARUS**

For whose pleasure, friend?

**SERVANT**

Well it pleases me, sir, and anyone else that loves music.

**PANDARUS**

Not "pleasure," I meant "command," friend.

**SERVANT**

Who will I command, sir?

**PANDARUS**

Friend, this conversation isn't working, my language is too courtly<sup>9</sup> and you are too quick-witted. Who has asked these people to play?

<sup>9</sup> People, like lords, who attended the court would speak with a very respectable and educated vocabulary. However, the servant has been deliberately misinterpreting Pandarus, which Pandarus realizes.

**SERVANT**

That's it, sir. To tell you the truth, sir, they play because Paris asked them to. He's there listening to them now. With him, the human Venus<sup>10</sup>, the real expression of ideal beauty, love itself...

<sup>10</sup> Venus was the Goddess of Beauty, but the servant means Helen.

**PANDARUS**

You mean my cousin Cressida?

**SERVANT**

No, sir, I mean Helen. Could you not tell by my description?

**PANDARUS**

You've clearly not seen Lady Cressida, man<sup>11</sup>. I am here to speak with Paris on behalf of Prince Troilus, I will go on a charm offensive<sup>12</sup> as my business with him is boiling hot<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> "Fellow" would be a slightly insulting way of addressing the servant, pointing out that the servant is of a lower class to Pandarus.

<sup>12</sup> Pandarus is saying he will flatter Paris. In the original Pandarus makes courtly flattery sound like the process of waging war.

<sup>13</sup> Pandarus uses a very complicated metaphor to suggest "I will flatter him because I want him to agree with me on something important," the servant's response shows that he feels Pandarus is trying too hard.

**SERVANT**

Is your business wet? Your language itself is over-cooked.

*PARIS and HELEN enter with people attending them.*

**PANDARUS**

I hope you and your companions are all well, my lord! I hope you are not troubled by your thoughts, especially you beautiful queen, may you rest easily.

**HELEN**

Good sir, you speak very kindly<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Helen notes that Pandarus used the term 'fair' eight times.

**PANDARUS**

You speak well, sweet queen. Sweet prince, I like the pieces<sup>15</sup> of this music.

<sup>15</sup> The music is "broken" as it is being played by many different people.

**PARIS**

55 You have broke it, cousin: and, by my life, you shall make it whole again; you shall piece it out with a piece of your performance. Nell, he is full of harmony.

**PANDARUS**

Truly, lady, no.

**HELEN**

O, sir,--

**PANDARUS**

Rude, in sooth; in good sooth, very rude.

**PARIS**

Well said, my lord! well, you say so in fits.

**PANDARUS**

60 I have business to my lord, dear queen. My lord, will you vouchsafe me a word?

**HELEN**

Nay, this shall not hedge us out: we'll hear you sing, certainly.

**PANDARUS**

65 Well, sweet queen. you are pleasant with me. But, marry, thus, my lord: my dear lord and most esteemed friend, your brother Troilus,--

**HELEN**

My Lord Pandarus; honey-sweet lord,--

**PANDARUS**

Go to, sweet queen, to go:--commends himself most affectionately to you,--

**HELEN**

70 You shall not bob us out of our melody: if you do, our melancholy upon your head!

**PANDARUS**

Sweet queen, sweet queen! that's a sweet queen, i' faith.

**HELEN**

And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence.

**PANDARUS**

75 Nay, that shall not serve your turn; that shall not, in truth, la. Nay, I care not for such words; no, no. And, my lord, he desires you, that if the king call for him at supper, you will make his excuse.

**HELEN**

My Lord Pandarus,--

**PANDARUS**

80 What says my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

**PARIS**

What exploit's in hand? where sups he to-night?

**HELEN**

Nay, but, my lord,--

**PARIS**

Well it is in pieces, cousin, now that you have broken it up. I swear it shall be up to you to make it whole again with a piece of performance of your own. My love, he is full of sweet sounds <sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Both music and flattery.

**PANDARUS**

Honestly, my lady, I'm not.

**HELEN**

Oh, but sir do sing for us...

**PANDARUS**

Honestly, I am a very bad singer.

**PARIS**

You speak well, my lord, speaking with such a rhythm.

**PANDARUS**

I have business with Paris, dear queen. My lord could I have a word with you?

**HELEN**

No, you won't come between us in this way. You owe me <sup>17</sup> a song for sure!

<sup>17</sup> Helen is using the "royal we," referring to herself in the third person.

**PANDARUS**

Sweet queen, you are trying to wind me up aren't you? But listen to this, lord Paris, your brother Troilus, my lord and most esteemed friend...

**HELEN**

My lord Pandarus, sweet <sup>18</sup> lord...

<sup>18</sup> Helen is implying that Pandarus is both dear to her and a flatterer.

**PANDARUS**

Please, sweet queen, shhh <sup>19</sup> ... (Troilus) wanted you to know that he is very fond of you (Paris)...

<sup>19</sup> "Go to" is a mild expression of exasperation that can range between "please be quiet" and "shut up."

**HELEN**

You won't cheat me out of a song. If you do I shan't forgive you!

**PANDARUS**

Sweet queen, sweet queen! Please don't be upset with me, I beg you.

**HELEN**

To upset a sweet lady is a sour <sup>20</sup> offense.

<sup>20</sup> Sour puns off sweet which Pandarus has used often to describe Helen, a sour offence would be one that is bad or ugly.

**PANDARUS**

No, that won't work, it really won't. No, I don't care for such words, no and no. Anyway, Troilus wants you to excuse him if the king asks to see him at supper, and asks that you would give an excuse for him.

**HELEN**

My lord Pandarus...

**PANDARUS**

What is it my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

**PARIS**

What is he up to, where will he be eating tonight?

**HELEN**

No, my lord listen to me...

**PANDARUS**

What says my sweet queen? My cousin will fall out with you. You must not know where he sups.

**PARIS**

85 I'll lay my life, with my disposer Cressida.

**PANDARUS**

No, no, no such matter; you are wide: come, your disposer is sick.

**PARIS**

Well, I'll make excuse.

**PANDARUS**

90 Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cressida? no, your poor disposer's sick.

**PARIS**

I spy.

**PANDARUS**

You spy! what do you spy? Come, give me an instrument. Now, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Why, this is kindly done.

**PANDARUS**

95 My niece is horribly in love with a thing you have, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

She shall have it, my lord, if it be not my lord Paris.

**PANDARUS**

He! no, she'll none of him; they two are twain.

**HELEN**

Falling in, after falling out, may make them three.

**PANDARUS**

100 Come, come, I'll hear no more of this; I'll sing you a song now.

**HELEN**

Ay, ay, prithee now. By my troth, sweet lord, thou hast a fine forehead.

**PANDARUS**

Ay, you may, you may.

**PANDARUS**

What is it sweet queen? My cousin <sup>21</sup> will fall out with you. I cannot say where he will be eating.

**PARIS**

I'll bet my life Cressida's stolen him away from my company.

**PANDARUS**

No, no, nothing of the sort, you couldn't be further from the truth. Be reasonable, anyway Cressida <sup>22</sup> is unwell.

**PARIS**

Sure, I'll make an excuse for him.

**PANDARUS**

Ah, thank you my lord. Why did you think it was Cressida? It couldn't be her, because she's ill.

**PARIS**

I spy <sup>23</sup> ...

**PANDARUS**

You spy! What do you spy? <sup>24</sup> Quickly, give me an instrument. Now I will play, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Oh, suddenly you are very keen to play.

**PANDARUS**

My niece is jealous of you <sup>25</sup>, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Whatever she wants I am sure she'll have it, so long as it isn't Paris.

**PANDARUS**

Ah she doesn't want anything to do with him, those two are so different.

**HELEN**

They could still fall in love and fall out again, such falling in and out could make the two of them into three of them <sup>26</sup>.

**PANDARUS**

Oh be civil, I'll hear no more of this. I'll sing a song for you now.

**HELEN**

Yes, yes, play now. Honestly, sweet lord, you do look so handsome and smart.

**PANDARUS**

Yes, you may treat me <sup>27</sup> like that.

<sup>21</sup> Pandarus is suggesting Paris would get angry at Helen for paying a man so much attention.

<sup>22</sup> Pandarus calls Cressida "your disposer," thus confirming Paris's suspicion that she is taking his brother away from him.

<sup>23</sup> Paris references the children's game (I spy with my little eye), it has presumably become obvious in the court that Troilus and Cressida are forming a relationship.

<sup>24</sup> Pandarus could either be worried that Paris knows what is happening, could be pretending to be naive, or could be subtly acknowledging that Paris is right.

<sup>25</sup> There are sexual connotations here, Cressida is jealous that Helen is in a relationship.

<sup>26</sup> Helen reiterates a proverb about couples falling in and out of love, and jokes that even if they weren't well suited Paris could still get Cressida pregnant.

<sup>27</sup> It is unclear if Pandarus is encouraging Helen's flirtatious praise or noticing that she is mocking him when she praises the fineness of his forehead.



**HELEN**

105 Let thy song be love: this love will undo us all.  
O Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!

**PANDARUS**

Love! ay, that it shall, i' faith.

**PARIS**

Ay, good now, love, love, nothing but love.

**PANDARUS**

In good troth, it begins so.

110

*Sings*

**PANDARUS**

Love, love, nothing but love, still more!  
For, O, love's bow  
Shoots buck and doe:  
The shaft confounds,  
115 Not that it wounds,  
But tickles still the sore.  
These lovers cry Oh! oh! they die!  
Yet that which seems the wound to kill,  
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!  
120 So dying love lives still:  
Oh! oh! a while, but ha! ha! ha!  
Oh! oh! groans out for ha! ha! ha!  
Heigh-ho!

**HELEN**

In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose.

**PARIS**

125 He eats nothing but doves, love, and that breeds hot  
blood. Hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot  
thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love.

**PANDARUS**

130 Is this the generation of love? hot blood, hot  
thoughts, and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers:  
is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's  
a-field to-day?

**PARIS**

135 Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the  
gallantry of Troy: I would fain have armed to-day,  
but my Nell would not have it so. How chance my  
brother Troilus went not?

**HELEN**

He hangs the lip at something: you know all, Lord  
Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

Not I, honey-sweet queen. I long to hear how they  
sped to-day. You'll remember your brother's excuse?

**PARIS**

140 To a hair.

**PANDARUS**

Farewell, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Commend me to your niece.

**PANDARUS**

I will, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Sing a love song. Love will be the ruin of us all. Oh, Cupid,  
Cupid, Cupid.

**PANDARUS**

Ah, yes. [It will be about love.](#) <sup>28</sup>

**PARIS**

Ah wonderful, sing about nothing but love, love, love.

**PANDARUS**

Truly I will, and now I begin.

*PANDARUS sings.*

**PANDARUS**

Love, love, nothing but love, even now!  
Because, oh, love's bow  
Shoots buck and doe <sup>29</sup>.  
The arrow <sup>30</sup> confuses,  
But doesn't hurt,  
It tickles the wound.  
The lovers cry "Oh! Oh! I am dying <sup>31</sup>!"  
But the arrow that seems to pierce the wound <sup>32</sup>,  
Turns moaning into laughter,  
Letting the dying lovers live on:  
At first they moan, then they laugh,  
And those that moan long to laugh.  
So it is!

**HELEN**

This is love alright, summed up perfectly.

**PARIS**

Love eats nothing but doves, and that causes a hotness in  
the blood. Hot blood leads to passionate thoughts.  
Passionate thoughts cause lustful actions. And lustful  
actions are love.

**PANDARUS**

Is this really where love comes from? Hot blood, heated  
thoughts, and lustful actions? These things sound like a can  
of worms. Is love a can of worms? Sweet lord, who is out on  
the battlefield today?

**PARIS**

Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the knights of  
Troy. I was eager to go out today, but my sweetheart  
wouldn't let me. How come my brother Troilus didn't go  
out?

**HELEN**

He's keeping tight-lipped, I'm sure you know why, Lord  
Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

I don't, sweet queen. I wonder how the battle has gone  
today. Remember to excuse Troilus from dinner?

**PARIS**

I will excuse his whole body.

**PANDARUS**

Goodbye, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Say hello to your niece for me.

**PANDARUS**

I will, sweet queen.

<sup>28</sup> It is unclear if Pandarus is saying that love will be their ruin or that love will be the subject of the song, or both.

<sup>29</sup> Male and female deer.

<sup>30</sup> An innuendo.

<sup>31</sup> An innuendo.

<sup>32</sup> An innuendo.

*Exit**A retreat sounded***PARIS**

145 They're come from field: let us to Priam's hall,  
To greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must woo you  
To help unarm our Hector: his stubborn buckles,  
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,  
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel  
150 Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more  
Than all the island kings,--disarm great Hector.

**HELEN**

'Twill make us proud to be his servant, Paris;  
Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty  
Gives us more palm in beauty than we have,  
155 Yea, overshines ourself.

**PARIS**

Sweet, above thought I love thee.

*Exeunt**PANDARUS exits.**The signal for retreat is given.***PARIS**

They are leaving the battlefield. Let's go to Priam's hall to greet the soldiers. Sweet Helen, would you mind helping Hector out of his armor, your delicate white hands will open the buckles on his armor more easily than any weapon or Greek would. Go do something no Greek king has done, disarm great Hector.

**HELEN**

I'd be glad to help him, Paris. Doing him this service will enhance my beauty. Yes the act of service will outshine my beautiful self.

**PARIS**

Sweetheart, I love you more than I can say.

*They exit.*

## Act 3, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter PANDARUS and Troilus's Boy, meeting***PANDARUS**

How now! where's thy master? at my cousin Cressida's?

**BOY**

No, sir; he stays for you to conduct him thither.

**PANDARUS**

O, here he comes.

5

*Enter TROILUS***PANDARUS**

How now, how now!

**TROILUS**

Sirrah, walk off.

*Exit Boy***PANDARUS**

10 Have you seen my cousin?

**TROILUS**

No, Pandarus: I stalk about her door,  
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks  
Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,  
And give me swift transportance to those fields  
15 Where I may wallow in the lily-beds  
Proposed for the deserter! O gentle Pandarus,  
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings  
And fly with me to Cressid!

**PANDARUS**

20 Walk here i' the orchard, I'll bring her straight.

*Exit*

### Shakescleare Translation

*PANDARUS and TROILUS'S BOY enter and see each other.***PANDARUS**

Hey! Where's your master? Is he at my cousin Cressida's house?

**BOY**

No sir, he is waiting for you to take him there.

**PANDARUS**

Oh, here he comes.

*TROILUS enters.***PANDARUS**

Hi, how's it going?


**TROILUS**

Servant, you may leave.

*TROILUS'S BOY exits.***PANDARUS**

Have you seen my cousin?


**TROILUS**

No, Pandarus. I wait outside her door like a lost soul waiting to be taken across the river Styx. Oh, be my Charon , and take me to the paradise where deserving people lie on beds of lilies. Oh gentle Pandarus, carry me like Cupid to Cressida!

**PANDARUS**

Wait here in this orchard, I'll bring her over soon.

*PANDARUS exits.*

 Charon was the boatman who took the souls of the dead across the mythical river Styx into the ancient Greek afterlife. The Greeks believed in different afterlives, one of which was very heaven-like and consisted of flowers, gentle hills, and pleasant rivers. The 'lily-beds' refer not only to the flowers in paradise, but to Cressida's bed.

**TROILUS**

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.  
The imaginary relish is so sweet  
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,  
When that the watery palate tastes indeed  
25 Love's thrice repured nectar? death, I fear me,  
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,  
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,  
For the capacity of my ruder powers:  
I fear it much; and I do fear besides,  
30 That I shall lose distinction in my joys;  
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps  
The enemy flying.

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

She's making her ready, she'll come straight: you  
must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches  
35 her wind so short, as if she were frayed with a  
sprite: I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest  
villain: she fetches her breath as short as a  
new-ta'en sparrow.

*Exit*

**TROILUS**

Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom:  
40 My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse;  
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,  
Like vassalage at unawares encountering  
The eye of majesty.

*Re-enter PANDARUS with CRESSIDA*

**PANDARUS**

Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a baby.  
45 Here she is now: swear the oaths now to her that  
you have sworn to me. What, are you gone again?  
you must be watched ere you be made tame, must you?  
Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward,  
we'll put you i' the fills. Why do you not speak to  
50 her? Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your  
picture. Alas the day, how loath you are to offend  
daylight! an 'twere dark, you'd close sooner.  
So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now!  
a kiss in fee-farm! build there, carpenter; the air  
55 is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere  
I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the  
ducks i' the river: go to, go to.

**TROILUS**

You have bereft me of all words, lady.

**PANDARUS**

Words pay no debts, give her deeds: but she'll  
60 bereave you o' the deeds too, if she call your  
activity in question. What, billing again? Here's  
'In witness whereof the parties interchangeably'--  
Come in, come in: I'll go get a fire.

*Exit*

**CRESSIDA**

Will you walk in, my lord?

**TROILUS**

65 O Cressida, how often have I wished me thus!

**CRESSIDA**

Wished, my lord! The gods grant,--O my lord!

**TROILUS**

I am giddy, and dizzy with excitement. Thoughts of her  
enchant my senses. What is it going to be like to taste love? I  
fear it would kill me or knock me out, or that some great  
joy, whose strength and sweetness I couldn't handle, would  
overpower me. I worry that all the things that make me  
happy will become totally indistinguishable, like a heap of  
bodies in a battle.

*PANDARUS re-enters.*

**PANDARUS**

She's getting ready, she will soon come here, so pull  
yourself together. She's flustered and blushing and doesn't  
know how to feel, I'll bring her out. She's a pretty sight, she  
is short of breath, like a bird that has just been caught.

*PANDARUS exits.*

**TROILUS**

I feel the same. My heart is beating like a drum, and I can  
barely contain myself, I feel so unprepared.

*PANDARUS re-enters with CRESSIDA wearing a veil.*

**PANDARUS**

Hey now, why are you blushing? Shame is for children. *[To Troilus]* Here she is, tell her all those feelings you told me. *[Cressida moves away]* What's this, are you going away? Do I have to guard over you while you're tamed <sup>2</sup>? Come along, come along, if you try and run off, I'll have to hold you still. *[To Troilus]* Why aren't you saying anything? Come, let's take off this veil and see your face. *[PANDARUS unveils CRESSIDA]* Oh my, you shouldn't hide your face from the sun, I'm sure you'd be more open in the dark <sup>3</sup>. Go on, go on, start the game, kiss her <sup>4</sup>. *[TROILUS and CRESSIDA kiss]* Woah there, a kiss without an end. This is going well and love is in the air. You'll soon be a couple. She is as keen as he is <sup>5</sup>, go on, go on.

<sup>2</sup> Pandarus uses imagery common to training hawks.

<sup>3</sup> An innuendo.

<sup>4</sup> As well as being a simple suggestion, this phrase carries both erotic meaning and imagery from bowling.

<sup>5</sup> Another hawking reference.

**TROILUS**

You've left me speechless, lady.

**PANDARUS**

Actions speak louder than words, and she'll have your actions too, given half a chance. *[TROILUS and CRESSIDA kiss]* Hah, kissing <sup>6</sup> again? The debate seems to be going well with both sides in agreement... come on in, I'll get a fire going.

<sup>6</sup> 'billing' refers to the bills of ducks, continuing the hawking and ducking metaphors from earlier.

*PANDARUS exits.*

**CRESSIDA**

Will you go inside, my lord?

**TROILUS**

Oh Cressida, I have so often wished you would call me that!

**CRESSIDA**

You have, my lord? Well may the gods grant... oh my lord! <sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cressida would probably move away at this point, doubting that she is doing the right thing.

**TROILUS**

What should they grant? what makes this pretty  
abruption? What too curious dreg espies my sweet  
lady in the fountain of our love?

**CRESSIDA**

70 More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

**TROILUS**

Fears make devils of cherubims; they never see truly.

**CRESSIDA**

Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer  
footing than blind reason stumbling without fear: to  
fear the worst oft cures the worse.

**TROILUS**

75 O, let my lady apprehend no fear: in all Cupid's  
pageant there is presented no monster.

**CRESSIDA**

Nor nothing monstrous neither?

**TROILUS**

80 Nothing, but our undertakings; when we vow to weep  
seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers; thinking  
it harder for our mistress to devise imposition  
enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed.  
This is the monstrosity in love, lady, that the will  
is infinite and the execution confined, that the  
desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit.

**CRESSIDA**

85 They say all lovers swear more performance than they  
are able and yet reserve an ability that they never  
perform, vowing more than the perfection often and  
discharging less than the tenth part of one. They  
that have the voice of lions and the act of hares,  
90 are they not monsters?

**TROILUS**

Are there such? such are not we: praise us as we  
are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go  
bare till merit crown it: no perfection in reversion  
shall have a praise in present: we will not name  
95 desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition  
shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus  
shall be such to Cressida as what envy can say worst  
shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can  
speak truest not truer than Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

100 Will you walk in, my lord?

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

What, blushing still? have you not done talking yet?

**CRESSIDA**

Well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you.

**PANDARUS**


105 I thank you for that: if my lord get a boy of you,  
you'll give him me. Be true to my lord: if he  
flinch, chide me for it.

**TROILUS**

You know now your hostages; your uncle's word and my  
firm faith.

**TROILUS?**

What have the gods done? Why do you suddenly seem so  
startled? Is there something wrong with the fountain of our  
love?

 Troilus compares their love to a fountain, with Cressida's fear being an impurity or unpleasant object in the water.

**CRESSIDA**

There's more dirt than water, if my fears are correct.

**TROILUS**


Fear makes good things seem bad, it hides the truth.

**CRESSIDA**

Blind fear, following reason, takes a safer path than blind  
reason stumbling ahead without fear. Expecting the worst  
often prevents it from happening.

**TROILUS**

Oh, don't worry my lady. In Cupid's pageant there are no  
monsters.

 In Greek mythology the cherub Cupid is the embodiment of erotic love.

**CRESSIDA**

Not only no monsters, but nothing monstrous at all?

**TROILUS**

Nothing is monstrous except for our promises: when we  
claim that we could weep seas, live in fire, eat rocks or tame  
tigers, because we assume that it would be more difficult  
for our mistresses to ask something that we would not do.  
This is the thing that is monstrous about love, my lady, that  
our will-power is greater than our abilities. Our desire is  
great but our abilities are limited.

**CRESSIDA**

They say that all lovers promise more than they can do but  
don't do everything that they can, promising ten times  
what they can do and doing only a tenth of it. Isn't it  
monstrous that they can speak like lions but only act like  
hares?

**TROILUS**

Do such people exist? We are not like that. Speak of us as  
you find us, let us prove ourselves. We won't congratulate  
ourselves until we deserve it. Nor will we promise things  
that will happen in the future, but only look to the here and  
now. We won't claim a virtue before it is demonstrated, and  
when it has been we will admit it humbly. A few words are  
enough to swear loyalty. Troilus will be so true to Cressida  
that Envy itself will not be able to mock him, except for  
being true. Troilus will be as true as Truth itself.

**CRESSIDA**

Will you go inside, my lord?

PANDARUS re-enters.

**PANDARUS**


You're still blushing? Have you not finished talking?

**CRESSIDA**

Uncle, if I talk too much I must have learnt that from you.

**PANDARUS**

110 Thank you for the offer! If you do become pregnant by  
Troilus, you can "dedicate" it to me. Stay faithful to  
Troilus. If he pulls away from you, blame me for it.

 Pandarus deflects Cressida's mockery.

**TROILUS**

Well now you have two hostages: your uncle's promise and  
my oath of loyalty.

**PANDARUS**

110 Nay, I'll give my word for her too: our kindred,  
though they be long ere they are wooed, they are  
constant being won: they are burs, I can tell you;  
they'll stick where they are thrown.

**CRESSIDA**

115 Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart.  
Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day  
For many weary months.

**TROILUS**

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

**CRESSIDA**

120 Hard to seem won: but I was won, my lord,  
With the first glance that ever--pardon me--  
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.  
I love you now; but not, till now, so much  
But I might master it: in faith, I lie;  
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown  
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!  
Why have I blabb'd? who shall be true to us,  
125 When we are so unsecret to ourselves?  
But, though I loved you well, I woo'd you not;  
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,  
Or that we women had men's privilege  
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,  
130 For in this rapture I shall surely speak  
The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,  
Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws  
My very soul of counsel! stop my mouth.

**TROILUS**

And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.

**PANDARUS**

135 Pretty, i' faith.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, I do beseech you, pardon me;  
'Twas not my purpose, thus to beg a kiss:  
I am ashamed. O heavens! what have I done?  
For this time will I take my leave, my lord.

**TROILUS**

140 Your leave, sweet Cressid!

**PANDARUS**

Leave! an you take leave till to-morrow morning,--

**CRESSIDA**

Pray you, content you.

**TROILUS**

What offends you, lady?

**CRESSIDA**

Sir, mine own company.

**TROILUS**

145 You cannot shun yourself.

**CRESSIDA**

Let me go and try:  
I have a kind of self resides with you;  
But an unkind self, that itself will leave,  
To be another's fool. I would be gone:  
150 Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.

**PANDARUS**

No, I'll vouch for her to you as well. Members of my family,  
although they take a lot of time to be seduced, are faithful  
when they are won. Like a dart they stick where they land, I  
swear.

**CRESSIDA**

I feel bold and confident now. Prince Troilus, I have loved  
you desperately for many long months.

**TROILUS**

Why were you so hard to win over then?

**CRESSIDA**

Hard to be won over only in appearance. I was won, my  
lord, by the first glance that I ever ... I'm sorry. If I say too  
much you'll be able to take advantage of me. I love you  
now. But before now I loved you and was able to control it.  
Oh, that's not true, my thoughts about you were like  
naughty children that had become too confident to obey  
their mother. Oh we are such idiots! Why have I spoken  
so openly? Who would be honest to someone who is so bad  
at keeping their own secrets? Even though I loved you, I  
didn't pursue you. But I did wish that I were a man, or that  
women had the male privilege of being able to approach  
the men that they liked. Sweetheart, tell me to be quiet,  
because in this elated state of mind I will say something I'll  
regret. Oh you aren't saying anything, it is a trick to make  
me talk so that in my weakness I give up all of my  
judgment. Kiss me to stop me talking!

**TROILUS**

As you wish. *[He kisses her]*

**PANDARUS**

How cute.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to seem like I was  
begging for a kiss. Oh I am ashamed of myself. Oh  
heavens! What have I done? I think I should leave for now,  
my lord.

**TROILUS**

You have to leave, sweet Cressida?

**PANDARUS**

Leave? If you go anywhere before tomorrow morning...

**CRESSIDA**

Please, don't argue.

**TROILUS**

What is upsetting you, lady?

**CRESSIDA**


My own behavior, sir.


**TROILUS**


You can't leave yourself.

**CRESSIDA**

Let me try to. I have a kind of self that lives with you, and an  
unnatural self that will betray itself and become someone  
else's fool. I want to leave. Where has my mind gone? I don't  
know what I'm saying.

 She may be speaking for all women.

 Courting was seen as a male role, it was up to the man to begin a relationship with a woman.

 By giving in to her desire for Troilus, Cressida is worried that she is acting in an unladylike manner.

**TROILUS**

Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

**CRESSIDA**

Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love;  
And fell so roundly to a large confession,  
To angle for your thoughts: but you are wise,  
155 Or else you love not, for to be wise and love  
Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.

**TROILUS**

O that I thought it could be in a woman--  
As, if it can, I will presume in you--  
To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love;  
160 To keep her constancy in plight and youth,  
Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind  
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!  
Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,  
That my integrity and truth to you  
165 Might be affronted with the match and weight  
Of such a winnow'd purity in love;  
How were I then uplifted! but, alas!  
I am as true as truth's simplicity  
And simpler than the infancy of truth.

**CRESSIDA**

170 In that I'll war with you.

**TROILUS**

O virtuous fight,  
When right with right wars who shall be most right!  
True swains in love shall in the world to come  
Approve their truths by Troilus: when their rhymes,  
175 Full of protest, of oath and big compare,  
Want similes, truth tired with iteration,  
As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,  
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,  
As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre,  
180 Yet, after all comparisons of truth,  
As truth's authentic author to be cited,  
'As true as Troilus' shall crown up the verse,  
And sanctify the numbers.

**CRESSIDA**

Prophet may you be!  
185 If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,  
When time is old and hath forgot itself,  
When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,  
And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,  
And mighty states characterless are grated  
190 To dusty nothing, yet let memory,  
From false to false, among false maids in love,  
Upbraid my falsehood! when they've said 'as false  
As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,  
As fox to lamb, as wolf to heifer's calf,  
195 Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son,'  
'Yea,' let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,  
'As false as Cressid.'

**PANDARUS**

Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it; I'll be the  
witness. Here I hold your hand, here my cousin's.  
200 If ever you prove false one to another, since I have  
taken such pains to bring you together, let all  
pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end  
after my name; call them all Pandars; let all  
constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids,  
205 and all brokers-between Pandars! say, amen.

**TROILUS**

Amen.

**TROILUS**

No one speaks as well as you without knowing what they  
are saying.

**CRESSIDA**

Maybe I am just pretending to be in love, my lord. And faked  
my confession of love to lower your guard. But I couldn't  
fool you, or you can't truly love me, because to be wise and  
in love at the same time is more than a man is capable of.  
Only the gods can do that.

**TROILUS**

If I believed that a woman could keep her love burning  
forever, and to remain faithful, and to maintain a clear mind  
after the end of her beauty, then I would believe that you  
were capable of it. Or if I could be convinced that my own  
integrity and truth could be matched with another equal to  
it, I would be overjoyed! But alas, I am as true as truth, and I  
am more straightforward than truth in its own infancy.

**CRESSIDA**

I'd argue against that.

**TROILUS**

Well it would be a virtuous argument, when one truthful  
person argues with another about who is most true. In the  
future when young men want to prove their honesty they  
will call themselves Troilus. When they write poems about  
love, full of claims, promises and grand comparisons, and  
run out of imagery after using every trick in the book they  
will say at last that they are "as true as Troilus," a phrase  
that will prove their love.

**CRESSIDA**

I hope that you will be shown to be a prophet! <sup>14</sup> If I am  
unfaithful, or in any way stray from loyalty, I hope that  
future generations, when the rain has worn away the stones  
of Troy, and entire cities have been forgotten, and whole  
states disappear into nothing, still use my name for those  
women who are unfaithful in love! When they've said "as  
false as air, as water, the wind, or the sandy earth, as false  
a fox is to a lamb, or as a wolf is to a cow, or hunter to a deer,  
or step mother to her son," at that point let them get right  
to the heart of falseness and say they are "as false as  
Cressida."

**PANDARUS**

Go for it, that sounds like a deal. Seal the deal, and I will be  
your witness. [PANDARUS holds the hand of TROILUS and  
CRESSIDA] Now I am holding your hand, and yours. If you  
are ever unfaithful to each other, let all go-betweenes be  
forever called by my name. Call them Pandars. Let all  
faithful men be called Troilus, all unfaithful women be  
called Cressida, and all match-makers be called Pander!  
Say, amen!

**TROILUS**

Amen.

<sup>14</sup> The story of Troilus and Cressida was already made famous in England by Geoffrey Chaucer's poem *Troilus and Criseyde*, and the names *Troilus*, *Cressida*, and *Pandarus* did indeed become by-words for truth, infidelity, and pandering.

**CRESSIDA**

Amen.

**PANDARUS**

210 Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber with a  
bed; which bed, because it shall not speak of your  
pretty encounters, press it to death: away!  
And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here  
Bed, chamber, Pandar to provide this gear!

*Exeunt*

**CRESSIDA**

Amen.

**PANDARUS**

Amen. Now we have agreed that I will show you to a room  
with a bed. Don't worry about the bed, which it can't tell  
anyone what it sees, smother it until it dies. Go! May Cupid  
give all confused young women the gifts of a bed, a room,  
and a pander <sup>15</sup> to help them along!

*They exit.*

<sup>15</sup> As noted above, Pandarus's name was the origin of a word that meant a "go-between in romantic affairs" or a "pimp."

## Act 3, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX, MENELAUS, and CALCHAS*

**CALCHAS**

Now, princes, for the service I have done you,  
The advantage of the time prompts me aloud  
To call for recompense. Appear it to your mind  
That, through the sight I bear in things to love,  
5 I have abandon'd Troy, left my possession,  
Incurr'd a traitor's name; exposed myself,  
From certain and possess'd conveniences,  
To doubtful fortunes; sequestering from me all  
That time, acquaintance, custom and condition  
10 Made tame and most familiar to my nature,  
And here, to do you service, am become  
As new into the world, strange, unacquainted:  
I do beseech you, as in way of taste,  
To give me now a little benefit,  
15 Out of those many register'd in promise,  
Which, you say, live to come in my behalf.

**AGAMEMNON**

What wouldst thou of us, Trojan? make demand.

**CALCHAS**

You have a Trojan prisoner, call'd Antenor,  
Yesterday took: Troy holds him very dear.  
20 Oft have you--often have you thanks therefore--  
Desired my Cressid in right great exchange,  
Whom Troy hath still denied: but this Antenor,  
I know, is such a wrest in their affairs  
That their negotiations all must slack,  
25 Wanting his manage; and they will almost  
Give us a prince of blood, a son of Priam,  
In change of him: let him be sent, great princes,  
And he shall buy my daughter; and her presence  
Shall quite strike off all service I have done,  
30 In most accepted pain.

**AGAMEMNON**

Let Diomedes bear him,  
And bring us Cressid hither: Calchas shall have  
What he requests of us. Good Diomed,  
Furnish you fairly for this interchange:  
35 Withal bring word if Hector will to-morrow  
Be answer'd in his challenge: Ajax is ready.

**DIOMEDES**

This shall I undertake; and 'tis a burden  
Which I am proud to bear.

*Exeunt DIOMEDES and CALCHAS*

### Shakesclore Translation

*AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX, MENELAUS, and CALCHAS enter.*

**CALCHAS**

Now, princes, the time has come for me to ask you for a  
reward for the service I have done for you. Remember that,  
because I can see into the future <sup>1</sup>, I have left Troy, leaving  
behind all my possessions and deserving a traitor. I have  
risked my comfortable and stable life. I have given up all the  
time, friends, and good-standing that I had. Because I  
wanted to help you I have come here, as if I was new to the  
world. I ask you to show me now a small part of the reward  
that you promised me.

<sup>1</sup> "Love" is probably a printing error for "come."

**AGAMEMNON**

What would you like, Trojan? Ask for it.

**CALCHAS**

You have a Trojan prisoner called Antenor, who you  
captured yesterday. Troy values him very highly. You have  
often asked Troy to release my Cressida <sup>2</sup> in hostage  
exchanges, which I thank you for, but you have had no luck.  
Now I know that Antenor, who is so important to their  
leadership that their discussions must be slack without his  
management. I reckon they would almost give us one of the  
royal princes, one of King Priam's sons, in return for  
Antenor. Let him go back, great princes, in return for my  
daughter. Her presence would be payment enough for all  
the service I have done for you, despite the hardships it has  
brought upon me.

<sup>2</sup> Calchas is Cressida's father.

**AGAMEMNON**

Let Diomedes hand over Antenor, and bring Cressida here.  
Calchas will get what he wants. Good Diomedes, dress well  
for this exchange, and tell them that if Hector is still willing  
to go through with his challenge that Ajax is ready.

**DIOMEDES**

I'll do this, I am honored that I can be of service.

*DIOMEDES and CALCHAS exit.*

Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS, before their tent

ACHILLES and PATROCLUS leave their tent and enter the stage.

**ULYSSES**

40 Achilles stands i' the entrance of his tent:  
Please it our general to pass strangely by him,  
As if he were forgot; and, princes all,  
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him:  
I will come last. 'Tis like he'll question me  
45 Why such unplausible eyes are bent on him:  
If so, I have derision medicinable,  
To use between your strangeness and his pride,  
Which his own will shall have desire to drink:  
It may be good: pride hath no other glass  
50 To show itself but pride, for supple knees  
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees.

**AGAMEMNON**

We'll execute your purpose, and put on  
A form of strangeness as we pass along:  
So do each lord, and either greet him not,  
55 Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more  
Than if not look'd on. I will lead the way.

**ACHILLES**

What, comes the general to speak with me?  
You know my mind, I'll fight no more 'gainst Troy.

**AGAMEMNON**

What says Achilles? would he aught with us?

**NESTOR**

60 Would you, my lord, aught with the general?

**ACHILLES**

No.

**NESTOR**

Nothing, my lord.

**AGAMEMNON**

The better.

*Exeunt AGAMEMNON and NESTOR*

**ACHILLES**

65 Good day, good day.

**MENELAUS**

How do you? how do you?

*Exit*

**ACHILLES**

What, does the cuckold scorn me?

**AJAX**

How now, Patroclus!

**ACHILLES**

70 Good morrow, Ajax.

**AJAX**

Ha?

**ACHILLES**

Good morrow.

**AJAX**

Ay, and good next day too.

**ULYSSES**

Achilles is standing in the entrance of his tent. If you please general, you should walk past him and treat him like a stranger, as if you had completely forgotten him. And, fellow princes, I suggest you also pay no attention to him. I will walk behind everyone else. It is likely he will ask me why no one recognizes him. And if he does this, I will provide a bitter-sweet medicine, and advise him on how to fix his reputation, a medicine he'll willingly take. It will do him good. Only pride can be a lesson for pride, and our previous attempts to bow to Achilles only made him more proud.

**AGAMEMNON**

We'll do as you say, and deliberately pretend not to notice him as we walk by. Each lord should do this, and don't greet him unless you do so disdainfully, which will upset him even more than if he were ignored. I will go first.  
*[AGAMEMNON walks past ACHILLES]*

**ACHILLES**

What, does the general come to speak with me? You know my decision, I won't fight against Troy anymore.

**AGAMEMNON**

*[To Nestor]* What is Achilles saying? Does he want to talk with me?

**NESTOR**

*[To Achilles]* Do you want to say something to the general, my lord?

**ACHILLES**

No.

**NESTOR**

*[To Agamemnon]* He has nothing to say, my lord.

**AGAMEMNON**

Excellent.

*AGAMEMNON and NESTOR exit.*

**ACHILLES**

*[To Menelaus]* Hello, good day.


**MENELAUS**

*[To Achilles]* How are you? How are you?

*MENELAUS exits.*

**ACHILLES**

Huh, does the cuckold  treat me scornfully?

 A man whose wife is unfaithful.

**AJAX**

*[To Patroclus]* Hello, Patroclus!

**ACHILLES**

*[To Ajax]* Good morning, Ajax.

**AJAX**

Huh?

**ACHILLES**

*[To Ajax]* Good morning.

**AJAX**

*[To Achilles]* Yeah, have a good week.



Exit

**ACHILLES**

75 What mean these fellows? Know they not Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

They pass by strangely: they were used to bend  
To send their smiles before them to Achilles;  
To come as humbly as they used to creep  
To holy altars.

**ACHILLES**

80 What, am I poor of late?  
'Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,  
Must fall out with men too: what the declined is  
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others  
As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,  
85 Show not their mealy wings but to the summer,  
And not a man, for being simply man,  
Hath any honour, but honour for those honours  
That are without him, as place, riches, favour,  
Prizes of accident as oft as merit:  
90 Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,  
The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,  
Do one pluck down another and together  
Die in the fall. But 'tis not so with me:  
Fortune and I are friends: I do enjoy  
95 At ample point all that I did possess,  
Save these men's looks; who do, methinks, find out  
Something not worth in me such rich beholding  
As they have often given. Here is Ulysses;  
I'll interrupt his reading.  
100 How now Ulysses!

**ULYSSES**

Now, great Thetis' son!

**ACHILLES**

What are you reading?

**ULYSSES**

A strange fellow here  
Writes me: 'That man, how dearly ever parted,  
105 How much in having, or without or in,  
Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,  
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;  
As when his virtues shining upon others  
Heat them and they retort that heat again  
110 To the first giver.'

**ACHILLES**

This is not strange, Ulysses.  
The beauty that is borne here in the face  
The bearer knows not, but commends itself  
To others' eyes; nor doth the eye itself,  
115 That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,  
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed  
Salutes each other with each other's form;  
For speculation turns not to itself,  
Till it hath travell'd and is mirror'd there  
120 Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.

**ULYSSES**

I do not strain at the position,--  
It is familiar,--but at the author's drift;  
Who, in his circumstance, expressly proves  
That no man is the lord of any thing,  
125 Though in and of him there be much consisting,  
Till he communicate his parts to others:  
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught  
Till he behold them form'd in the applause  
Where they're extended; who, like an arch,  
130 reverberates  
The voice again, or, like a gate of steel

AJAX exits.

**ACHILLES**

What is wrong with these people? Don't they know me?

**PATROCLUS**

They pass by like they don't know you. They used to bow  
before you and smile when they came to Achilles, as  
humble as when they go to pray.

**ACHILLES**

What, have I lost my reputation? When great men lose their  
good fortune they also lose all the respect of their fellow  
man. The newly unfortunate man reads his fall in the eyes  
of other people. In that respect people are like butterflies  
who only show their wings during the summer: men show  
respect only to those who appear honorable on their  
outside, even if their successes were by accident rather  
than merit. And when a great man falls the love that other  
people have shown to him falls too, the one bringing down  
the other so they both die. But it won't be like this with me,  
good fortune is my friend. I still have all the strengths I used  
to have, except these men's attentions. I think these men  
have seen something in me that they don't respect as much  
as they used to. Ulysses is coming, I'll interrupt his reading.  
[To ULYSSES] How's it going, Ulysses!

**ULYSSES**

Hello, great son of Thetis.

**ACHILLES**

What are you reading?

**ULYSSES**

A strange man tells me: "That no man, no matter how  
naturally talented, rich, or in favor with the king, can boast  
of what he has nor understand what his duty is except by  
seeing how other people treat him. Virtues warm the  
people around them, and that heat is then reflected back."

**ACHILLES**

That is not strange, Ulysses. Someone with a beautiful face  
wouldn't know it unless other people tell them. And an eye,  
our greatest natural tool, cannot see itself except by looking  
at something reflective, or gazing at another person's eye.  
Sight only happens when we look away, and the image  
comes back to us<sup>4</sup>. There is nothing unusual about what  
the man says.

**ULYSSES**

I'm not calling his argument strange, it is a common idea,  
but I wonder what he means by it. He argues cleverly that  
no one really possesses any quality, no matter how there is  
in him, until they have demonstrate it to others. He also  
shows that we cannot know anything of ourselves except  
through other people's applause. We only can only judge  
ourselves through the reflection of our actions, like an echo  
in a tunnel, or a steel gate that receives the sun and shines  
it back. I have been very interested in this, and was  
immediately reminded of Ajax. By heaven, what kind of  
man is he? He's like a horse that doesn't know how he is

<sup>4</sup> Ancient (Galenic) understanding of the eye taught that eyes emit a kind of beam that is reflected, and this idea was common in the Renaissance.

<sup>5</sup> Like "by heaven" this seems to simply be an exclamation but it is also a comment on nature's tendency to give people widely varying capacities.


Fronting the sun, receives and renders back  
 His figure and his heat. I was much wrapt in this;  
 And apprehended here immediately  
 135 The unknown Ajax.  
 Heavens, what a man is there! a very horse,  
 That has he knows not what. Nature, what things there  
 are  
 Most abject in regard and dear in use!  
 140 What things again most dear in the esteem  
 And poor in worth! Now shall we see to-morrow--  
 An act that very chance doth throw upon him--  
 Ajax renown'd. O heavens, what some men do,  
 While some men leave to do!  
 145 How some men creep in skittish fortune's hall,  
 Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!  
 How one man eats into another's pride,  
 While pride is fasting in his wantonness!  
 To see these Grecian lords!-- why, even already  
 150 They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,  
 As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast  
 And great Troy shrieking.

**ACHILLES**

I do believe it; for they pass'd by me  
 As misers do by beggars, neither gave to me  
 155 Good word nor look: what, are my deeds forgot?

**ULYSSES**




Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,  
 Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
 A great-sized monster of ingratitude:  
 Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devour'd  
 160 As fast as they are made, forgot as soon  
 As done: perseverance, dear my lord,  
 Keeps honour bright: to have done is to hang  
 Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail  
 In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;  
 165 For honour travels in a strait so narrow,  
 Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;  
 For emulation hath a thousand sons  
 That one by one pursue: if you give way,  
 Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,  
 170 Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by  
 And leave you hindmost;  
 Or like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,  
 Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,  
 O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,  
 175 Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;  
 For time is like a fashionable host  
 That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,  
 And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,  
 Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,  
 180 And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not  
 virtue seek  
 Remuneration for the thing it was;  
 For beauty, wit,  
 High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,  
 185 Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
 To envious and calumniating time.  
 One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,  
 That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,  
 Though they are made and moulded of things past,  
 190 And give to dust that is a little gilt  
 More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.  
 The present eye praises the present object.  
 Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,  
 That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;  
 195 Since things in motion sooner catch the eye  
 Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,  
 And still it might, and yet it may again,  
 If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive  
 And case thy reputation in thy tent;  
 200 Whose glorious deeds, but in these fields of late,  
 Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves  
 And drave great Mars to faction.


being exploited. By nature , there are some creatures that are hated but useful, and others that we value highly but have no use! Tomorrow we'll all see an opportunity that pure luck has given him. Can you imagine Ajax being a hero? Oh heavens, it is amazing what opportunities some men will take and others will leave. Some men skulk around and avoid greatness even though luck is on their side, whilst others act like fools to try to become famous. The second man, although he is less worthy, steals the fame that should be the first man's. You should see the Greek lords! They are already patting the idiot on his back and cheering him as if he had already triumphed over Hector and made great Troy shriek.


**ACHILLES**


I know, they all walked past me earlier and looked at me like I was a beggar, saying nothing and not even looking at me. Are my deeds already forgotten?

**ULYSSES**

As time passes all our actions are forgotten. Go  od deeds only last a moment and then become worthless. Only perseverance, my lord, keeps honor fresh and bright. To have done  something is to be always out of fashion, like a rusty suit of armor. Take the most direct route, because honor always takes a path that is straight and narrow: keep on the path as there are always a thousand other men running after, one by one. Give them any room, or step aside, they'll rush past you in an instant and leave you behind. It is like a horse who falls at the front of the battle, and is run past and trampled on by those who come from behind. A success made now is worth much more than a past success, even if it is a lesser success, yes. Time is like a fashionable host who quickly says goodbye to his parting guest before embracing the next guest coming in: you are welcome when you show up but not when you leave. Virtues like honor, intellect, beauty, and so on, shouldn't ask to be respected for what they were but for what they are. People only value new things, even when their old possessions are better made. Someone in the present only praises things that are in the present: so you shouldn't be surprised that all the Greek lords are starting to cheer for Ajax, as he is still active. They once cheered for you, and still could cheer for you again, if you stopped burying yourself in your tent and thinking about how great you were. Especially since you were so great that the gods themselves had to enter the field of battle, even Mars !

 In the original Time is personified as a man who collects money for Forgetfulness, this is based on an old saying.

 This may be a pun on "dun" which means dull-colored.

 Ulysses is suggesting that Achilles was so strong that the gods would come down to join the battle as they felt he was an unfair advantage.

**ACHILLES**

Of this my privacy  
I have strong reasons.

**ULYSSES**

205 But 'gainst your privacy  
The reasons are more potent and heroic:  
'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love  
With one of Priam's daughters.

**ACHILLES**

Ha! known!

**ULYSSES**

210 Is that a wonder?  
The providence that's in a watchful state  
Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,  
Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,  
Keeps place with thought and almost, like the gods,  
215 Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.  
There is a mystery--with whom relation  
Durst never meddle--in the soul of state;  
Which hath an operation more divine  
Than breath or pen can give expressure to:  
220 All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;  
And better would it fit Achilles much  
To throw down Hector than Polyxena:  
But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,  
225 When fame shall in our islands sound her trump,  
And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing,  
'Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,  
But our great Ajax bravely beat down him.'  
Farewell, my lord: I as your lover speak;  
230 The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break.

*Exit*

**PATROCLUS**

To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you:  
A woman impudent and mannish grown  
Is not more loathed than an effeminate man  
In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this;  
235 They think my little stomach to the war  
And your great love to me restrains you thus:  
Sweet, rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid  
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,  
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,  
240 Be shook to air.

**ACHILLES**

Shall Ajax fight with Hector?

**PATROCLUS**

Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.

**ACHILLES**

I see my reputation is at stake  
My fame is shrewdly gored.

**PATROCLUS**

245 O, then, beware;  
Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves:  
Omission to do what is necessary  
Seals a commission to a blank of danger;  
And danger, like an ague, subtly taints  
250 Even then when we sit idly in the sun.

**ACHILLES**

Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus:  
I'll send the fool to Ajax and desire him  
To invite the Trojan lords after the combat  
To see us here unarm'd: I have a woman's longing,  
255 An appetite that I am sick withal,

**ACHILLES**

I have good reasons for not coming out.

**ULYSSES**


Well, there are better and more heroic reasons for you to come out. It is well known that you are in love with one of Priam's daughters, Achilles.

**ACHILLES**

Hah, what do you mean?

**ULYSSES**

Are you surprised? Nothing escapes the notice of a good government, even the affairs of the gods can not be kept private from their spies, and thoughts can be understood before they are spoken. There is a kind of government knowledge that is never spoken of, and that is more godly than I could ever express in words. Every message you have sent over to Troy is as well known to us as it is to you, my lord, and I think it would be far more fitting that you wrestle Hector than Polyxena. It will be embarrassing for your son, Pyrrhus, back in Greece, when the news comes in and all the Greek girls start singing:  
"Achilles won great Hector's sister,  
But our great Ajax bravely slayed Hector."  
Goodbye, my lord, speaking as your good friend I have to say, the fool is taking what should be yours.

 Ulysses is joking that Achilles should be more worried about getting physical with the Trojan Hector than the Trojan Polyxena.

*ULYSSES exits.*

**PATROCLUS**

I have told you this before, Achilles. An angry woman who acts like a man is better than a man who acts like a woman when it's time to fight. I am getting the blame for this, as everyone thinks that because I don't want to fight and you don't want to leave me you won't fight as well. Sweetheart, get up, and matters of love will fall from you like sweat from a lion's mane.

**ACHILLES**

Will Ajax fight Hector?

**PATROCLUS**

Yes, and maybe become famous for defeating him.

**ACHILLES**

My reputation is at stake, my good name has been attacked.

**PATROCLUS**

Then be cautious, the damage we do to ourselves is the hardest to heal. Refusing to do what you have to guarantee a bad result. And danger is always just around the corner, even when we are idle.

**ACHILLES**

Go and fetch Thersites, sweet Patroclus. I'll send the fool to Ajax and tell him to invite the Trojan lords here after the fight to meet us here without our weapons. I am sick with love, and desperate to talk with Hector away from the battlefield.

To see great Hector in his weeds of peace,  
To talk with him and to behold his visage,  
Even to my full of view.

Enter **THERSITES**

**ACHILLES**

A labour saved!

260

**THERSITES**

A wonder!

**ACHILLES**

What?

**THERSITES**

Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself.

**ACHILLES**

How so?

**THERSITES**

265 He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroic cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

**ACHILLES**

How can that be?

**THERSITES**

270 Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,—a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say 'There were wit in this head, an 'twould out;' and so there is, but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking.

275 The man's undone forever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he'll break 't himself in vain-glory. He knows not me: I said 'Good morrow, Ajax;' and he replies 'Thanks, Agamemnon.' What think

280 you of this man that takes me for the general? He's grown a very land-fish, language-less, a monster. A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides, like a leather jerkin.

**ACHILLES**

Thou must be my ambassador to him, Thersites.

**THERSITES**

285 Who, I? why, he'll answer nobody; he professes not answering: speaking is for beggars; he wears his tongue in's arms. I will put on his presence: let Patroclus make demands to me, you shall see the pageant of Ajax.

**ACHILLES**

290 To him, Patroclus; tell him I humbly desire the valiant Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to procure safe-conduct for his person of the magnanimous and most illustrious six-or-seven-times-honoured

295 captain-general of the Grecian army, Agamemnon, et cetera. Do this.

**PATROCLUS**

Jove bless great Ajax!

*THERSITES enters.*

**ACHILLES**

You won't have to bother fetching Thersites.

**THERSITES**

There is an incredible sight!

**ACHILLES**

What?

**THERSITES**

Ajax is pacing up and down the field looking for "a jakes."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> A jakes was a term for a toilet, and Thersites is punning on Ajax's name, implying that Ajax looks like he might foul himself.

**ACHILLES**

Why?

**THERSITES**

He must fight one-on-one with Hector tomorrow, and is proudly confident that he will be heroically defeated so he walks around saying nothing loudly.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Thersites is mocking Ajax with the paradoxes of his behavior, in particular Ajax has stopped talking because he is so proud, but he is not subtle so it is like he is loudly not speaking.

**ACHILLES**

How is that possible?

**THERSITES**

Oh he is walking around like a peacock, taking a step then standing still, and posing like a barmaid who can't count up the bill. He bites his lip and looks contemplative, like a man who has all the answers but won't say them, but the only way you'd get anything out of his head is by knocking his brains out! He can't win, because if Hector doesn't kill him, his vanity would. He didn't even recognize me earlier: I said "Good morning Ajax," and he replied "Thanks, Agamemnon." What kind of man would think I am the general? He's like a walking goldfish or some kind of language-less monster. Reputation is ridiculous. Man can wear it one way or another, like a leather waistcoat.

**ACHILLES**

I want you to tell him something from me, Thersites.

**THERSITES**

Me? He won't speak to anyone, it's like a motto to him: speaking is for beggars. He only talks through his fighting. I will show you what he's like, tell Patroclus to give me your message, and you'll see how ridiculous Ajax looks.

**ACHILLES**

Go on Patroclus, tell him I humbly desire that the valiant Ajax would invite the valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to ask the very brave Agamemnon not to harm my guests, et cetera. Say that.

**PATROCLUS**

Jupiter bless the great Ajax!

**THERSITES**

Hum!

**PATROCLUS**

I come from the worthy Achilles,--

**THERSITES**

300 Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent,--

**THERSITES**

Hum!

**PATROCLUS**

And to procure safe-conduct from Agamemnon.

**THERSITES**

305 Agamemnon!

**PATROCLUS**

Ay, my lord.

**THERSITES**

Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

What say you to't?

**THERSITES**

God b' wi' you, with all my heart.

**PATROCLUS**

310 Your answer, sir.

**THERSITES**

If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven o'clock it will go one way or other: howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.

**PATROCLUS**

Your answer, sir.

**THERSITES**

315 Fare you well, with all my heart.

**ACHILLES**

Why, but he is not in this tune, is he?

**THERSITES**

No, but he's out o' tune thus. What music will be in him when Hector has knocked out his brains, I know not; but, I am sure, none, unless the fiddler Apollo get his sinews to make catlings on.

320

**ACHILLES**

Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him straight.

**THERSITES**

Let me bear another to his horse; for that's the more capable creature.

**ACHILLES**My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd;  
And I myself see not the bottom of it.

325

*Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS***THERSITES**

Hmm!

**PATROCLUS**

I have come on behalf of the worthy Achilles...

**THERSITES**

Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

Who very humbly asks you to invite Hector to his tent...

**THERSITES**

Hmm!

**PATROCLUS**

And to get a guarantee of safety from Agamemnon.

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon!

**PATROCLUS**

Yes, my lord.

**THERSITES**

Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

What is your reply?

**THERSITES**

God bless you with all my heart.

**PATROCLUS**

Your response, sir?

**THERSITES**

Tomorrow's battle, if it happens, will have been decided by eleven o'clock. And whatever happens I shall make sure he is hurt before either of us wins.

**PATROCLUS**

Your response, sir?

**THERSITES**

A warm goodbye.

**ACHILLES**

Surely he isn't really like this?

**THERSITES**Oh, but he is <sup>12</sup>. I don't know what sense will be in him when Hector has dashed out his brains, but it would take Apollo <sup>13</sup> to make him understand.<sup>12</sup> *Thersites's answer puns on Achilles's question.*<sup>13</sup> *The God of music and reason.***ACHILLES**

Come here, I want you to deliver a letter to him.

**THERSITES**

I should take it to his horse, his horse is more sensible.

**ACHILLES**

This is all very troubling, and I don't know how the future will play out.

*ACHILLES and PATROCLUS exit.*

**THERSITES**

Would the fountain of your mind were clear again,  
that I might water an ass at it! I had rather be a  
tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance.

330

*Exit***THERSITES**

Stupid man! I'd rather be an insect than this arrogant fool.

*THERSITES exits.*

## Act 4, Scene 1

### Shakespeare

*Enter, from one side, AENEAS, and Servant with a torch; from the other, PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES, and others, with torches*

**PARIS**

See, ho! who is that there?

**DEIPHOBUS**

It is the Lord Aeneas.

**AENEAS**

Is the prince there in person?

Had I so good occasion to lie long

5 As you, prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business

Should rob my bed-mate of my company.

**DIOMEDES**

That's my mind too. Good morrow, Lord Aeneas.

**PARIS**

A valiant Greek, Aeneas,--take his hand,--

Witness the process of your speech, wherein

10 You told how Diomed, a whole week by days,

Did haunt you in the field.

**AENEAS**

Health to you, valiant sir,

During all question of the gentle truce;

But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance

15 As heart can think or courage execute.

**DIOMEDES**

The one and other Diomed embraces.

Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health!

But when contention and occasion meet,

By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life

20 With all my force, pursuit and policy.

**AENEAS**

And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly

With his face backward. In humane gentleness,

Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,

Welcome, indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,

25 No man alive can love in such a sort

The thing he means to kill more excellently.

**DIOMEDES**

We sympathize: Jove, let Aeneas live,

If to my sword his fate be not the glory,

A thousand complete courses of the sun!

30 But, in mine emulous honour, let him die,

With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow!

**AENEAS**

We know each other well.

### Shakesclore Translation

*AENEAS and a servant carrying a torch enter from one side, from the other side PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES and other followers enter with torches.*

**PARIS**

Look there! Who is that?

**DEIPHOBUS**

It's the lord Aeneas.

**AENEAS**

Are you the Prince himself? If I had as good a reason not to

get out of bed as you, prince Paris, nothing but prayer

would get me to leave my wife alone.

**DIOMEDES**

I agree. Good morning, Lord Aeneas.

**PARIS**

A brave Greek, Aeneas, greet him! You told me he has been

finding you out on the battle field all week and never

leaving you alone, and here he is again!

**AENEAS**

I hope you are well, valiant sir, for at least as long as we

have this truce. But when we begin fighting again, I'll make

sure I see you dead.

**DIOMEDES**

*[Embracing AENEAS and PARIS]* Greetings to both of you.

We aren't enemies at the moment, so for now I hope you

are well! But when we start fighting again, by Jupiter, I'll try

to kill you with all my strength, skill, and intelligence.

**AENEAS**

It will be like you are hunting a lion, one that will run from

you facing towards you. But now I greet you as a human,

welcome to Troy! Now, on my father's life, welcome! By

Venus my mother's hand I promise, that no one has ever

loved a person they intend to kill as much as I do now.

**DIOMEDES**

I feel the same. Jupiter, let Aeneas live a thousand years,

unless I kill him myself. But, let him die bloody and broken

tomorrow, all for the sake of my honor.

**AENEAS**

We understand each other well.

**DIOMEDES**

We do; and long to know each other worse.

**PARIS**

35 This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,  
The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.  
What business, lord, so early?

**AENEAS**

I was sent for to the king; but why, I know not.

**PARIS**

His purpose meets you: 'twas to bring this Greek  
To Calchas' house, and there to render him,  
40 For the enfreed Antenor, the fair Cressid:  
Let's have your company, or, if you please,  
Haste there before us: I constantly do think--  
Or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge--  
My brother Troilus lodges there to-night:  
45 Rouse him and give him note of our approach.  
With the whole quality wherefore: I fear  
We shall be much unwelcome.

**AENEAS**

That I assure you:  
Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece  
50 Than Cressid borne from Troy.

**PARIS**

There is no help;  
The bitter disposition of the time  
Will have it so. On, lord; we'll follow you.

**AENEAS**

55 Good morrow, all.

*Exit with Servant*

**PARIS**

And tell me, noble Diomed, faith, tell me true,  
Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship,  
Who, in your thoughts, merits fair Helen best,  
Myself or Menelaus?

**DIOMEDES**

60 Both alike:  
He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,  
Not making any scruple of her soileure,  
With such a hell of pain and world of charge,  
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,  
65 Not palating the taste of her dishonour,  
With such a costly loss of wealth and friends:  
He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up  
The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;  
You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins  
70 Are pleased to breed out your inheritors:  
Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more;  
But he as he, the heavier for a whore.


**PARIS**


You are too bitter to your countrywoman.

**DIOMEDES**

75 She's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris:  
For every false drop in her bawdy veins  
A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple  
Of her contaminated carrion weight,  
A Trojan hath been slain: since she could speak,  
She hath not given so many good words breath  
80 As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.

**DIOMEDES**

Yes, and we both hope that the other will be worse  as well.

 Punning on 'well' as meaning 'healthy' rather than 'thoroughly', Diomedes is saying he hopes to see Aeneas dead.

**PARIS**

This is the most violent and polite greeting I have ever heard of, with the most noble and hateful love. Why are you up so early, lord?

**AENEAS**

I was told to come to the king, but I don't know why.

**PARIS**

I can tell you why he sent for you. He wants you to bring this Greek to Calchas's house, and when you are there to give him the beautiful Cressida for the freedom of Antenor. You're welcome to stay with me for a bit, or, go there before me. *[Aside to AENEAS]* I am quite sure, or to be honest I know for a fact, that my brother Troilus is staying at that house tonight. Wake him up and tell him we are coming, although I don't think we'll be very welcome when he finds out why.

**AENEAS**

I am certain you are right, Troilus would rather we gave Troy to Greece than Cressida to the Greeks.

**PARIS**

It can't be helped, this bitter time demands that it must be so. Go, lord, we'll follow you.

**AENEAS**


Goodbye everyone.


*AENEAS and his servant exit.*

**PARIS**

Tell me honestly, noble Diomedes, given this spirit of friendship, who most deserves to have the beautiful Helen, myself or Menelaus?

**DIOMEDES**

Both of you equally deserve her. Menelaus deserves her since he is willing to do all this, bringing about a hellish war and costing two countries a massive amount, without caring that she has been spoiled. Equally, you deserve to keep her, since you fight for her without noticing that she is dishonorable, having cost so much money and so many of our friends. He, like a grovelling cuckold, is desperate for someone else's table scraps, and you, like a creep, are willing to father your children with a whore . If you compare the two of you, both of you deserve her the same amount, you're identical except that one of you has the whore.

 This passage is vividly sexual, dehumanising of Helen, and misogynistic.

**PARIS**

You're too unkind towards your countrywoman.

**DIOMEDES**

Trust me, Paris, she's been too unkind to her country. A Greek has died for every worthless drop of blood in her unfaithful veins. And a Trojan has died for every gram of her festering flesh. She hasn't spoken as many pleasant things as Trojans and Greeks died for her.

**PARIS**

Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,  
Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy:  
But we in silence hold this virtue well,  
We'll but commend what we intend to sell.

85 Here lies our way.

*Exeunt*

**PARIS**

Fair Diomedes, just like a trader you are insulting the thing you want to buy, so it will be cheaper. But I won't defend her, as I have no desire to sell her. Come this way please.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter TROILUS and CRESSIDA*

**TROILUS**

Dear, trouble not yourself: the morn is cold.

**CRESSIDA**

Then, sweet my lord, I'll call mine uncle down;  
He shall unbolt the gates.

**TROILUS**

Trouble him not;

5 To bed, to bed: sleep kill those pretty eyes,  
And give as soft attachment to thy senses  
As infants' empty of all thought!

**CRESSIDA**

Good morrow, then.

**TROILUS**

I prithee now, to bed.

**CRESSIDA**

10 Are you a-weary of me?

**TROILUS**

O Cressida! but that the busy day,  
Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,  
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,  
I would not from thee.

**CRESSIDA**

15 Night hath been too brief.

**TROILUS**

Beshrew the witch! with venomous wights she stays  
As tediously as hell, but flies the grasps of love  
With wings more momentary-swift than thought.  
You will catch cold, and curse me.

**CRESSIDA**

20 Prithee, tarry:  
You men will never tarry.  
O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off,  
And then you would have tarried. Hark!  
there's one up.

**PANDARUS**

25 *[Within]* What, 's all the doors open here?


**TROILUS**


It is your uncle.

### Shakesclare Translation

*TROILUS and CRESSIDA enter.*

**TROILUS**

Don't get up , my dear, it's cold this morning.

 Troilus is planning on leaving the house.

**CRESSIDA**

Then I'll have my uncle open the gates, my lord.

**TROILUS**

Don't trouble him, go to bed, go to bed. Let sleep close your beautiful eyes, and rest peacefully.

**CRESSIDA**

Goodbye, then.

**TROILUS**

I beg you, go to sleep.

**CRESSIDA**

Are you tired of me?


**TROILUS**


Oh Cressida! If it was still night and day hadn't broken, I'd stay with you.

**CRESSIDA**

Night has been too short.

**TROILUS**

Curse the witch ! If you have troubled sleep she seems to last forever, but if you are holding your lover she barely lasts long enough to realize. You'll catch a cold and hate me, if you stay out at this time of day.

 Troilus is insulting the personification of night.

**CRESSIDA**

I beg you, stay. You men never stick around. Oh foolish Cressida! If I hadn't given in to you you might have stayed. Listen! Someone's nearby.

**PANDARUS**

*[Within]* What, why are all the doors open?

**TROILUS**

It is your uncle.



**CRESSIDA**

A pestilence on him! now will he be mocking:  
I shall have such a life!

*Enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

30 How now, how now! how go maidenheads? Here, you  
maid! where's my cousin Cressida?

**CRESSIDA**

Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle!  
You bring me to do, and then you flout me too.

**PANDARUS**

35 To do what? to do what? let her say  
what: what have I brought you to do?

**CRESSIDA**

Come, come, beshrew your heart! you'll ne'er be good,  
Nor suffer others.

**PANDARUS**

40 Ha! ha! Alas, poor wretch! ah, poor capocchia!  
hast not slept to-night? would he not, a naughty  
man, let it sleep? a bugbear take him!

**CRESSIDA**

Did not I tell you? Would he were knock'd i' the head!

*Knocking within*

**CRESSIDA**

45 Who's that at door? good uncle, go and see.  
My lord, come you again into my chamber:  
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

**TROILUS**

Ha, ha!

**CRESSIDA**

Come, you are deceived, I think of no such thing.

*Knocking within*

**CRESSIDA**

50 How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in:  
I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

*Exeunt TROILUS and CRESSIDA*

**PANDARUS**

55 Who's there? what's the matter? will you beat  
down the door? How now! what's the matter?

*Enter AENEAS*

**AENEAS**

Good morrow, lord, good morrow.

**PANDARUS**



Who's there? my Lord Aeneas! By my troth,  
I knew you not: what news with you so early?


**CRESSIDA**


Curse him. He's going to start mocking me again. I'll never  
hear the end of this!

*PANDARUS enters.*

**PANDARUS**

Well, well. What's the price of virgin?  Hey, you there  
young girl ! Where's my cousin Cressida?


 How go...? would be a common way of asking the price of something at a market.


 Pandarus is pretending not to recognize Cressida after she stayed with Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Go hang yourself, naughty mocking uncle! You go about  
making me do something, and then you laugh at me for it  
as well.

**PANDARUS**



Do what ? Do what? Let her say what, what have I helped  
you do?


 'To do' has the same meaning in the Renaissance as it does now.


**CRESSIDA**

Oh behave, have some decency! You'll never live a good life,  
nor allow others to live good lives.

**PANDARUS**

Ha ha! Alas, poor wretch! Ah, poor thing . Haven't you  
slept last night? Would the naughty boy not let the thing  
sleep? Oh what a naughty man! 

 Pandarus is speaking dirty Italian, referring to Troilus's sexual member.

 Pandarus is treating Troilus and Cressida like children.

**CRESSIDA**

What did I say he would be like? I wish someone would  
knock him out.

*There is knocking outside.*

**CRESSIDA**

Who's at the door? Good uncle, go and see. *[To TROILUS]*  
My lord, come back into my bedroom. Why are you smiling?  
Oh, not like that!

**TROILUS**

Haha.

**CRESSIDA**

Come on, you're wrong, I'm not thinking about that.

*There is knocking outside.*

**CRESSIDA**

They are knocking so loudly! Please, come in. I don't want  
anyone to know you are here.

*TROILUS and CRESSIDA exit.*

**PANDARUS**

Who's there? What's the matter? You're going to break the  
door down! What's the matter?

*AENEAS enters.*

**AENEAS**

Good morning, lord, good morning.

**PANDARUS**

Who's there? My lord Aeneas! I honestly, didn't recognize  
you. What's wrong that means you come here so early in  
the day?

**AENEAS**

Is not Prince Troilus here?

**PANDARUS**

60 Here! what should he do here?

**AENEAS**

Come, he is here, my lord; do not deny him:  
It doth import him much to speak with me.

**PANDARUS**

Is he here, say you? 'tis more than I know, I'll  
be sworn: for my own part, I came in late. What  
65 should he do here?

**AENEAS**

Who!--nay, then: come, come, you'll do him wrong  
ere you're ware: you'll be so true to him, to be  
false to him: do not you know of him, but yet go  
fetch him hither; go.

*Re-enter TROILUS*

**TROILUS**

70 How now! what's the matter?

**AENEAS**

My lord, I scarce have leisure to salute you,  
My matter is so rash: there is at hand  
Paris your brother, and Deiphobus,  
The Grecian Diomed, and our Antenor  
75 Deliver'd to us; and for him forthwith,  
Ere the first sacrifice, within this hour,  
We must give up to Diomedes' hand  
The Lady Cressida.

**TROILUS**

Is it so concluded?

**AENEAS**

80 By Priam and the general state of Troy:  
They are at hand and ready to effect it.

**TROILUS**

How my achievements mock me!  
I will go meet them: and, my Lord Aeneas,  
We met by chance; you did not find me here.

**AENEAS**

85 Good, good, my lord; the secrets of nature  
Have not more gift in taciturnity.

*Exeunt TROILUS and AENEAS*

**PANDARUS**

Is't possible? no sooner got but lost? The devil  
take Antenor! the young prince will go mad: a  
90 plague upon Antenor! I would they had broke's neck!

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

**CRESSIDA**

How now! what's the matter? who was here?

**PANDARUS**

Ah, ah!

**CRESSIDA**

Why sigh you so profoundly? where's my lord? gone!  
Tell me, sweet uncle, what's the matter?

**AENEAS**

Is Prince Troilus here?

**PANDARUS**

Here? Why would he be here?

**AENEAS**

Look, he's obviously here, don't deny it. It's important he  
speaks to me.

**PANDARUS**

You say he's here? Oh, well, I wouldn't know, honestly. I  
only came back recently. Why would he be here?

**AENEAS**

You mean "who" should he be doing here! No, come on  
then. You'll hurt him if you're not careful. You're covering  
for him, but betraying him. I don't care if you know he is  
here, go get him. Now.

*TROILUS re-enters.*

**TROILUS**

Hey, what's the matter?

**AENEAS**

My lord, I hardly have time to say hello, my business is so  
important. Outside the house are your brother Paris,  
Deiphobus, the Greek Diomedes and the Trojan Antenor,  
who has been returned to us. And in return for Antenor,  
before we even go to prayer, right now, we must give up  
Lady Cressida to Diomedes.

**TROILUS**

This has been decided?

**AENEAS**

By Priam and the politicians of Troy, they are outside ready  
to make it happen.

**TROILUS**

My success has turned to despair! I will go and meet them,  
my lord Aeneas, I'll pretend to have just been passing by,  
don't say you saw me here.

**AENEAS**

Yes, my lord. No one is more discrete than me.

*TROILUS and AENEAS exit.*

**PANDARUS**

Is it possible? No sooner got than it is lost? I'd give Antenor  
to the devil! The young prince will go mad, I hope a plague  
takes Antenor! I wish the Greeks had broken his neck!

*CRESSIDA re-enters.*

**CRESSIDA**

Hey, what's the matter? Who was here?

**PANDARUS**

Ah, ah!

**CRESSIDA**

Why are you sighing so deeply? Where's my lord? He's gone!  
Tell me, sweet uncle, what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

95 Would I were as deep under the earth as I am above!

**CRESSIDA**

O the gods! what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

Prithee, get thee in: would thou hadst ne'er been born! I knew thou wouldst be his death. O, poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!

**CRESSIDA**

100 Good uncle, I beseech you, on my knees! beseech you, what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

Thou must be gone, wench, thou must be gone; thou art changed for Antenor: thou must to thy father, and be gone from Troilus: 'twill be his death;  
105 'twill be his bane; he cannot bear it.

**CRESSIDA**

O you immortal gods! I will not go.

**PANDARUS**

Thou must.

**CRESSIDA**

I will not, uncle: I have forgot my father;  
I know no touch of consanguinity;  
110 No kin no love, no blood, no soul so near me  
As the sweet Troilus. O you gods divine!  
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,  
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death,  
Do to this body what extremes you can;  
115 But the strong base and building of my love  
Is as the very centre of the earth,  
Drawing all things to it. I'll go in and weep,--

**PANDARUS**

Do, do.

**CRESSIDA**

Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks,  
120 Crack my clear voice with sobs and break my heart  
With sounding Troilus. I will not go from Troy.

*Exeunt*

**PANDARUS**

I wish I were dead!

**CRESSIDA**

Oh gods! What's the matter!


**PANDARUS**


I beg you, go inside, I wish you had never been born! I knew you'd be the thing that kills him. Oh, poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!

**CRESSIDA**

Good uncle, I beg you, on my knees, I beg you, what's happened?

**PANDARUS**

You must go, girl , you must be gone, you are going to be traded in return for Antenor. You must go to your father and away from Troilus. It will be his death, his torture, the one thing he couldn't possibly bear.

 *Wench could be a term of endearment, or an insult to a sexually active woman.*

**CRESSIDA**

Oh gods! I will not go.

**PANDARUS**

You have to.

**CRESSIDA**

I will not, uncle. I have broken relations with my father, and don't recognize him as my family. He is not my relative, I feel no love for him, I am not of his blood, and there is no soul worth so much to me as that of Troilus. Oh divine gods! Make my name a common by-word for infidelity if I ever leave Troilus! Oh Time, Force, and Death: do whatever you can to me, my love for Troilus is stronger than the gravity that holds us on the earth. I'll go into my room to cry...

**PANDARUS**

Do, do.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll tear out my hair and scratch at my cheeks, scream until my throat hurts, and break my heart crying Troilus's name. I will not leave Troy.

*PANDARUS and CRESSIDA leave.*

## Act 4, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter PARIS, TROILUS, AENEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, and DIOMEDES*

**PARIS**

It is great morning, and the hour prefix'd  
Of her delivery to this valiant Greek  
Comes fast upon. Good my brother Troilus,  
Tell you the lady what she is to do,  
5 And haste her to the purpose.

**TROILUS**

Walk into her house;  
I'll bring her to the Grecian presently:  
And to his hand when I deliver her,  
Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus  
10 A priest there offering to it his own heart.

### Shakescleare Translation

*PARIS, TROILUS, AENEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, and DIOMEDES enter.*

**PARIS**

It is late in the morning, and nearly time we give her to this brave Greek. Good brother Troilus, go tell the lady what she has to do, and tell her to be swift.

**TROILUS**

Go into her house, I'll bring her to the Greek immediately, and when I hand her over to him, I will think of it as a marriage ceremony. Like a priest, except I will give away my own heart.

*Exit***PARIS**

I know what 'tis to love;  
And would, as I shall pity, I could help!  
Please you walk in, my lords.

*Exeunt**TROILUS exits.***PARIS**

I know what it is to love, and wish I could help him. Please  
go in, my lords.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 4

### Shakespeare

*Enter PANDARUS and CRESSIDA***PANDARUS**

Be moderate, be moderate.

**CRESSIDA**

Why tell you me of moderation?  
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,  
And violenteth in a sense as strong  
5 As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?  
If I could temporize with my affection,  
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,  
The like allayment could I give my grief.  
My love admits no qualifying dross;  
10 No more my grief, in such a precious loss.

**PANDARUS**

Here, here, here he comes.

*Enter TROILUS***PANDARUS**

Ah, sweet ducks!

**CRESSIDA**

15 O Troilus! Troilus!

*Embracing him***PANDARUS**

What a pair of spectacles is here!  
Let me embrace too. 'O heart,' as the goodly saying is,  
'--O heart, heavy heart,  
20 Why sigh'st thou without breaking?  
where he answers again,  
'Because thou canst not ease thy smart  
By friendship nor by speaking.'  
There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away  
25 nothing, for we may live to have need of such a  
verse: we see it, we see it. How now, lambs?

**TROILUS**

Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity,  
That the bless'd gods, as angry with my fancy,  
More bright in zeal than the devotion which  
30 Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

**CRESSIDA**

Have the gods envy?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, ay, ay, ay; 'tis too plain a case.

**CRESSIDA**

And is it true that I must go from Troy?


### Shakescleare Translation

*PANDARUS and CRESSIDA enter.***PANDARUS**

Be reasonable, be reasonable.

**CRESSIDA**

Why are you telling me to be reasonable? This grief is totally  
appropriate and exactly as violent as the reason that causes  
it! How can I be more reasonable than this? If I could make it  
less painful, or water down my love, it would also be an  
appropriate cure for my grief . My love can't be diluted,  
nor can my grief, when what I am losing is so precious to  
me.

 In homeopathy, medicine can be made by watering down the poison that caused the disease.

**PANDARUS**

He is coming.


*TROILUS enters.***PANDARUS**


Oh, such a sweet couple.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh Troilus! Troilus!

*CRESSIDA embraces TROILUS.***PANDARUS**

These two are an extraordinary sight! Let me embrace you  
too.  
"Oh heart," as the great saying goes, "... oh heavy, heavy  
heart,  
Why do you sigh without breaking ?" and the heart  
replies:  
"Because you cannot ease your pain,  
with company or words."  
There has never been a better saying. Let us never forget  
anything, for one day we might need a saying like this. How  
are you, lambs?

 Perhaps, breaking may mean speaking here.

**TROILUS**

Cressida, I love you so purely that the divine gods are taking  
you away from me, as they are angry that my devotion to  
you is stronger and more passionate than my devotion to  
them.

**CRESSIDA**

Are the gods envious of me?

**PANDARUS**

Yes, yes, yes, yes. That is too obvious a question.

**CRESSIDA**

And is it also true that I must leave Troy?

**TROILUS**

A hateful truth.

**CRESSIDA**

35 What, and from Troilus too?

**TROILUS**

From Troy and Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Is it possible?

**TROILUS**

And suddenly; where injury of chance  
 Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
 40 All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
 Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents  
 Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
 Even in the birth of our own labouring breath:  
 We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
 45 Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
 With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  
 Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
 Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:  
 As many farewells as be stars in heaven,  
 50 With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,  
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
 And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

**AENEAS**

*[Within]* My lord, is the lady ready?

**TROILUS**

55 Hark! you are call'd: some say the Genius so  
 Cries 'come' to him that instantly must die.  
 Bid them have patience; she shall come anon.

**PANDARUS**

Where are my tears? rain, to lay this wind, or  
 my heart will be blown up by the root.  
 60

*Exit*

**CRESSIDA**

I must then to the Grecians?

**TROILUS**

No remedy.

**CRESSIDA**

A woful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks!  
 When shall we see again?

**TROILUS**

65 Hear me, my love: be thou but true of heart,--

**CRESSIDA**

I true! how now! what wicked deem is this?

**TROILUS**

Nay, we must use expostulation kindly,  
 For it is parting from us:  
 I speak not 'be thou true,' as fearing thee,  
 70 For I will throw my glove to Death himself,  
 That there's no maculation in thy heart:  
 But 'be thou true,' say I, to fashion in  
 My sequent protestation; be thou true,  
 And I will see thee.

**TROILUS**

A hateful truth.

**CRESSIDA**

And must I leave Troilus too?

**TROILUS**

You have to leave Troy and Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

How can it be?

**TROILUS**

And our bad luck is splitting us up suddenly. It stops us saying goodbye, pushes past our moment of hesitation, rudely prevents our lips from meeting <sup>3</sup>, and stops us from embracing each other. It strangles our promises to each other when they have only just been born. Even though we spent so many thousands of sighs winning each other, we now lose each other spending only one sigh <sup>4</sup>. Time is hasty like a thief, bundling up his stolen object without knowing how valuable it is. What is as valuable as the stars in heaven, with so much breath and kisses devoted to each one, he bundles up into a brief goodbye. He allows us only a brief kiss, ruined by our salty tears.

<sup>3</sup> This means that they cannot kiss and also, perhaps, that their mouths are hanging open.

<sup>4</sup> This seems to be a play on words, by "one sigh" Troilus suggests that they have only had one sexual encounter.

**AENEAS**

*[Within]* My lord, is the lady ready to leave?

**TROILUS**

Listen! They are calling you. Some people say that a guardian spirit shouts "come" to a man who is about to die. *[To PANDARUS]* Tell them to be patient, she will come soon.

**PANDARUS**

Why am I not crying? I feel like I need to cry or my heart will be torn out.

*PANDARUS exits.*

**CRESSIDA**

I have go to the Greeks, then?

**TROILUS**

There is no way of stopping it.

**CRESSIDA**

I will be a sad Cressida among happy Greeks. When will we meet again?

**TROILUS**

Listen to me, my love. If you are just true to your heart...

**CRESSIDA**

Are you questioning my truth? How come? What an evil judgment on me is that?

**TROILUS**

No, we must protest <sup>5</sup> gently, as we don't have much time. I'm not saying "be true to me" because I fear that you won't be. I would duel with Death himself to prove that there is no stain of infidelity in your heart. But I say "if you are true" so that I can add "then we will see each other again."

<sup>5</sup> "Expostulation" means a friendly protest, and there is wordplay here: etymologically, the word also suggests the leaving ("ex-") of a place ("post").

**CRESSIDA**

75 O, you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers  
As infinite as imminent! but I'll be true.

**TROILUS**

And I'll grow friend with danger. Wear this sleeve.

**CRESSIDA**

And you this glove. When shall I see you?

**TROILUS**

I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels,  
80 To give thee nightly visitation.  
But yet be true.

**CRESSIDA**

O heavens! 'be true' again!

**TROILUS**

Hear while I speak it, love:  
The Grecian youths are full of quality;  
85 They're loving, well composed with gifts of nature,  
Flowing and swelling o'er with arts and exercise:  
How novelty may move, and parts with person,  
Alas, a kind of godly jealousy--  
Which, I beseech you, call a virtuous sin--  
90 Makes me afraid.

**CRESSIDA**

O heavens! you love me not.

**TROILUS**

Die I a villain, then!  
In this I do not call your faith in question  
So mainly as my merit: I cannot sing,  
95 Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk,  
Nor play at subtle games; fair virtues all,  
To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant:  
But I can tell that in each grace of these  
There lurks a still and dumb-discursive devil  
100 That tempts most cunningly: but be not tempted.

**CRESSIDA**

Do you think I will?

**TROILUS**

No.  
But something may be done that we will not:  
And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,  
105 When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,  
Presuming on their changeful potency.

**AENEAS**

[Within] Nay, good my lord,--

**TROILUS**

Come, kiss; and let us part.

**PARIS**

[Within] Brother Troilus!

**TROILUS**

110 Good brother, come you hither;  
And bring Aeneas and the Grecian with you.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, will you be true?

**CRESSIDA**

Oh, you will face dangers, my lord, as immediate as they are  
infinite! But I will be true to you.

**TROILUS**

I will befriend danger. Wear this sleeve <sup>8</sup>. [TROILUS gives  
CRESSIDA a sleeve]

**CRESSIDA**

Wear this glove. [CRESSIDA gives TROILUS a glove] When  
will I see you?

**TROILUS**

I'll bribe the Greek guards, so that I can see you at night.  
Just be true to me.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh heavens. He's telling me to "be true," again!

**TROILUS**

Listen, love. Young Greek men are full of good qualities:  
they're loving, well put together, fluent in their education  
and swollen from exercise. The way that this new situation  
could persuade you, and touch certain parts of you, I'm  
afraid that a kind of godly jealousy <sup>9</sup>... Which I hope you  
can consider a virtuous sin... Makes me afraid.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh heavens! You don't love me.

**TROILUS**

Then I would die a villain! I am not questioning your loyalty  
so much as my own merit. I cannot sing or dance the  
"volta," <sup>8</sup> I don't sweeten my speech <sup>9</sup>, and I'm not  
manipulative. These are the good virtues that the Greeks  
are all good at and full of. And in each of their talents there  
will be a tempting devil. But don't be tempted.

**CRESSIDA**

Do you think I will be?

**TROILUS**

No. But sometimes things happen against our will <sup>10</sup>, and  
sometimes we are devils to ourselves if we assume that our  
power to resist temptation will not change.

**AENEAS**

[Within] No, my good lord...

**TROILUS**

Come, kiss me, and let us go outside.

**PARIS**

[Within] Brother Troilus!

**TROILUS**

Good brother, come here, and bring Aeneas and the Greek  
with you.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, will you be true?

<sup>8</sup> In the Renaissance sleeves were detachable, Troilus is giving Cressida something to remember him by.

<sup>9</sup> There was a contested idea in Christian theology that God was jealous when man was not faithful to him.

<sup>8</sup> The "volta" or "lavolt" was a very physically demanding dance.

<sup>9</sup> With eloquence or praise. This is ironic, because Troilus's speech is full of rhetorical and poetic aspects.

<sup>10</sup> He is playing on her question, turning "will" into a question of will-power.

**TROILUS**

Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:  
 Whilst others fish with craft for great opinion,  
 115 I with great truth catch mere simplicity;  
 Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,  
 With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.  
 Fear not my truth: the moral of my wit  
 Is 'plain and true;' there's all the reach of it.

*Enter AENEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, and DIOMEDES*

**TROILUS**

120 Welcome, Sir Diomed! here is the lady  
 Which for Antenor we deliver you:  
 At the port, lord, I'll give her to thy hand,  
 And by the way possess thee what she is.  
 Entreat her fair; and, by my soul, fair Greek,  
 125 If e'er thou stand at mercy of my sword,  
 Name Cressida and thy life shall be as safe  
 As Priam is in Ilium.

**DIOMEDES**

Fair Lady Cressida,  
 So please you, save the thanks this prince expects:  
 130 The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,  
 Pleads your fair usage; and to Diomed  
 You shall be mistress, and command him wholly.

**TROILUS**

Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously,  
 To shame the zeal of my petition to thee  
 135 In praising her: I tell thee, lord of Greece,  
 She is as far high-soaring o'er thy praises  
 As thou unworthy to be call'd her servant.  
 I charge thee use her well, even for my charge;  
 For, by the dreadful Pluto, if thou dost not,  
 140 Though the great bulk Achilles be thy guard,  
 I'll cut thy throat.

**DIOMEDES**

O, be not moved, Prince Troilus:  
 Let me be privileged by my place and message,  
 To be a speaker free; when I am hence  
 145 I'll answer to my lust: and know you, lord,  
 I'll nothing do on charge: to her own worth  
 She shall be prized; but that you say 'be't so,  
 I'll speak it in my spirit and honour, 'no.'

**TROILUS**

Come, to the port. I'll tell thee, Diomed,  
 150 This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.  
 Lady, give me your hand, and, as we walk,  
 To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

*Exeunt TROILUS, CRESSIDA, and DIOMEDES*

*Trumpet within*

**PARIS**

Hark! Hector's trumpet.

**AENEAS**

How have we spent this morning!  
 155 The prince must think me tardy and remiss,  
 That swore to ride before him to the field.

**PARIS**

'Tis Troilus' fault: come, come, to field with him.

**DEIPHOBUS**

Let us make ready straight.

**TROILUS**

Who me? Alas, my fault, my vice, is that I must be true.  
 Other people are very artful in fishing for a good reputation,  
 but with my great honesty the only thing I can catch is a  
 reputation for being simple. Other people gild copper  
 crowns with cunning, I wear my crown bare, expressing  
 only truth and plainness. Don't worry about me being loyal:  
 my motto has always been "plain and honest," and that's all  
 there is to it.

*AENEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, and DIOMEDES  
 enter.*

**TROILUS**

Welcome, Sir Diomedes! Here is the lady which we must  
 give you in return for Antenor. I'll give you her hand at the  
 gate, lord, and from there you will possess what she is.  
 Treat her as fairly as she is fair. I promise you, good Greek,  
 that if you are ever at the mercy of my sword in battle, you  
 just have to say her name and your life will be as safe as  
 Troy.

**DIOMEDES**

Fair lady Cressida, you don't need to thank this prince: the  
 spark in your eye and your blushing cheek demand that I  
 treat you fairly. You shall be mistress to Diomed<sup>11</sup>, and  
 command me wholly.

<sup>11</sup> Both meanings of "mistress" as female master and lover are being implied here.

**TROILUS**

Greek, you are not to treat me courteously, by insulting my  
 genuine request that you keep her safe and praising her  
 yourself. I'm telling you, Greek lord, she flies above your  
 praises and you are unworthy of being her servant. I charge  
 you to treat her well, and do it because I charge you to do it.  
 If you do not do it, even if the huge Achilles were protecting  
 you, by Pluto,<sup>12</sup> I will cut your throat.

<sup>12</sup> The Greek god of the underworld.

**DIOMEDES**

Oh don't get upset, Prince Troilus. The privilege of being a  
 messenger and a noble means that I can speak freely. When  
 I am away from here I'll do as I please<sup>13</sup>, and I don't do  
 anything because I am charged to. She will be prized well  
 because of her worth. But if you tell me to treat her well,  
 then on my honor and with all my heart I'll tell you "No."

<sup>13</sup> "Answer to my lust" means "do as I please" and at the same time "satisfy my desire."

**TROILUS**

Let us go to the gate. This insult, Diomedes, will make you  
 flee me on the battlefield. Lady, give me your hand, and as  
 we walk to the gate we'll talk between us only.

*TROILUS, CRESSIDA, and DIOMEDES exit.*

*A trumpet sounds off-stage.*

**PARIS**

Listen, it is Hector's trumpet.

**AENEAS**

How has the morning already passed? The prince must  
 think I am late and neglectful, since I promised to ride out  
 to the battlefield before him.

**PARIS**

It's Troilus's fault. Come, let's go to the battle with him.

**DEIPHOBUS**

We should go immediately.

**AENEAS**

160 Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity,  
Let us address to tend on Hector's heels:  
The glory of our Troy doth this day lie  
On his fair worth and single chivalry.

*Exeunt*

**AENEAS**

Yes, let's follow Hector with the speed of a bridegroom who is full of joy. The glory of Troy all depends today on his strength and chivalry.

*They exit.*

## Act 4, Scene 5

### Shakespeare

*Enter AJAX, armed; AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENELAUS, ULYSSES, NESTOR, and others*

**AGAMEMNON**

Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,  
Anticipating time with starting courage.  
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,  
Thou dreadful Ajax; that the appalled air  
5 May pierce the head of the great combatant  
And hale him hither.

**AJAX**

Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.  
Now crack thy lungs, and split thy brazen pipe:  
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek  
10 Outswell the colic of puff'd Aquilon:  
Come, stretch thy chest and let thy eyes spout blood;  
Thou blow'st for Hector.

*Trumpet sounds*

**ULYSSES**

No trumpet answers.

**ACHILLES**

'Tis but early days.

**AGAMEMNON**

15 Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?

**ULYSSES**

'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gait;  
He rises on the toe: that spirit of his  
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

*Enter DIOMEDES, with CRESSIDA*

**AGAMEMNON**

20 Is this the Lady Cressid?

**DIOMEDES**

Even she.

**AGAMEMNON**

Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.

**NESTOR**

Our general doth salute you with a kiss.

**ULYSSES**

25 Yet is the kindness but particular;  
'Twere better she were kiss'd in general.

### Shakescleare Translation

*AJAX dressed for battle, AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENELAUS, ULYSSES, NESTOR and other followers, including a trumpeter, enter.*

**AGAMEMNON**

You are here fresh and ready, waiting bravely for the time to fight. Blow your trumpet loudly to give a message to Troy, terrifying Ajax, that the awful sound might assault his ears and bring him here.

**AJAX**

You, trumpeter, here is my money. Now blow as hard as you can. Blow, man, until your cheeks are more full of air than the entire sky. Now puff out your chest and play until your eyes cry blood. You are blowing to Hector.

*The trumpet is played.*

**ULYSSES**

There is no reply.

**ACHILLES**

It's not been long enough.

**AGAMEMNON**

Isn't that Diomedes with Calchas's daughter?

**ULYSSES**

It is him, I recognize the way he walks. He has a spring in his step, and his spirit seems to lift him above the ground.

*DIOMEDES enters with CRESSIDA.*

**AGAMEMNON**

Is this the lady Cressida?

**DIOMEDES**

It is her.

**AGAMEMNON**


Welcome to the Greek camp, sweet lady. *[AGAMEMNON kisses CRESSIDA]*

**NESTOR**

Our general greets you with a kiss.

**ULYSSES**

But this is just the kindness of one man, she should be kissed by everyone.

 Ulysses puns on 'general' as being a military meaning, but also meaning in general.



**NESTOR**

And very courtly counsel: I'll begin.  
So much for Nestor.

**ACHILLES**

I'll take what winter from your lips, fair lady:  
Achilles bids you welcome.

**MENELAUS**

30 I had good argument for kissing once.

**PATROCLUS**

But that's no argument for kissing now;  
For this popp'd Paris in his hardiment,  
And parted thus you and your argument.

**ULYSSES**

35 O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!  
For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.

**PATROCLUS**

The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine:  
Patroclus kisses you.

**MENELAUS**

O, this is trim!

**PATROCLUS**

Paris and I kiss evermore for him.

**MENELAUS**

40 I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, by your leave.

**CRESSIDA**

In kissing, do you render or receive?

**PATROCLUS**

Both take and give.

**CRESSIDA**

45 I'll make my match to live,  
The kiss you take is better than you give;  
Therefore no kiss.

**MENELAUS**

I'll give you boot, I'll give you three for one.

**CRESSIDA**

You're an odd man; give even or give none.

**MENELAUS**

An odd man, lady! every man is odd.

**CRESSIDA**

50 No, Paris is not; for you know 'tis true,  
That you are odd, and he is even with you.

**MENELAUS**

You fillip me o' the head.

**CRESSIDA**

No, I'll be sworn.

**NESTOR**

That's good advice, I'll begin. This is from Nestor. *[NESTOR kisses CRESSIDA]*

**ACHILLES**

I'll warm your lips, fair lady. Achilles welcomes you.  
*[ACHILLES kisses CRESSIDA]*

**MENELAUS**

I used to have a good reason <sup>2</sup> to kiss.

<sup>2</sup> Helen.

**PATROCLUS**

But that's no reason for kissing now. Paris thrust himself in,  
with his boldness, and separated you from your reason.  
*[PATROCLUS kisses CRESSIDA]*

**ULYSSES**

Oh that terrible reason, the reason for all our suffering! The  
reason is why we lose our heads to decorate his horns <sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Horns are the traditional symbol of the cuckold. Ulysses jokes, drily, that Menelaus's reason (Helen's cuckolding of him with Paris) is the reason that Greek soldiers are dying in battle.

**PATROCLUS**

The first kiss I give you is from Menelaus <sup>4</sup>. This one is  
your kiss from Patroclus. *[PATROCLUS kisses CRESSIDA again]*

<sup>4</sup> Patroclus is mocking Menelaus, making him a cuckold again by stealing his opportunity to kiss Cressida.

**MENELAUS**

Oh, good one.

**PATROCLUS**

Paris and I do all his kissing for him.

**MENELAUS**

I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, if you don't mind.

**CRESSIDA**

Do you give a kiss or take one?

**MENELAUS**

A kiss is both taken and given.

**CRESSIDA**

I bet my life that the kiss you take is better than the kiss you  
receive <sup>5</sup>. Therefore I won't kiss you.

<sup>5</sup> Cressida may be joking that, since he lost his wife, Menelaus must be a bad lover.

**MENELAUS**

I'll give you a profit, I'll kiss you three times in return for one  
kiss from you.

**CRESSIDA**

You're an odd <sup>6</sup> man. Give equally or don't give at all.

<sup>6</sup> Odd meaning both strange and single.

**MENELAUS**

An odd man? Lady, every man is just one person.

**CRESSIDA**

No, Paris isn't, and you know that because of him you are  
alone and he has got even with you.

**MENELAUS**

That hurt <sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Menelaus is suggesting that he can feel the horns under his skin, she has reminded him that his wife is unfaithful.

**CRESSIDA**

I don't think it was me that hurt your head.

**ULYSSES**

It were no match, your nail against his horn.  
May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

**CRESSIDA**

55 You may.

**ULYSSES**

I do desire it.

**CRESSIDA**

Why, beg, then.

**ULYSSES**

Why then for Venus' sake, give me a kiss,  
When Helen is a maid again, and his.

**CRESSIDA**

60 I am your debtor, claim it when 'tis due.

**ULYSSES**

Never's my day, and then a kiss of you.

**DIOMEDES**

Lady, a word: I'll bring you to your father.

*Exit with CRESSIDA*

**NESTOR**

A woman of quick sense.

**ULYSSES**

65 Fie, fie upon her!  
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.  
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
70 That give accosting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
To every ticklish reader! set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity  
And daughters of the game.

*Trumpet within*

**ALL**

75 The Trojans' trumpet.

**AGAMEMNON**

Yonder comes the troop.

*Enter HECTOR, armed; AENEAS, TROILUS, and other Trojans, with Attendants*

**AENEAS**

Hail, all you state of Greece! what shall be done  
To him that victory commands? or do you purpose  
80 A victor shall be known? will you the knights  
Shall to the edge of all extremity  
Pursue each other, or shall be divided  
By any voice or order of the field?  
Hector bade ask.

**AGAMEMNON**

85 Which way would Hector have it?

**AENEAS**

He cares not; he'll obey conditions.

**ULYSSES**

It's no competition, your nails against his horn <sup>9</sup>. May I,  
sweet lady, beg for a kiss from you?

<sup>9</sup> Ulysses seems to be comparing Cressida's insults with her long nails, as if they were scratching Menelaus's face, but he agrees that Paris's cuckolding of him is worse.

**CRESSIDA**

You may.

**ULYSSES**

I wish to.

**CRESSIDA**

Go on, then, beg.

**ULYSSES**

Why then, for Venus's sake, give me a kiss when Helen is a  
virgin again and back with him <sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Ulysses is saying he won't beg for a kiss.

**CRESSIDA**

I will honor that when what you say is true <sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Ulysses was a famously clever speaker and a notorious liar.

**ULYSSES**

Then I'll never have a kiss from you.

**DIOMEDES**

Lady, may I talk with you. I will bring you to your father.

*DIOMEDES exits with CRESSIDA.*

**NESTOR**

She's a quick-witted woman.

**ULYSSES**

Bah, sod her! There's wit in her eyes, cheeks, lips, even her  
foot is witty. Her promiscuous spirits pour out of every joint  
and limb of her body. Oh, these confident women, so clever  
with their tongue, they show what they really want to  
anyone willing to take her up on it! Consider her either an  
easy prize to be won by anyone bold enough to try or a  
prostitute.

*A trumpet plays off-stage.*

**ALL**

The Trojans' trumpet.

**AGAMEMNON**

Here come their soldiers.

*HECTOR, dressed for battle, AENEAS, TROILUS, and other Trojans and attendants enter.*

**AENEAS**

Greetings to you, Greek rulers. How will the winner be  
rewarded? Or how do you intend that the victory be  
decided? Do you want the knights to fight to the death, or  
should they be stopped by a referee? Hector told me to ask  
you.

**AGAMEMNON**

What conditions does Hector want?

**AENEAS**

He doesn't care, he'll obey any conditions.

**ACHILLES**

'Tis done like Hector; but securely done,  
A little proudly, and great deal misprizing  
The knight opposed.

**AENEAS**

90 If not Achilles, sir,  
What is your name?

**ACHILLES**

If not Achilles, nothing.

**AENEAS**

Therefore Achilles: but, whate'er, know this:  
In the extremity of great and little,  
95 Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector;  
The one almost as infinite as all,  
The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,  
And that which looks like pride is courtesy.  
This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood:  
100 In love whereof, half Hector stays at home;  
Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek  
This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.

**ACHILLES**

A maiden battle, then? O, I perceive you.

*Re-enter DIOMEDES*

**AGAMEMNON**

105 Here is Sir Diomed. Go, gentle knight,  
Stand by our Ajax: as you and Lord Aeneas  
Consent upon the order of their fight,  
So be it; either to the uttermost,  
Or else a breath: the combatants being kin  
110 Half stints their strife before their strokes begin.

*AJAX and HECTOR enter the lists*

**ULYSSES**

They are opposed already.

**AGAMEMNON**

What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?

**ULYSSES**

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,  
Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,  
115 Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue;  
Not soon provoked nor being provoked soon calm'd:  
His heart and hand both open and both free;  
For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows;  
Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,  
120 Nor dignifies an impure thought with breath;  
Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;  
For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes  
To tender objects, but he in heat of action  
Is more vindicative than jealous love:  
125 They call him Troilus, and on him erect  
A second hope, as fairly built as Hector.  
Thus says Aeneas; one that knows the youth  
Even to his inches, and with private soul  
Did in great Ilium thus translate him to me.

*Alarm. Hector and Ajax fight*

**AGAMEMNON**

130 They are in action.

**NESTOR**

Now, Ajax, hold thine own!

**ACHILLES**

This is how Hector speaks, confidently, a little proudly, and greatly underestimating his opponent.

**AENEAS**


Who are you, if you aren't Achilles?

**ACHILLES**

If I'm not Achilles, I am nothing.

**AENEAS**

Therefore Achilles, or whoever you are, listen: there is great braveness and little pride in Hector. The first is almost infinite, the other almost nothing. If you look at him you'll see that when he seems proud, he is actually being polite. Ajax is a relative of Hector, and so their blood is half the same. Because of this, half of Hector comes to fight. And with only half of his heart, and one of his hands, Hector comes to fight [this half-Trojan, half-Greek knight](#).

 Ajax was thought to be half Trojan.

**ACHILLES**

This won't be a fight to the death then? I see.

*DIOMEDES re-enters.*

**AGAMEMNON**

This is Sir Diomedes. Go, noble knight, and stand with Ajax. Whatever terms you and Lord Aeneas agree to shall be the rules for the battle. Let it be either to death or just a sporting fight, if the combatants are related they won't be able to hate each other fully.

*AJAX and HECTOR prepare to fight.*

**ULYSSES**

They are already prepared to fight.

**AGAMEMNON**

Who is that Trojan who looks so sad?

**ULYSSES**

The youngest son of king Priam, a good knight, not yet fully grown up, but still an unequalled knight: an honest man, who speaks with actions not words. It's hard to make him angry, and hard to calm him down when he is angry, but he is generous with both his love and his possessions. Whatever he has he shares, and whatever he thinks he shows, but only to people who he should be generous towards, and he would never be so dishonorable as to say anything inappropriate. He is as manly as Hector but more dangerous. For while Hector can be expected to show mercy even when he is angry, when he is in the heat of the fight, this knight is even more vengeful than a jealous lover. He is called Troilus, and the Trojans see him as a second hope, as well built as Hector. This is what Aeneas said to me in private when I visited Troy, and he knows the young man very well.

*An alarm sounds. HECTOR and AJAX fight.*

**AGAMEMNON**

They are fighting.

**NESTOR**

Come on Ajax, defend yourself.

**TROILUS**

Hector, thou sleep'st;  
Awake thee!

**AGAMEMNON**

His blows are well disposed: there, Ajax!

**DIOMEDES**

135 You must no more.

*Trumpets cease*

**AENEAS**

Princes, enough, so please you.

**AJAX**

I am not warm yet; let us fight again.

**DIOMEDES**

As Hector pleases.

**HECTOR**

140 Why, then will I no more:  
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,  
A cousin-german to great Priam's seed;  
The obligation of our blood forbids  
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:  
145 Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so  
That thou couldst say 'This hand is Grecian all,  
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg  
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood  
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister  
150 Bounds in my father's; by Jove multipotent,  
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member  
Wherein my sword had not impressure made  
Of our rank feud: but the just gods gainsay  
That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,  
155 My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword  
Be drain'd! Let me embrace thee, Ajax:  
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;  
Hector would have them fall upon him thus:  
Cousin, all honour to thee!

**AJAX**

160 I thank thee, Hector  
Thou art too gentle and too free a man:  
I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence  
A great addition earned in thy death.

**HECTOR**

Not Neoptolemus so mirable,  
165 On whose bright crest Fame with her loud'st Oyes  
Cries 'This is he,' could promise to himself  
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.

**AENEAS**

There is expectance here from both the sides,  
What further you will do.

**HECTOR**

170 We'll answer it;  
The issue is embracement: Ajax, farewell.

**AJAX**

If I might in entreaties find success--  
As seld I have the chance-- I would desire  
My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.

**DIOMEDES**

175 'Tis Agamemnon's wish, and great Achilles  
Doth long to see unarm'd the valiant Hector.

**TROILUS**

Hector you are fighting as if you're asleep, wake up!

**AGAMEMNON**

His attacks are well aimed, good shot, Ajax!

**DIOMEDES**

You must stop fighting.

*The trumpets stop playing.*

**AENEAS**

Princes, please stop.

**AJAX**

I haven't even broken a sweat, let's fight again.

**DIOMEDES**

If Hector is happy to continue...

**HECTOR**

Then I will stop here: you are, great lord, my father's sister's son, and the first cousin to all of Priam's sons. Because we are family we are not allowed to kill each other. If it were possible to separate your Greek and Trojan parts so that you could say: "This hand is all Greek, and this one is Trojan, the muscles in this leg are all Greek, and this one is Trojan, my Trojan mother's blood is in my right cheek, and the left <sup>12</sup> cheek is made of my father's Greek blood," then, I swear by Jove, you would not leave this fight with a Greek limb on your body. But the gods forbid that I use my sword to spill any of your mother's, my sacred aunt's, blood! Let me embrace you, Ajax, by Jove, you have strong arms and I'd rather they embraced me than fought me. All honor to you, cousin!

<sup>12</sup> The left or 'sinister' side is supposed to be evil.

**AJAX**

Thank you Hector, you are too generous and gentle. I came to kill you, cousin, and gain honor from you dying.

**HECTOR**

Not even the great Achilles, who Fame herself declares is her favourite, could expect to have that honor.

**AENEAS**

Both sides wait for your answer about what you will do.

**HECTOR**

We'll give you this answer: the outcome of this fight is an embrace. Ajax, goodbye.

**AJAX**

Maybe I can have more success with my words, something I rarely get a chance to do. I invite my famous cousin to the Greek camp.

**DIOMEDES**

It is Agamemnon's wish, and great Achilles wants to see the valiant Hector without his weapons.

**HECTOR**

Aeneas, call my brother Troilus to me,  
And signify this loving interview  
To the expecters of our Trojan part;  
180 Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;  
I will go eat with thee and see your knights.

**AJAX**

Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.

**HECTOR**

The worthiest of them tell me name by name;  
But for Achilles, mine own searching eyes  
185 Shall find him by his large and portly size.

**AGAMEMNON**

Worthy of arms! as welcome as to one  
That would be rid of such an enemy;  
But that's no welcome: understand more clear,  
What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks  
190 And formless ruin of oblivion;  
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,  
Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,  
Bids thee, with most divine integrity,  
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.

**HECTOR**

195 I thank thee, most imperious Agamemnon.

**AGAMEMNON**

[To TROILUS] My well-famed lord of Troy, no  
less to you.

**MENELAUS**

Let me confirm my princely brother's greeting:  
You brace of warlike brothers, welcome hither.

**HECTOR**

200 Who must we answer?

**AENEAS**

The noble Menelaus.

**HECTOR**

O, you, my lord? by Mars his gauntlet, thanks!  
Mock not, that I affect the untraded oath;  
Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove:  
205 She's well, but bade me not commend her to you.

**MENELAUS**

Name her not now, sir; she's a deadly theme.

**HECTOR**

O, pardon; I offend.

**NESTOR**

I have, thou gallant Trojan, seen thee oft  
Labouring for destiny make cruel way  
210 Through ranks of Greekish youth, and I have seen thee,  
As hot as Perseus, spur thy Phrygian steed,  
Despising many forfeits and subduements,  
When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i' the air,  
Not letting it decline on the declined,  
215 That I have said to some my standers by  
'Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life!  
And I have seen thee pause and take thy breath,  
When that a ring of Greeks have hemm'd thee in,  
Like an Olympian wrestling: this have I seen;  
220 But this thy countenance, still lock'd in steel,  
I never saw till now. I knew thy grandsire,

**HECTOR**

Aeneas, go bring Troilus to me, and tell the Trojans who  
expect me to come back that I am going to meet the Greeks  
and that they may go home. Give me your hand, cousin, I  
will eat with you and meet your knights.

**AJAX**

Great Agamemnon is coming to meet us here.

**HECTOR**

Tell me the names of the most important people. Except for  
Achilles, I'll recognize him from his large build.

**AGAMEMNON**

Brave fighters! You are welcome here, even though we  
would be glad to be rid of such an enemy. But that's no  
welcome. Understand me clearly, our past and future are  
full of skeletons and total destruction. But this moment  
allows you to be welcomed, great Hector, honestly and  
faithfully, free of any prejudice, with the most divine fair  
dealing.

**HECTOR**

Thank you, imperial Agamemnon.

**AGAMEMNON**

[To TROILUS] I welcome you as well, famous Trojan lord.

**MENELAUS**

I'd like to welcome you as well, warrior brothers, you are  
welcome here.

**HECTOR**

Who are you, may I ask?

**AENEAS**

The noble Menelaus.

**HECTOR**

Oh it's you? Many thanks, by Mars! Don't be upset that I  
don't pass on best wishes from your ex-wife, but she told  
me not to <sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> The original text links to Greek mythology and carries a sexual innuendo.

**MENELAUS**

Let's not talk about her now, sir, she's a bad <sup>14</sup> topic.

<sup>14</sup> Menelaus's wording suggests that he is regularly reminded how much death the cuckoldry of his wife has caused.

**HECTOR**

Oh, excuse me. I'm offending you.

**NESTOR**

I have, gallant <sup>15</sup> Trojan, often seen you doing Death's job  
and cruelly cutting a path through ranks of young Greek  
soldiers, and I have seen you, as hot as Perseus <sup>16</sup>, riding  
your warhorse showing your scorn for those soldiers who  
beg for mercy, holding your sword in the air rather than  
letting it fall on the fallen. And I have said to some other  
observers: "Look, Jupiter himself has come, deciding who  
should live and who should die!" And I have seen you pause  
and catch your breath, when you have been surrounded by  
a ring of Greek soldiers, like a wrestler entering the ring.  
This I have seen but until now I never saw your face without  
a helmet on. I knew your grandfather, and once fought with <sup>17</sup>  
him. He was a good soldier, but by Mars, the captain of  
us all <sup>18</sup>, I never saw anyone like you before. Let an old

<sup>15</sup> This term can mean both brave and flippant.

<sup>16</sup> Perseus was a legendary Greek hero.

<sup>17</sup> Against or alongside is unclear.

<sup>18</sup> Mars was the Roman god of war.

And once fought with him: he was a soldier good;  
But, by great Mars, the captain of us all,  
Never saw like thee. Let an old man embrace thee;  
225 And, worthy warrior, welcome to our tents.

**AENEAS**

'Tis the old Nestor.

**HECTOR**

Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,  
That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time:  
Most reverend Nestor, I am glad to clasp thee.

**NESTOR**

230 I would my arms could match thee in contention,  
As they contend with thee in courtesy.

**HECTOR**

I would they could.

**NESTOR**

Ha!  
By this white beard, I'd fight with thee to-morrow.  
235 Well, welcome, welcome! I have seen the time.

**ULYSSES**

I wonder now how yonder city stands  
When we have here her base and pillar by us.

**HECTOR**

I know your favour, Lord Ulysses, well.  
Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Trojan dead,  
240 Since first I saw yourself and Diomed  
In Ilion, on your Greekish embassy.

**ULYSSES**

Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue:  
My prophecy is but half his journey yet;  
For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,  
245 Yond towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds,  
Must kiss their own feet.

**HECTOR**

I must not believe you:  
There they stand yet, and modestly I think,  
The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost  
250 A drop of Grecian blood: the end crowns all,  
And that old common arbitrator, Time,  
Will one day end it.

**ULYSSES**

So to him we leave it.  
Most gentle and most valiant Hector, welcome:  
255 After the general, I beseech you next  
To feast with me and see me at my tent.

**ACHILLES**

I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!  
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;  
I have with exact view perused thee, Hector,  
260 And quoted joint by joint.

**HECTOR**

Is this Achilles?

**ACHILLES**

I am Achilles.

**HECTOR**

Stand fair, I pray thee: let me look on thee.

man embrace you, and welcome you to our tents, worthy warrior.

**AENEAS**

This is old Nestor.

**HECTOR**

Let me embrace you, wise old story-teller, that has lived a very long life. Respect-worthy Nestor, I am glad to hold you in my arms.

**NESTOR**

I wish my arms were as strong as yours, I cannot hold you so tightly.

**HECTOR**

I wish they could.

**NESTOR**

Ha! By my white beard, I would fight with you tomorrow if I could. Well, welcome, welcome! I cannot believe I have lived to see this.

**ULYSSES**

I wonder how Troy is still standing without you standing there to hold her up.

**HECTOR**

I know your face well, Lord Ulysses. Ah, sir, many Greeks and Trojans have died since I last saw you and Diomedes in Troy as ambassadors.

**ULYSSES**

Sir I told you then what would happen. My prophecy has only been half fulfilled, though. For those walls over there, that hold up your town so shamelessly, and those towers, which so lustfully kiss the clouds, will kiss their own feet when they fall.

**HECTOR**

I can't believe your visions will come true. Troy's walls are still standing, and they look modest to me. Every stone that falls from our walls will cost a drop of Greek blood. The end is the conclusion of everything, and time will be the judge of everyone.

**ULYSSES**

Then we will leave it to him. Most gentle and valiant Hector, welcome. After you have visited the general, I ask that you will come and eat with me at my tent.

**ACHILLES**

I shall interrupt you there, lord Ulysses! Now, Hector, I have feasted my eyes on you. I have seen you very well indeed, Hector, and considered every joint.

**HECTOR**

Is this Achilles?

**ACHILLES**

I am Achilles.

**HECTOR**

Stand still, please. Let me look at you.

**ACHILLES**

Behold thy fill.

**HECTOR**

265 Nay, I have done already.

**ACHILLES**

Thou art too brief: I will the second time,  
As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.

**HECTOR**

O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;  
But there's more in me than thou understand'st.  
270 Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?

**ACHILLES**

Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body  
Shall I destroy him? whether there, or there, or there?  
That I may give the local wound a name  
And make distinct the very breach whereout  
275 Hector's great spirit flew: answer me, heavens!

**HECTOR**

It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,  
To answer such a question: stand again:  
Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly  
As to prenominate in nice conjecture  
280 Where thou wilt hit me dead?

**ACHILLES**

I tell thee, yea.

**HECTOR**

Wert thou an oracle to tell me so,  
I'd not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;  
For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there;  
285 But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,  
I'll kill thee every where, yea, o'er and o'er.  
You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag;  
His insolence draws folly from my lips;  
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,  
290 Or may I never--

**AJAX**

Do not chafe thee, cousin:  
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone,  
Till accident or purpose bring you to't:  
You may have every day enough of Hector  
295 If you have stomach; the general state, I fear,  
Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.

**HECTOR**

I pray you, let us see you in the field:  
We have had pelting wars, since you refused  
The Grecians' cause.

**ACHILLES**

300 Dost thou entreat me, Hector?  
To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;  
To-night all friends.

**HECTOR**

Thy hand upon that match.

**AGAMEMNON**


305 First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;  
There in the full convive we: afterwards,  
As Hector's leisure and your bounties shall  
Concur together, severally entreat him.  
Beat loud the tabourines, let the trumpets blow,  
That this great soldier may his welcome know.

**ACHILLES**

Take your fill of looking.

**HECTOR**

No, I am already done .

 Hector is suggesting there is not much to see.

**ACHILLES**

You are too quick. I'd like to see you a second time, so that I will know what to do with you.

**HECTOR**

Oh, you'll read me like a hunting book will you? There's more inside me than you understand. Why are you glaring at me like this?

**ACHILLES**

Tell me, heavens, how I should destroy him? Should I attack there, or there, or there? I need to know so that I may name the place where I wound him, and can know the breach out of which Hector's great spirit flew. Answer me, heavens!

**HECTOR**

It would be dishonorable for the blessed gods to answer, proud man. Stand up again. You think it will be so easy to speculate in advance where you will strike me dead?

**ACHILLES**

I think so, yes.

**HECTOR**

If you were an oracle and thought so, I would not believe you. From now on protect yourself well. For I won't kill you there, nor there, nor there. But, I swear by Mars, I'll kill you everywhere, yes, over and over again. Wise Greeks, forgive me for boasting like this, I'll make sure I carry out what I have said or I'll never...

**AJAX**

Don't get angry cousin. And you, Achilles, stop making threats, until by accident or intention you may do it. You can spend every day fighting Hector as much you want, if you have the stomach for it. The generals, I suspect, cannot encourage you enough to triumph over him.

**HECTOR**

I beg you, come find me on the battlefield. We've been play-fighting since you stopped fighting.

**ACHILLES**

Are you asking me to do that for you, Hector? Tomorrow I will find you, as terrifying as death. Tonight we are friends.

**HECTOR**

I'll shake to that.

**AGAMEMNON**

First, all of you brave men, go to my tent. There we shall feast together, and afterwards you can all meet Hector when you want. Beat the tambourines, play the trumpets, so that this great soldier knows how welcome he is.

*Exeunt all except TROILUS and ULYSSES***TROILUS**

310 My Lord Ulysses, tell me, I beseech you,  
In what place of the field doth Calchas keep?

**ULYSSES**

At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus:  
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night;  
Who neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,  
315 But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view  
On the fair Cressid.

**TROILUS**

Shall sweet lord, be bound to you so much,  
After we part from Agamemnon's tent,  
To bring me thither?

**ULYSSES**

320 You shall command me, sir.  
As gentle tell me, of what honour was  
This Cressida in Troy? Had she no lover there  
That waits her absence?

**TROILUS**

O, sir, to such as boasting show their scars  
325 A mock is due. Will you walk on, my lord?  
She was beloved, she loved; she is, and doth:  
But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth.

*Exeunt**They all exit except TROILUS and ULYSSES.***TROILUS**

Lord Ulysses, please tell me where Calchas is staying?

**ULYSSES**

He is in Menelaus's tent, Prince Troilus. Diomedes is feasting with him there tonight. He is unable to look up or down, but only has loving eyes for the fair Cressida.

**TROILUS**

Would you be so kind as to take me there after we leave Agamemnon's tent?

**ULYSSES**

If you wish, sir. Would you mind telling me what Cressida's reputation was like when she was in Troy. Did she not have a lover there who misses her?

**TROILUS**

Oh, sir, those who boast by showing their scars deserve to be mocked. Will you go ahead, lord? *[To himself.]* She was beloved, she used to love. She is loved, and she loves. But sweet love is the food of [fortune](#) <sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Troilus implies that erotic love is subject to Fortune, and never remains constant.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 1

## Shakespeare

*Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS***ACHILLES**

I'll heat his blood with Greekish wine to-night,  
Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow.  
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

**PATROCLUS**

Here comes Thersites.

5

*Enter THERSITES***ACHILLES**

How now, thou core of envy!  
Thou crusty batch of nature, what's the news?

**THERSITES**

Why, thou picture of what thou seemest, and idol  
of idiot worshippers, here's a letter for thee.

**ACHILLES**

10 From whence, fragment?

**THERSITES**

Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

**PATROCLUS**

Who keeps the tent now?

## Shakescleare Translation

*ACHILLES and PATROCLUS enter.***ACHILLES**

I'll heat Hector's blood with Greek wine tonight, and tomorrow I will cool it with my [scimitar](#) <sup>1</sup>. Patroclus, let's entertain him well.

<sup>1</sup> A curved sword.

**PATROCLUS**

Here comes Thersites.

*THERSITES enters.***ACHILLES**

Hey there, you heart of envy! You ugly misfit, what's the news?

**THERSITES**

That you are what you look like, an idol for people who worship idiots. Here's a letter for you.

**ACHILLES**

Who from, worm?

**THERSITES**

You dish of [fool](#) <sup>2</sup>, from Troy.

<sup>2</sup> Fool is a traditional English dessert, made of stewed or crushed fruit and cream.

**PATROCLUS**

Who is staying in their tent now?



**THERSITES**

The surgeon's box, or the patient's wound.

**PATROCLUS**

Well said, adversity! and what need these tricks?

**THERSITES**

15 Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk:  
thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.

**PATROCLUS**

Male varlet, you rogue! what's that?

**THERSITES**

Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases  
of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs,  
20 loads o' gravel i' the back, lethargies, cold  
palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing  
lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas,  
limekilns i' the palm, incurable bone-ache, and the  
rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take  
25 again such preposterous discoveries!

**PATROCLUS**

Why thou damnable box of envy, thou, what meanest  
thou to curse thus?

**THERSITES**

Do I curse thee?

**PATROCLUS**

30 Why no, you ruinous butt, you whoreson  
indistinguishable cur, no.

**THERSITES**

No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle  
immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green sarcenet  
flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's  
purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered  
35 with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!

**PATROCLUS**

Out, gall!

**THERSITES**

Finch-egg!

**ACHILLES**


My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite  
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.  
40 Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,  
A token from her daughter, my fair love,  
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep  
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:  
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;  
45 My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.  
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent:  
This night in banqueting must all be spent.  
Away, Patroclus!

*Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

**THERSITES**

50 With too much blood and too little brain, these two  
may run mad; but, if with too much brain and too  
little blood they do, I'll be a curer of madmen.  
Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one

**THERSITES**

I'll laugh at his wounds .

**PATROCLUS**

Very clever, always understanding the opposite of what I'm  
saying! Are your tricks useful?

**THERSITES**

Please, stop talking, boy. I don't gain anything from talking  
to you. You are thought to be Achilles's boy-lover.

**PATROCLUS**

Boy-lover, you rogue! What did you say?


**THERSITES**

Why, his male prostitute. Now I will call you syphilis, gut-  
ache, lesions, mucus, gall-stones, tiredness, fevers, sore  
eyes, bladders full of abscesses, liver disease, boils, gall-  
stones, skin-diseases, ringworm, accept these many  
unacceptable truths!

**PATROCLUS**

Oh you evil, box of envy. What do you mean by cursing like  
this?


**THERSITES**

Are these your names I have been cursing you with? .

**PATROCLUS**

No, you hateful arse, you son of a whore, you malformed  
wretch, no.

**THERSITES**

No? Then why are you so angry, you idle fabric decoration,  
you pampered eye-patch , you ornament, you? Ah the  
whole world is filled with leeches like you.

**PATROCLUS**

Get out, you blister!

**THERSITES**

You finch-egg!


**ACHILLES**


My sweet Patroclus, I can't carry on with my plan to go to  
battle tomorrow. This is a letter from Queen Hecuba, and  
has a message from her daughter, whom I love, which is  
making me promise not to break an oath I have sworn. I  
can't break my oath even if it means the Greeks losing or  
my losing my fame. The only vow I care about is this, and I'll  
obey it. Come, come, Thersites, tidy up my tent, we will  
spend this night banqueting. Let's go Patroclus!


*ACHILLES and PATROCLUS exit.*


**THERSITES**

With too much passion and too little brain, these two will  
go mad. But if they do go mad with too much thinking and  
too little courage, I will be considered a curer of madmen.  
Here comes Agamemnon, an honest man and one that

 A tent is a medical instrument  
that is used to stop bleeding,  
Thersites is punning on the idea of  
Achilles being hurt.

 If Patroclus said yes he would be  
agreeing that he was all the things  
that Thersites called him.

 Losing an eye could be a sign of a  
STI. All of Thersites's insults imply that  
Patroclus is only kept around by  
Achilles because they sleep together.

 "Quails" was also a term meaning  
prostitutes. Thersites seems to be

that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as  
 55 earwax: and the goodly transformation of Jupiter  
 there, his brother, the bull,--the primitive statue,  
 and oblique memorial of cuckolds; a thrifty  
 shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's  
 leg,-- to what form but that he is, should wit larded  
 60 with malice and malice forced with wit turn him to?  
 To an ass, were nothing; he is both ass and ox: to  
 an ox, were nothing; he is both ox and ass. To be a  
 dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an  
 owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would  
 not care; but to be Menelaus, I would conspire  
 65 against destiny. Ask me not, what I would be, if I  
 were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse  
 of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus! Hey-day!  
 spirits and fires!

*Enter HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR,  
 MENELAUS, and DIOMEDES, with lights*

**AGAMEMNON**

We go wrong, we go wrong.

**AJAX**

70 No, yonder 'tis;  
 There, where we see the lights.

**HECTOR**

I trouble you.

**AJAX**

No, not a whit.

**ULYSSES**

Here comes himself to guide you.

75 *Re-enter ACHILLES*

**ACHILLES**

Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, princes all.

**AGAMEMNON**

So now, fair prince of Troy, I bid good night.  
 Ajax commands the guard to tend on you.

**HECTOR**

Thanks and good night to the Greeks' general.

**MENELAUS**

80 Good night, my lord.

**HECTOR**

Good night, sweet lord Menelaus.

**THERSITES**

Sweet draught: 'sweet' quoth 'a! sweet sink,  
 sweet sewer.

**ACHILLES**

85 Good night and welcome, both at once, to those  
 That go or tarry.

**AGAMEMNON**

Good night.

*Exeunt AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS*

**ACHILLES**

Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomedes,  
 Keep Hector company an hour or two.

loves eating quails <sup>6</sup>. But he doesn't have as much brain  
 as he does earwax. And the walking embodiment of Jupiter  
 stood next to him, his bull-like brother, the original model  
 and monument to all cuckolds, is a coward, like a tool  
 hanging from his brother's belt... What worse shape could  
 an angry god make you into? If he were turned into an ass  
 or an ox that would be fine, because he is already both. If  
 were turned into a dog, a cat, a mule, a polecat, a toad, a  
 lizard, an owl, a hawk, or a worthless fish, I wouldn't care,  
 but I would do anything to avoid being turned into  
 Menelaus. Don't ask me what I would be if I wasn't myself,  
 because I would be perfectly happy as a louse or a leper,  
 anything but Menelaus! Look at that, they are caring  
 torches!

*suggesting that King Agamemnon was  
 not an extraordinary man.*

*HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, ULYSSES, NESTOR, MENELAUS,  
 and DIOMEDES enter carrying torches.*

**AGAMEMNON**

We've gone the wrong way, we've gone the wrong way.

**AJAX**

No it is this way, there, where the light is.

**HECTOR**

I've asked too much of you.

**AJAX**

No, not at all.

**ULYSSES**

Here he comes to show us the way.

*ACHILLES re-enters.*

**ACHILLES**

Welcome, brave Hector, welcome everyone.

**AGAMEMNON**

Well, now I will say goodnight, fair prince of Troy. Ajax will  
 tell the guard to look after you.

**HECTOR**

Thanks and goodnight, Greek general.

**MENELAUS**

Goodnight, my lord.

**HECTOR**

Goodnight, sweet lord Menelaus.

**THERSITES**

*[Aside]* That's a "sweet" thing to say! "Sweet" like a drain,  
 "sweet" like a sewer.

**ACHILLES**

Goodnight or welcome, if you are coming or going.

**AGAMEMNON**

Goodnight.

*AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS exit.*

**ACHILLES**

Old Nestor is staying here, and you too, Diomedes, come in  
 and keep Hector company with me.

**DIOMEDES**

90 I cannot, lord; I have important business,  
The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector.

**HECTOR**

Give me your hand.

**ULYSSES**

*[Aside to TROILUS]* Follow his torch; he goes to Calchas' tent:

95 I'll keep you company.

**TROILUS**

Sweet sir, you honour me.

**HECTOR**

And so, good night.

*Exit DIOMEDES; ULYSSES and TROILUS following*

**ACHILLES**

Come, come, enter my tent.

100

*Exeunt ACHILLES, HECTOR, AJAX, and NESTOR*

**THERSITES**

That same Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he leers than I will a serpent when he hisses: he will spend his mouth, and promise, like Brabblers the hound: but when he performs, astronomers foretell it; it is prodigious, there will come some change; the sun borrows of the moon, when Diomed keeps his word. I will rather leave to see Hector, than not to dog him: they say he keeps a Trojan drab, and uses the traitor Calchas' tent: I'll after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets!

105

110

*Exit*

**DIOMEDES**

I can't, lord, I have important business that must be seen to at once. Goodnight, great Hector.

**HECTOR**

Give me your hand.

**ULYSSES**

*Aside to TROILUS]* Follow his torch, he's going to Calchas's tent: I'll come with you.

**TROILUS**

*[Aside to ULYSSES]* Sweet sir, you honour me.

**HECTOR**

And so, good night.

*DIOMEDES exits, ULYSSES and TROILUS follow him.*

**ACHILLES**

Come this way, enter my tent.

*ACHILLES, HECTOR, AJAX, and NESTOR exit.*

**THERSITES**

That Diomedes is a false-hearted rogue, and an unjust fool. I don't trust him when he looks at me anymore than I do when a snake hisses at me. He is always promising so much and never delivers, like a hound running away from the scent. If he is ever actually honest astronomers see it as a sign from the gods, it is such a rare event: the sun will take its light from the moon before Diomedes keeps his word. I'll leave Hector rather than stop following him. Apparently he has a Trojan mistress, and keeps her in Calchas's tent, I'll follow them. I'll have nothing but lechery and easy women!

*THERSITES exits.*

## Act 5, Scene 2

### Shakespeare

*Enter DIOMEDES*

**DIOMEDES**

What, are you up here, ho? speak.

**CALCHAS**

*[Within]* Who calls?

**DIOMEDES**

Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?

**CALCHAS**

*[Within]* She comes to you.

5

*Enter TROILUS and ULYSSES, at a distance; after them, THERSITES*

**ULYSSES**

Stand where the torch may not discover us.

*Enter CRESSIDA*

**TROILUS**

Cressid comes forth to him.

### Shakesclare Translation

*DIOMEDES enters.*

**DIOMEDES**

Hey, is anyone awake in there? Speak.

**CALCHAS**

*[Within]* Who is asking?

**DIOMEDES**

I think that is Calchas. Where's your daughter?

**CALCHAS**

*[Within]* She is coming out to meet you.

*TROILUS and ULYSSES enter at a distance, and THERSITES follows them.*

**ULYSSES**

Stand in the shadows, away from the light.

*CRESSIDA enters.*

**TROILUS**

Cressida is coming out to him.

**DIOMEDES**

How now, my charge!

**CRESSIDA**

10 Now, my sweet guardian! Hark, a word with you.

*Whispers*

**TROILUS**

Yea, so familiar!

**ULYSSES**

She will sing any man at first sight.

**THERSITES**

15 And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff;  
she's noted.

**DIOMEDES**

Will you remember?

**CRESSIDA**

Remember! yes.

**DIOMEDES**

Nay, but do, then;  
And let your mind be coupled with your words.

**TROILUS**

20 What should she remember?

**ULYSSES**

List.

**CRESSIDA**

Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.

**THERSITES**

Roguary!

**DIOMEDES**

Nay, then,--

**CRESSIDA**

25 I'll tell you what,--

**DIOMEDES**

Foh, foh! come, tell a pin: you are forsworn.

**CRESSIDA**

In faith, I cannot: what would you have me do?

**THERSITES**

A juggling trick,--to be secretly open.

**DIOMEDES**

What did you swear you would bestow on me?

**CRESSIDA**

30 I prithee, do not hold me to mine oath;  
Bid me do any thing but that, sweet Greek.

**DIOMEDES**

Good night.

**DIOMEDES**

How are you, my ward <sup>1</sup>?

<sup>1</sup> *Diomedes recognises that protecting Cressida is his job.*

**CRESSIDA**

Oh, my sweet guardian! Listen, I want to tell you something.

*They whisper.*

**TROILUS**

She's acting so familiar with him!

**ULYSSES**

She will play <sup>2</sup> with any man without knowing them first.

<sup>2</sup> *The imagery here is musical, Cressida can play men like an instrument without any sheet music.*

**THERSITES**

And any man may sing her song <sup>3</sup>, if he can find her key <sup>4</sup>.  
She's noted like an instrument.

<sup>3</sup> *Any man may very quickly get to know her.*

<sup>4</sup> *Musical key, but also an allusion to genitals.*

**DIOMEDES**

Will you remember?

**CRESSIDA**

Of course I will remember.

**DIOMEDES**

Well, make sure you do, and prove what you say with actions.

**TROILUS**

What has he asked her to remember?

**ULYSSES**

Listen.

**CRESSIDA**

Sweet-speaking Greek, don't tempt me to do any more foolish things <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Implying sex.*

**THERSITES**

What kind of poor behavior is this?

**DIOMEDES**

No, then...

**CRESSIDA**

I'll tell you what...

**DIOMEDES**

Bah! Tell me nothing. You are promised to someone else.

**CRESSIDA**

Honestly, I can't. What would you have me do?

**THERSITES**

A clever thing to say... one that shows her to be secretly open.

**DIOMEDES**

What did you promise you'd give to me?

**CRESSIDA**

I beg you, don't make me do what I promised. Ask me anything other than that, sweet Greek.

**DIOMEDES**

Goodnight.

**TROILUS**

Hold, patience!

**ULYSSES**

How now, Trojan!

**CRESSIDA**

35 Diomed,--

**DIOMEDES**

No, no, good night: I'll be your fool no more.

**TROILUS**

Thy better must.

**CRESSIDA**

Hark, one word in your ear.

**TROILUS**

O plague and madness!

**ULYSSES**

40 You are moved, prince; let us depart, I pray you,  
Lest your displeasure should enlarge itself  
To wrathful terms: this place is dangerous;  
The time right deadly; I beseech you, go.

**TROILUS**

Behold, I pray you!

**ULYSSES**

45 Nay, good my lord, go off:  
You flow to great distraction; come, my lord.

**TROILUS**

I pray thee, stay.

**ULYSSES**

You have not patience; come.

**TROILUS**

50 I pray you, stay; by hell and all hell's torments  
I will not speak a word!

**DIOMEDES**

And so, good night.

**CRESSIDA**

Nay, but you part in anger.

**TROILUS**

Doth that grieve thee?  
O wither'd truth!

**ULYSSES**

55 Why, how now, lord!

**TROILUS**

By Jove,  
I will be patient.

**CRESSIDA**

Guardian!--why, Greek!

**DIOMEDES**

Foh, foh! adieu; you palter.

**CRESSIDA**

60 In faith, I do not: come hither once again.

**TROILUS**

How can I endure this?

**ULYSSES**

Quiet, Trojan!

**CRESSIDA**

Diomedes...

**DIOMEDES**

No, no, goodnight. I'm not going to be your fool anymore.

**TROILUS**

You better had.

**CRESSIDA**

Listen, let me say one thing into your ear.

**TROILUS**

*[Shouts]* Oh plague and madness!

**ULYSSES**

You are upset, prince. Let's go, I beg you, in case your anger makes you violent. This is a dangerous place and a deadly time for you to be here. I beg you, go.

**TROILUS**

Look, I beg you.

**ULYSSES**

No, my lord, leave. You are going insane, come, my lord.

**TROILUS**

I beg you, stay.

**ULYSSES**

You don't have the patience, come.

**TROILUS**

I beg you, stay. No matter what torture I see I won't say a word.

**DIOMEDES**

And so, goodnight.

**CRESSIDA**

No, you are still angry.

**TROILUS**

Does that bother you? Oh your truth has died!

**ULYSSES**

Woah, lord!

**TROILUS**

By Jupiter, I will be patient.

**CRESSIDA**

Guardian... oh, Greek!

**DIOMEDES**

Pah, pah, goodbye, you time waster.

**CRESSIDA**

Honestly, I am not wasting your time. Come here again.

**ULYSSES**

You shake, my lord, at something: will you go?  
You will break out.

**TROILUS**

She strokes his cheek!

**ULYSSES**

Come, come.

**TROILUS**

65 Nay, stay; by Jove, I will not speak a word:  
There is between my will and all offences  
A guard of patience: stay a little while.

**THERSITES**

70 How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and  
potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery,  
fry!

**DIOMEDES**

But will you, then?

**CRESSIDA**

In faith, I will, la; never trust me else.

**DIOMEDES**

Give me some token for the surety of it.

**CRESSIDA**

75 I'll fetch you one.

*Exit*

**ULYSSES**

You have sworn patience.

**TROILUS**

80 Fear me not, sweet lord;  
I will not be myself, nor have cognition  
Of what I feel: I am all patience.

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

**THERSITES**

Now the pledge; now, now, now!

**CRESSIDA**

Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.

**TROILUS**

O beauty! where is thy faith?

**ULYSSES**

My lord,--

**TROILUS**

85 I will be patient; outwardly I will.

**CRESSIDA**

You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.  
He loved me--O false wench!--Give't me again.

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was't?

**CRESSIDA**

90 It is no matter, now I have't again.  
I will not meet with you to-morrow night:

**ULYSSES**

You are shaking, my lord, will you leave here? You are going  
to blow your cover.

**TROILUS**

She is stroking his cheek.

**ULYSSES**

Come, come.

**TROILUS**

No, stay, by Jupiter, I won't say a word. My patience will  
stop me from saying or doing anything dangerous. Let's  
stay a little longer.

**THERSITES**

Luxury <sup>6</sup>, like a little devil with a fat bottom and thick  
fingers is getting these two excited. Go on, Lechery, go on!

<sup>6</sup> *Luxury/Lechery is a cardinal sin  
and is imagined here to be a devil.*

**DIOMEDES**

So you will then?

**CRESSIDA**

Honestly I will, ha. If I don't then never believe me again.

**DIOMEDES**

Give me a token <sup>7</sup> so that I can be sure.

<sup>7</sup> *A gift or symbol.*

**CRESSIDA**

I'll fetch you one.

*CRESSIDA exits.*

**ULYSSES**

You have promised to be patient.

**TROILUS**

Don't worry about me, sweet lord. I will pretend I am not  
me and put my emotions aside. I can be patient.

*CRESSIDA re-enters.*

**THERSITES**

Here's her promise. Now, now, now.

**CRESSIDA**

Here, Diomedes, keep this sleeve. [*CRESSIDA gives  
DIOMEDES the sleeve Troilus had given her*]

**TROILUS**

Oh beauty! Where is your loyalty?

**ULYSSES**

My lord...

**TROILUS**

I will be patient, or at least I won't move.

**CRESSIDA**

You look at that sleeve, take good care of it. He loved me...  
oh you unfaithful girl... give it back to me. [*Cressida takes  
the sleeve back*]

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

It doesn't matter, I want it back. I won't meet with you  
tomorrow night, I beg you, Diomedes, don't visit me again.

I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.

**THERSITES**

Now she sharpens: well said, whetstone!

**DIOMEDES**

I shall have it.

**CRESSIDA**

What, this?

**DIOMEDES**

95 Ay, that.

**CRESSIDA**

O, all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!  
Thy master now lies thinking in his bed  
Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,  
And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,  
100 As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;  
He that takes that doth take my heart withal.

**DIOMEDES**

I had your heart before, this follows it.

**TROILUS**

I did swear patience.

**CRESSIDA**

105 You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you shall not;  
I'll give you something else.

**DIOMEDES**

I will have this: whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

It is no matter.

**DIOMEDES**

Come, tell me whose it was.

**CRESSIDA**

110 'Twas one's that loved me better than you will.  
But, now you have it, take it.

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

By all Diana's waiting-women yond,  
And by herself, I will not tell you whose.

**DIOMEDES**

115 To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,  
And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.

**TROILUS**

Wert thou the devil, and worst it on thy horn,  
It should be challenged.


**CRESSIDA**


Well, well, 'tis done, 'tis past: and yet it is not;  
I will not keep my word.

**DIOMEDES**

120 Why, then, farewell;  
Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.

**THERSITES**

Now she whets his appetite. Well done, like a whetstone! 

 Thersites is saying that Cressida's actions are making Diomedes want her more, like a stone used for sharpening a knife.

**DIOMEDES**

I'll have it.

**CRESSIDA**

What, this?

**DIOMEDES**

Yes, that.

**CRESSIDA**

Oh, all you gods! Oh, pretty gift! The person who gave you to me is lying in his bed now, thinking of his gift and me, and sighing. He will be taking my glove, and kisses it to remember me, just as I kiss you now. [CRESSIDA kisses the sleeve and DIOMEDES steals it from her] No, don't take it from me! The person who takes that from me steals my heart itself.

**DIOMEDES**

I have already won your heart, so this token comes afterwards.

**TROILUS**

I swore patience.

**CRESSIDA**

You won't have it, Diomedes. I swear, you won't. I'll give you something else.

**DIOMEDES**

I will have this. Whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

It doesn't matter.

**DIOMEDES**

Come, tell me, whose was it.


**CRESSIDA**


It belonged to someone that loved me better than you will. But now you have it, keep it.

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

By Diana  and all her companions, I will not tell you whose it was.

 The virgin goddess of childbirth and women.

**DIOMEDES**

Tomorrow I will wear this on my helmet, and see if he comes forward.

**TROILUS**

[Quietly] If you were the devil himself, and wore it on your horns, I would still come and fight you.

**CRESSIDA**

Right, it is done, it is over. But no, it's not, I won't keep my word.

**DIOMEDES**

Okay then, goodbye, you'll never see me again.

**CRESSIDA**

You shall not go: one cannot speak a word,  
But it straight starts you.

**DIOMEDES**

I do not like this fooling.

**THERSITES**

125 Nor I, by Pluto: but that that likes not you pleases me  
best.

**DIOMEDES**

What, shall I come? the hour?

**CRESSIDA**

Ay, come:--O Jove!--do come:--I shall be plagued.

**DIOMEDES**

Farewell till then.

**CRESSIDA**

130 Good night: I prithee, come.

*Exit DIOMEDES*

**CRESSIDA**

Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee  
But with my heart the other eye doth see.  
Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,  
135 The error of our eye directs our mind:  
What error leads must err; O, then conclude  
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude.

*Exit*

**THERSITES**

A proof of strength she could not publish more,  
Unless she said "My mind is now turn'd whore."

**ULYSSES**

140 All's done, my lord.

**TROILUS**

It is.

**ULYSSES**

Why stay we, then?

**TROILUS**

To make a recordation to my soul  
Of every syllable that here was spoke.  
145 But if I tell how these two did co-act,  
Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?  
Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,  
An esperance so obstinately strong,  
That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears,  
150 As if those organs had deceptious functions,  
Created only to calumniate.  
Was Cressid here?

**ULYSSES**

I cannot conjure, Trojan.

**TROILUS**

She was not, sure.

**ULYSSES**

155 Most sure she was.

**TROILUS**

Why, my negation hath no taste of madness.

**CRESSIDA**

You mustn't go. I can't say anything without you running  
off.

**DIOMEDES**

I'm getting bored of this.

**THERSITES**

Nor me, by Pluto. But I am glad you are upset.

**DIOMEDES**

Well, should I come when we agreed? Same time?

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, come. Oh Jupiter! Do come. I will be cursed.

**DIOMEDES**

Goodbye until then.

**CRESSIDA**

Goodnight. I beg you, come tomorrow.

*DIOMEDES exits.*

**CRESSIDA**

Goodbye Troilus. Part of me still belongs to you, but  
another part of me cannot help itself. Ah, women are so  
weak! I think our fault is that we use our eyes to make  
decisions not our brains! People who are only guided by  
bad judgments, must do bad things. Oh, brains that are  
lead by eyes are full of bad thoughts.

*CRESSIDA exits.*

**THERSITES**

She couldn't sum herself up better, unless she said "My  
mind has become a whore."

**ULYSSES**

It's over, my lord.

**TROILUS**

It is.

**ULYSSES**

Why are we still here, then.

**TROILUS**

To make a record in my soul of everything that was said  
here. Although these two are so deceitful together, that if I  
spoke the truth everything I said would be dishonest.  
Although there is still some trust in my heart and some  
hope so stubbornly strong, that it turns upside down what  
my eyes and ears have seen, as if those organs had been  
created only to make up lies. Was Cressida here?

**ULYSSES**

I can't perform magic, Trojan, I couldn't fake all the things  
you saw.

**TROILUS**

Surely she wasn't here.

**ULYSSES**

She definitely was.

**TROILUS**

I don't think I have gone mad, she wasn't.



**ULYSSES**

Nor mine, my lord: Cressid was here but now.

**TROILUS**

Let it not be believed for womanhood!  
Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage  
160 To stubborn critics, apt, without a theme,  
For depravation, to square the general sex  
By Cressid's rule: rather think this not Cressid.

**ULYSSES**

What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers?

**TROILUS**

Nothing at all, unless that this were she.

**THERSITES**

165 Will he swagger himself out on's own eyes?

**TROILUS**

This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida:  
If beauty have a soul, this is not she;  
If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,  
If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
170 If there be rule in unity itself,  
This is not she. O madness of discourse,  
That cause sets up with and against itself!  
Bi-fold authority! where reason can revolt  
Without perdition, and loss assume all reason  
175 Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid.  
Within my soul there doth conduce a fight  
Of this strange nature that a thing inseparate  
Divides more wider than the sky and earth,  
And yet the spacious breadth of this division  
180 Admits no orifex for a point as subtle  
As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.  
Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates;  
Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven:  
Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself;  
185 The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolved, and loosed;  
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,  
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,  
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics  
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

**ULYSSES**

190 May worthy Troilus be half attach'd  
With that which here his passion doth express?

**THERSITES**

He'll tickle it for his concupy.

**TROILUS**

O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!  
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,  
195 And they'll seem glorious.

**ULYSSES**

O, contain yourself  
Your passion draws ears hither.

*Enter AENEAS*

**AENEAS**

I have been seeking you this hour, my lord:  
200 Hector, by this, is arming him in Troy;  
Ajax, your guard, stays to conduct you home.

**ULYSSES**

I definitely haven't gone mad, Cressida was just here.

**TROILUS**

For the sake of womankind, let this not be believed! Since we ourselves had mothers. Don't let the stubborn critics of women, who don't have an example of their depravation, blame their sex by Cressida's example. It is better not to think this was Cressida.

**ULYSSES**

What has she done, prince, that would be an insult to our mothers?

**TROILUS**

Nothing at all, unless that was her.

**THERSITES**

Will he convince himself out of it, despite all he's seen?

**TROILUS**

This, her? No, this is Diomedes's Cressida. If beauty has a soul, this is not her. If souls guide promises, if promises are sacred, if being sacred is what the gods care about, if there is any justice in the world, that was not her. Oh mad talking, that argues against itself! A duplicitous judgment! Why won't my logic let her be and not be Cressida. There is a fight in my soul to bring these two possibilities together although they are further apart than the sky and the earth. But the divide between these two possibilities is as impossible to get out of as a labyrinth using Ariachne's broken spider web <sup>10</sup>. With one important exception! At once Cressida is mine and tied to me by heaven, and at the same time those ties have broken and she has tied another knot to Diomedes with her unfaithful dishonesty.

<sup>10</sup> Scholars are uncertain if this is a mistake. Troilus seems to be referring to the mythological figure of Arachne, who was turned into a spider, and at the same time to Ariadne, who gave Theseus a thread to help him get out of a labyrinth.

**ULYSSES**

Can the worthy Troilus really be as angry as he seems?

**THERSITES**

He'll beat him for his lover <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Thersites is making another obscene pun.

**TROILUS**

Oh Cressida! Oh false Cressida. False, false, false! Let all lies be given your name, that way they'll seem glorious.

**ULYSSES**

Oh, be patient, your anger is drawing attention to us.

*AENEAS enters.*

**AENEAS**

I have been looking for you for an hour, my lord. Hector is getting ready for war in Troy, and Ajax, your guard, is getting ready to walk you home.

**TROILUS**

Have with you, prince. My courteous lord, adieu.  
Farewell, revolted fair! and, Diomed,  
Stand fast, and wear a castle on thy head!

**ULYSSES**

205 I'll bring you to the gates.

**TROILUS**

Accept distracted thanks.

*Exeunt TROILUS, AENEAS, and ULYSSES*

**THERSITES**

210 Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would  
croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode.  
Patroclus will give me any thing for the  
intelligence of this whore: the parrot will not  
do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab.  
Lechery, lechery; still, wars and lechery; nothing  
else holds fashion: a burning devil take them!

*Exit*

**TROILUS**

I'll come with you, prince. Courteous lord, goodbye.  
Farewell, ugly beauty! And, Diomedes stand up tall, you'll  
need a strong helmet to protect you!

**ULYSSES**

I'll show you to the gates.

**TROILUS**


Please forgive me for not thanking you well enough, I am  
overwhelmed.

*They exit.*

**THERSITES**

I wish I could wait outside Diomedes's tent like an omen of  
bad luck. I know, Patroclus would give me anything for  
information of such a woman as this. A parrot will not do  
more for an almond as he will do for easy women. Lechery,  
lechery, more wars and lechery! Nothing else is so  
fashionable at the moment. I hope a devil takes the lot of  
them.

*THERSITES exits.*

 Both: 'I hope they are punished for their sins' and 'I hope they catch a disease from their sins'.

## Act 5, Scene 3

### Shakespeare

*Enter HECTOR and ANDROMACHE*

**ANDROMACHE**

When was my lord so much ungently temper'd,  
To stop his ears against admonishment?  
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight to-day.

**HECTOR**

5 You train me to offend you; get you in:  
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go!

**ANDROMACHE**

My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day.

**HECTOR**

No more, I say.

*Enter CASSANDRA*

**CASSANDRA**

Where is my brother Hector?

**ANDROMACHE**

10 Here, sister; arm'd, and bloody in intent.  
Consort with me in loud and dear petition,  
Pursue we him on knees; for I have dream'd  
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night  
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

**CASSANDRA**

15 O, 'tis true.

**HECTOR**

Ho! bid my trumpet sound!

**CASSANDRA**

No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother.

### Shakescleare Translation

*HECTOR and ANDROMACHE enter.*

**ANDROMACHE**


Since when have you been so angry, husband, that you  
won't listen to my advice? Take off your armor, put down  
your weapons, and don't go out to fight today.

**HECTOR**

You're provoking me want to upset you. Go back inside, by  
all the gods, I swear I will go out and fight.

**ANDROMACHE**

I am sure my dreams predict something bad happening  
today.

 Andromache has seen in her dreams that Hector should not fight.

**HECTOR**

Stop speaking, enough.

*CASSANDRA enters.*

**CASSANDRA**

Where is my brother Hector?

**ANDROMACHE**

Here he is, sister, in his armor and intent on fighting. Join  
my loud and clear pleas, let's follow him on our knees. I  
have had dreams of a bloody disaster, for the whole night,  
nothing but dreams about different kinds of slaughter.

**CASSANDRA**

Oh, it is true.

**HECTOR**

Ha! Tell them to blow my trumpet!

**CASSANDRA**

For heaven's sake, don't make any suggestion that you will  
go out there, sweet brother.

**HECTOR**

Be gone, I say: the gods have heard me swear.

**CASSANDRA**

20 The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:  
They are polluted offerings, more abhorr'd  
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

**ANDROMACHE**

O, be persuaded! do not count it holy  
To hurt by being just: it is as lawful,  
For we would give much, to use violent thefts,  
25 And rob in the behalf of charity.

**CASSANDRA**

It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;  
But vows to every purpose must not hold:  
Unarm, sweet Hector.

**HECTOR**

30 Hold you still, I say;  
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate:  
Life every man holds dear; but the brave man  
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

*Enter TROILUS*

**HECTOR**

How now, young man! mean'st thou to fight to-day?

**ANDROMACHE**

35 Cassandra, call my father to persuade.

*Exit CASSANDRA*

**HECTOR**

No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy harness, youth;  
I am to-day i' the vein of chivalry:  
Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,  
40 And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.  
Unarm thee, go, and doubt thou not, brave boy,  
I'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.

**TROILUS**

Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,  
Which better fits a lion than a man.

**HECTOR**

45 What vice is that, good Troilus? chide me for it.

**TROILUS**

When many times the captive Grecian falls,  
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,  
You bid them rise, and live.

**HECTOR**

O,'tis fair play.

**TROILUS**

50 Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

**HECTOR**

How now! how now!

**TROILUS**


For the love of all the gods,  
Let's leave the hermit pity with our mothers,  
And when we have our armours buckled on,  
55 The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,  
Spur them to ruthless work, rein them from ruth.

**HECTOR**

Go away, I say. The gods have heard my promise.

**CASSANDRA**

The gods are deaf to unwise and angry promises. They aren't proper promises or offerings to the gods, and are bad sacrifices.

 Cassandra is saying that Hector's angry vows aren't acceptable religious offerings, and that the gods won't be happy if he enacts them.

**ANDROMACHE**

Oh, listen to her! Don't think it is holy to let yourself be injured for being just. It is as holy as stealing for the purpose of charity.

**CASSANDRA**

It is only the reason behind a promise that makes it justified. Any old promise does not need to be binding. Disarm, sweet Hector.

**HECTOR**

Stop there, I said. My honor is more important to me than my destiny. Every man values his life, but a brave man values his honor far more.

*TROILUS enters.*

**HECTOR**

Hello there, young man! Are you planning to fight today?

**ANDROMACHE**

Cassandra, bring my father here to help persuade them.


*CASSANDRA exits.*

**HECTOR**

No, honestly, young Troilus, take off your armor, young man. I am going out today as a knight should. You should let your young body grow older, don't take the risks of war yet. Disarm yourself and go, and don't doubt, brave boy, I'll fight hard enough today for you, me and all of Troy.

**TROILUS**

Brother your mercy isn't appropriate here. You aren't a lion, you are a man.

 Lions supposedly didn't attack surrendering prey.

**HECTOR**

What inappropriate mercy have I shown, good Troilus? Tell me off for it.

**TROILUS**

Many times when a Greek soldier was defenseless in front of your sword, and you let them get up and live.

**HECTOR**

Oh, this is just fair play.

**TROILUS**

This is how idiots fight, by heaven, Hector.

**HECTOR**

Woah, woah.

**TROILUS**

For the love of all the gods, leave your pity at home with our mothers, when we are armed, we carry vengeance in our swords, and we must use them to do sad work, without becoming sad about it.

**HECTOR**

Fie, savage, fie!

**TROILUS**

Hector, then 'tis wars.

**HECTOR**

Troilus, I would not have you fight to-day.

**TROILUS**

60 Who should withhold me?  
Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars  
Beckoning with fiery truncheon my retire;  
Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,  
Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears;  
65 Not you, my brother, with your true sword drawn,  
Opposed to hinder me, should stop my way,  
But by my ruin.

*Re-enter CASSANDRA, with PRIAM*

**CASSANDRA**

Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast:  
He is thy crutch; now if thou lose thy stay,  
70 Thou on him leaning, and all Troy on thee,  
Fall all together.

**PRIAM**

Come, Hector, come, go back:  
Thy wife hath dream'd; thy mother hath had visions;  
Cassandra doth foresee; and I myself  
75 Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt  
To tell thee that this day is ominous:  
Therefore, come back.

**HECTOR**

Aeneas is a-field;  
And I do stand engaged to many Greeks,  
80 Even in the faith of valour, to appear  
This morning to them.

**PRIAM**

Ay, but thou shalt not go.

**HECTOR**

I must not break my faith.  
You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,  
85 Let me not shame respect; but give me leave  
To take that course by your consent and voice,  
Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.

**CASSANDRA**

O Priam, yield not to him!

**ANDROMACHE**

Do not, dear father.

**HECTOR**

90 Andromache, I am offended with you:  
Upon the love you bear me, get you in.

*Exit ANDROMACHE*

**TROILUS**

This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl  
Makes all these bodements.

**CASSANDRA**

95 O, farewell, dear Hector!  
Look, how thou diest! look, how thy eye turns pale!  
Look, how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!  
Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out!

**HECTOR**

No, savage, you're wrong!

**TROILUS**

Hector, this is a war.

**HECTOR**

Troilus, I don't want you to fight today.

**TROILUS**

What is going to stop me? Fate won't, nor would obedience,  
nor the hand of Mars if he used a burning weapon to make  
me go back. Not my father or mother begging on their  
knees and their eyes full of tears. Not you, brother, if you  
drew your sword to fight me, unless you managed to kill me  
first.

*CASSANDRA re-enters with PRIAM.*

**CASSANDRA**

Grab him, Priam, hold him still. He is like your crutch, he  
supports you. Now if you let him go all of Troy will fall down  
with you.

**PRIAM**

Come, Hector, go back inside. Your wife has dreamed, your  
mother has had visions, Cassandra foresees, and even I feel  
like a prophet and feel inspired to tell you that today is  
ominous. Therefore, come back inside.

**HECTOR**

Aeneas has gone to battle. And I have promised myself to  
many Greeks, bound with a oath of bravery, to go out there  
this morning.

**PRIAM**

Yes, but you should not go.

**HECTOR**

I must not break my promise. You know that I am  
honest. Therefore, dear sir, don't make me disrespect you  
by ignoring you. Allow me to go out with your blessing,  
royal Priam.

**CASSANDRA**

Oh Priam, don't let him go!

**ANDROMACHE**

Don't, dear father.

**HECTOR**


Andromache, I'm upset with you. If you love me, go inside.


*ANDROMACHE exits.*

**TROILUS**

This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl is the person  
making all these bad predictions.

**CASSANDRA**

Oh, goodbye, dear Hector! I can see you dying! I can see  
your eyes turning pale! I can see blood pouring from your  
many wounds! I can hear Troy screaming! I can hear  
Hecuba  crying! Your wife, Andromache, is screaming

 Queen Hecuba was Priam's wife.

How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth!  
 100 Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement,  
 Like witless antics, one another meet,  
 And all cry, Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!

**TROILUS**

Away! away!

**CASSANDRA**

Farewell: yet, soft! Hector! take my leave:  
 105 Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive.

*Exit*

**HECTOR**

You are amazed, my liege, at her exclaim:  
 Go in and cheer the town: we'll forth and fight,  
 Do deeds worth praise and tell you them at night.

**PRIAM**

110 Farewell: the gods with safety stand about thee!

*Exeunt severally PRIAM and HECTOR. Alarums*

**TROILUS**

They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe,  
 I come to lose my arm, or win my sleeve.

*Enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

115 Do you hear, my lord? do you hear?

**TROILUS**

What now?

**PANDARUS**

Here's a letter come from yond poor girl.

**TROILUS**

Let me read.

**PANDARUS**

A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so  
 120 troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this girl;  
 and what one thing, what another, that I shall  
 leave you one o' these days: and I have a rheum  
 in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones  
 that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what  
 125 to think on't. What says she there?

**TROILUS**

Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart:  
 The effect doth operate another way.

*Tearing the letter*

**TROILUS**

Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.  
 130 My love with words and errors still she feeds;  
 But edifies another with her deeds.

*Exeunt severally*

with grief! I see confusion, hatred, shock, and awful things  
 all coming for you! Everyone will scream: "Hector! Hector's  
 dead! Oh Hector!"

**TROILUS**

Go away, go away!

**CASSANDRA**

Goodbye, still living Hector! Let me go, you are going to ruin  
 yourself and all of Troy.

*Cassandra exits.*

**HECTOR**

You are in shock, my liege, at what she has said. Go in and  
 make the town happy, we'll go out and fight, and perform  
 great deeds that we can tell you about tonight.

**PRIAM**

Goodbye. May the gods watch over you.

*PRIAM and HECTOR exit in different directions. Alarums  
 sound.*

**TROILUS**

The men outside are fighting, listen! Proud Diomedes  
 believe me that I will either lose my arm or regain my  
 sleeve!

*PANDARUS enters.*

**PANDARUS**

Have you heard, my lord? Have you heard?

**TROILUS**

What is it?


**PANDARUS**


A letter has come from the poor girl.

**TROILUS**

Let me read it. *[TROILUS reads the letter]*

**PANDARUS**

A terrible cough , a really awful cough is troubling me,  
 and the fortunes of this girl. What is true of one thing is true  
 of the other: I will leave you one of these days. My eyes are  
 rheumatic, and my bones ache so much. I must be cursed,  
 because I cannot think what else I might have. What does  
 she say in the letter?

 Pandarus appears to have been  
 cursed with a venereal disease.

**TROILUS**

Words, only words, nothing meaningful. What she says and  
 the truth aren't the same.

*TROILUS tears up the letter.*

**TROILUS**

Scatter and dance in the wind. She still feeds my love for  
 her with her words, but loves another person with her  
 actions.

*They leave separately.*

## Act 5, Scene 4

## Shakespeare

*Alarums: excursions. Enter THERSITES*

**THERSITES**

Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlet Diomed, has got that same scurvy dotting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm: I would fain see  
 5 them meet; that that same young Trojan ass, that loves the whore there, might send that Greekish whore-masterly villain, with the sleeve, back to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless errand.  
 10 O' the t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals, that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses, is not proved worthy a blackberry: they set me up, in policy, that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles: and now is the cur Ajax  
 15 prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion. Soft! here comes sleeve, and t'other.

*Enter DIOMEDES, TROILUS following*

**TROILUS**

20 Fly not; for shouldst thou take the river Styx, I would swim after.

**DIOMEDES**

Thou dost miscall retire:  
 I do not fly, but advantageous care  
 Withdrew me from the odds of multitude:  
 Have at thee!

**THERSITES**

25 Hold thy whore, Grecian!--now for thy whore, Trojan!--now the sleeve, now the sleeve!

*Exeunt TROILUS and DIOMEDES, fighting*

*Enter HECTOR*

**HECTOR**

What art thou, Greek? art thou for Hector's match?  
 Art thou of blood and honour?

**THERSITES**

30 No, no, I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave: a very filthy rogue.

**HECTOR**

I do believe thee: live.

*Exit*

**THERSITES**

35 God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me; but a plague break thy neck for frightening me! What's become of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed one another: I would laugh at that miracle: yet, in a sort, lechery eats itself. I'll seek them.

*Exit*

## Shakescleare Translation

*An alarm is sounded and soldiers fight on stage. THERSITES enters.*

**THERSITES**

Now the two armies are fighting hard, I'll watch them. That lying, detestable crook Diomedes has got the equally awful young Trojan's sleeve on his helmet. Oh I would love to see them fighting and see the young Trojan that loves the whore send the whoring Greek villain to the lying and unfaithful girl without any sleeves at all. On the other side of the battlefield, the tactics of the old mouse Nestor and foxhound Ulysses are as worthless as a blackberry. They had made me set up Ajax against Achilles, but now Ajax is even prouder than Achilles and won't fight today either. Soon the whole Greek army will be uncontrollable, but I must keep quiet, here comes the knight with the sleeve and the other man.

*DIOMEDES enters, with TROILUS following.*

**TROILUS**

Don't flee me. Even if you were crossing the river Styx, I would swim after you.

**DIOMEDES**

You are wrong to say I'm retreating: I wasn't fleeing, but being careful to withdraw from a place where I was outnumbered, alone in a crowd. Defend yourself! *[They fight]*

**THERSITES**

Defend your whore, Greek! Fight for your whore, Trojan! Now fight for the sleeve! The sleeve!

*TROILUS and DIOMEDES exit fighting.*

*HECTOR enters.*

**HECTOR**

Who are you, Greek? Are you able to fight Hector? Are you brave and noble?

**THERSITES**

No, no, I am not a brave man, I am just a sick, unpleasant creature, a dirty rogue.

**HECTOR**

I believe you, you may live.

*HECTOR exits.*

**THERSITES**

God bless you for believing me, but curse you for scaring me! What's happened to the whoring thugs? Maybe they have eaten each other up, that would be a hilarious sight, although I suppose lust and greed do consume the people they meet. I'll find them.

*THERSITES exits.*

## Act 5, Scene 5

## Shakespeare

*Enter DIOMEDES and a Servant***DIOMEDES**

Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse;  
Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid:  
Fellow, commend my service to her beauty;  
Tell her I have chastised the amorous Trojan,  
5 And am her knight by proof.

**SERVANT**

I go, my lord.

*Exit**Enter AGAMEMNON***AGAMEMNON**

Renew, renew! The fierce Polydamas  
Hath beat down Menon: bastard Margarelon  
10 Hath Doreus prisoner,  
And stands colossus-wise, waving his beam,  
Upon the pashed corpses of the kings  
Epistrophus and Cedius: Polyxenes is slain,  
Amphimachus and Thoas deadly hurt,  
15 Patroclus ta'en or slain, and Palamedes  
Sore hurt and bruised: the dreadful Sagittary  
Appals our numbers: haste we, Diomed,  
To reinforcement, or we perish all.

*Enter NESTOR***NESTOR**

Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles;  
20 And bid the snail-paced Ajax arm for shame.  
There is a thousand Hectors in the field:  
Now here he fights on Galathe his horse,  
And there lacks work; anon he's there afoot,  
And there they fly or die, like scaled sculls  
25 Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,  
And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,  
Fall down before him, like the mower's swath:  
Here, there, and every where, he leaves and takes,  
Dexterity so obeying appetite  
30 That what he will he does, and does so much  
That proof is call'd impossibility.

*Enter ULYSSES***ULYSSES**

O, courage, courage, princes! great Achilles  
Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance:  
Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood,  
35 Together with his mangled Myrmidons,  
That noseless, handleless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to  
him,  
Crying on Hector. Ajax hath lost a friend  
And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd and at it,  
40 Roaring for Troilus, who hath done to-day  
Mad and fantastic execution,  
Engaging and redeeming of himself  
With such a careless force and forceless care  
As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,  
45 Bade him win all.

*Enter AJAX***AJAX**

Troilus! thou coward Troilus!

## Shakescleare Translation

*DIOMEDES and a servant enter.***DIOMEDES**

Go, go, servant, take Troilus's horse and show it to my lady Cressida. My man, tell the beautiful lady that she is mine, tell her I beat her Trojan lover, and I am now her knight because of this.


**SERVANT**

I will go now, my lord.


*The servant exits.**AGAMEMNON enters.***AGAMEMNON**

Rally! Rally! The fierce Polydamas has beaten Menon, Margarelon the bastard has Doreus prisoner and stands over him like the Colossus of Rhodes, waving this sword over the broken bodies of the kings Epistrophus and Cedius. Polyxenes is dead, Amphimachus and Thoas are fatally wounded, Patroclus has been taken prisoner or killed, and Palamedes has been badly beaten. Their cavalry are terrifying our soldiers. We must hurry, Diomedes, to reinforce our soldiers, or all of us will die.

*NESTOR enters with soldiers carrying PATROCLUS's body.***NESTOR**


Go, show Patroclus's body to Achilles, and tell Ajax to arm himself. It is as if there are a thousand Hectors out there today, you see him one moment fighting on Galathe his horse, and the next moment he is fighting on foot where our soldiers either flee or are killed like schools of small fish before a hungry whale. Then you'll see him over there, harvesting Greeks like they were wheat . He appears here, there, and everywhere and decides who shall live and who shall die. His skill is perfectly matched to his desire to kill, so much so that he can do anything he wants, and he is doing so much that proof of it would be called impossibility.


*ULYSSES enters.***ULYSSES**

Be brave, be brave, princes! Great Achilles is arming himself, weepings, cursing, and promising revenge. Patroclus's wounds have awoken his sleepy rage, and he is rallying his Myrmidons  many of whom have been horribly injured and all of them wanting to kill Hector. One of Ajax's friends has died, and he is now foaming at the mouth with anger, because of this he has armed himself and come out to find Troilus, who has killed a great many people today. Troilus has been reckless in engaging our soldiers and even when the odds almost guaranteed his death, he simply kills them and moves on as if luck itself was on his side.

*AJAX enters.***AJAX**

Troilus! You are a coward Troilus!

 Nestor is imagining Hector as a figure much like the Grim Reaper with a scythe.

 The Myrmidons were Achilles personal retinue or band of soldiers.

*Exit***DIOMEDES**

Ay, there, there.

**NESTOR**

So, so, we draw together.

50

*Enter ACHILLES***ACHILLES**

Where is this Hector?

Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face;

Know what it is to meet Achilles angry:

Hector? where's Hector? I will none but Hector.

*Exeunt**Ajax exits.***DIOMEDES**

Yes, over there, over there.

**NESTOR**

We are pulling together now.

*ACHILLES enters.***ACHILLES**

Where is Hector? Come here boy-killer, show yourself. You will learn what it is like to meet me when I am angry.

Hector? Where's Hector? I won't deal with anyone except Hector.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 6

### Shakespeare

*Enter AJAX***AJAX**

Troilus, thou coward Troilus, show thy head!

*Enter DIOMEDES***DIOMEDES**

Troilus, I say! where's Troilus?

**AJAX**

What wouldst thou?

**DIOMEDES**

5 I would correct him.

**AJAX**Were I the general, thou shouldst have my office  
Ere that correction. Troilus, I say! what, Troilus!*Enter TROILUS***TROILUS**10 O traitor Diomed! turn thy false face, thou traitor,  
And pay thy life thou owest me for my horse!**DIOMEDES**

Ha, art thou there?

**AJAX**

I'll fight with him alone: stand, Diomed.

**DIOMEDES**

He is my prize; I will not look upon.

**TROILUS**

15 Come, both you coggling Greeks; have at you both!

*Exeunt, fighting**Enter HECTOR***HECTOR**

Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!

### Shakescleare Translation

*AJAX enters.***AJAX**

Troilus, you coward Troilus, show yourself!


*DIOMEDES enters.***DIOMEDES**

Troilus, I say! Where's Troilus?

**AJAX**

What do you want with him?

**DIOMEDES**I want to correct him.

 Kill, punish, argue, hurt, beat, triumph over him are all implied here.

**AJAX**You aren't taking the pleasure of killing him away from me.  
Troilus, I say! Where are you, Troilus!*TROILUS enters.***TROILUS**Oh it is the traitor Diomedes! Turn your deceitful face  
towards me, you traitor, and die for stealing my horse!**DIOMEDES**

Ha, where are you?

**AJAX**

I want to fight him alone, stand back Diomedes.

**DIOMEDES**

I have the right to kill him, I won't just be a spectator.

**TROILUS**

Come, both of you cheating Greeks, I'll fight you both!

*They exit fighting.**HECTOR enters.***HECTOR**

Is that Troilus? Oh, you fight well youngest brother!



*Enter ACHILLES***ACHILLES**

Now do I see thee, ha! have at thee, Hector!

**HECTOR**

Pause, if thou wilt.

**ACHILLES**

20 I do disdain thy courtesy, proud Trojan:  
Be happy that my arms are out of use:  
My rest and negligence befriends thee now,  
But thou anon shalt hear of me again;  
Till when, go seek thy fortune.

*Exit***HECTOR**

25 Fare thee well:  
I would have been much more a fresher man,  
Had I expected thee. How now, my brother!

*Re-enter TROILUS***TROILUS**

Ajax hath ta'en Aeneas: shall it be?  
30 No, by the flame of yonder glorious heaven,  
He shall not carry him: I'll be ta'en too,  
Or bring him off: fate, hear me what I say!  
I reck not though I end my life to-day.

*Exit**Enter one in sumptuous armour***HECTOR**

Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly mark:  
35 No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;  
I'll frush it and unlock the rivets all,  
But I'll be master of it: wilt thou not,  
beast, abide?  
Why, then fly on, I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

*Exeunt**ACHILLES enters.***ACHILLES**

Now I see you, ha! Defend yourself, Hector! [*ACHILLES fights HECTOR*]

**HECTOR**

You can rest, if you like [2](#).

[2](#) The implication here is that Achilles is beaten by Hector and at his mercy, but is allowed to stand back up.

**ACHILLES**

I disdain your courtesy, proud Trojan. You should be glad that I am out of practice. My rest and recent refusal to fight has given you the advantage, but I will find you another time, until then go and do what you want.

*ACHILLES exits.***HECTOR**

Goodbye, I wouldn't have let myself be so tired if I knew I would have to fight you. What's this, here's my brother!

*TROILUS re-enters.***TROILUS**

Ajax has captured Aeneas, should we allow him to do this? No, by the sun, he won't be allowed to capture him. I'll either be captured as well, or I'll set Aeneas free. Fate, hear what I am saying! I don't care if I die today.

*TROILUS exits.**A Greek soldier in expensive armor enters.***HECTOR**

Stand and fight me, you Greek. You are a worthy target. No? You won't fight me? I like your armor, I'll hack at it and take it to pieces, so that I can keep it for myself. Won't you fight me, you beast? Why then keep running away, and I'll hunt you for your hide [3](#).

[3](#) Hector is saying he will hunt the well armed Greek like a deer, so that he can have his 'hide' (an animal's skin), meaning his armor.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 7

### Shakespeare

*Enter ACHILLES, with Myrmidons***ACHILLES**

Come here about me, you my Myrmidons;  
Mark what I say. Attend me where I wheel:  
Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath:  
And when I have the bloody Hector found,  
5 Empale him with your weapons round about;  
In fellest manner execute your aims.  
Follow me, sirs, and my proceedings eye:  
It is decreed Hector the great must die.

*Exeunt**Enter MENELAUS and PARIS, fighting: then THERSITES*

### Shakesclare Translation

*ACHILLES enters with his Myrmidons.***ACHILLES**

Gather around me, my Myrmidons, and listen to what I say. Form up behind me and follow me as I turn, don't attack anyone but instead keep yourselves ready, and when I have found the bloodied Hector, surround him with your weapons and kill him fiercely [4](#). Follow me, men, and watch where I go. I demand that the great Hector must die.

[4](#) This is quite obviously not an honorable tactic, and Achilles's actions can be opposed to the mercy Hector shows him.

*They exit.**MENELAUS and PARIS enter fighting each other, followed by THERSITES.*

**THERSITES**

10 The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it. Now, bull! now, dog! 'Loo, Paris, 'loo! now my double-henned sparrow! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! The bull has the game: ware horns, ho!

*Exeunt PARIS and MENELAUS*

*Enter MARGARELON*

**MARGARELON**

Turn, slave, and fight.

**THERSITES**

What art thou?

**MARGARELON**

15 A bastard son of Priam's.

**THERSITES**

I am a bastard too; I love bastards: I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in every thing illegitimate. One bear will not bite another, and wherefore should one bastard?  
20 Take heed, the quarrel's most ominous to us: if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgment: farewell, bastard.

*Exit*

**MARGARELON**

The devil take thee, coward!

*Exit*

**THERSITES**

The cuckold and the man who made him a cuckold are fighting each other. Attack him, bull! Attack him, dog! Go, Paris, go! Fight <sup>2</sup>. Go, Paris, go! The bull can fight, watch out for his horns, woah!

*PARIS and MENELAUS exit.*

*MARGARELON enters.*

**MARGARELON**

Turn, slave <sup>3</sup>, and fight.

**THERSITES**

Who are you?

**MARGARELON**

One of Priam's bastards.

**THERSITES**

I am a bastard <sup>4</sup> too, I love bastards. I am a bastard by parentage, educated by a bastard, a bastard in my thoughts, when I fight I fight like a bastard, and am illegitimate in every way. Bears <sup>5</sup> don't eat each other, so why would two bastards? Listen, two children with whores for mothers shouldn't fight, because we might be brothers, and then we would be guilty of killing a relative. Goodbye, bastard.

*THERSITES exits.*

**MARGARELON**

Curse you, coward.

*MARGARELON exits.*

<sup>2</sup> In other editions of the text 'double-henned sparrow' reads 'double-horned Spartan' which would be a reference to Menelaus's country and his cuckold's horns. If 'double-henned sparrow' is preferred it would imply Thersites is backing the man with two wives, and hence neither of them as the love triangle holds one woman and two men.

<sup>3</sup> Here 'slave' is just an insult.

<sup>4</sup> Thersites plays on the two meanings of bastard: a child whose parents aren't/weren't married and an unpleasant, underhand person.

<sup>5</sup> Bear-baiting was a common gambling sport in Renaissance London, where a bear would be blinded and made to fight dogs, bears weren't made to fight each other, however.

## Act 5, Scene 8

## Shakespeare

*Enter HECTOR*

**HECTOR**

Most putrefied core, so fair without,  
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.  
Now is my day's work done; I'll take good breath:  
Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death.

*Puts off his helmet and hangs his shield behind him*

*Enter ACHILLES and Myrmidons*

**ACHILLES**

5 Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set;  
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels:  
Even with the vail and darkening of the sun,  
To close the day up, Hector's life is done.

**HECTOR**

I am unarm'd; forego this vantage, Greek.

## Shakescleare Translation

*HECTOR enters carrying or dragging the man in armor.*

**HECTOR**

Cowardly man, so beautiful on the outside, your beautiful armor has cost you your life. Now I am able to finish for the day, and rest well. Take a rest, sword, you have had enough blood and death today.

*HECTOR takes off his helmet and hangs his shield behind him.*

*ACHILLES and the Myrmidons enter.*

**ACHILLES**

Look how the sun begins to set <sup>1</sup>, Hector. Now night <sup>2</sup> is pursuing him. Just as a dark shadow is coming over the earth, Hector's life is over.

<sup>1</sup> It is both late in the evening, and late in Hector's life.

<sup>2</sup> Both nighttime and death.

**HECTOR**

I have disarmed, don't take advantage like this, Greek.

**ACHILLES**  
10 Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.

*HECTOR falls*

**ACHILLES**  
So, Ilion, fall thou next! now, Troy, sink down!  
Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone.  
On, Myrmidons, and cry you all amain,  
15 'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain.'

*A retreat sounded*

**ACHILLES**  
Hark! a retire upon our Grecian part.

**MYRMIDONS**  
The Trojan trumpets sound the like, my lord.

**ACHILLES**  
20 The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth,  
And, stickler-like, the armies separates.  
My half-supp'd sword, that frankly would have fed,  
Pleased with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed.

*Sheathes his sword*

**ACHILLES**  
Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;  
Along the field I will the Trojan trail.  
25

*Exeunt*

**ACHILLES**  
Attack, men, attack. This is the man I have been hunting.

*HECTOR dies.*

**ACHILLES**  
Now, Troy, you will fall next. Fall, Troy, now! Here's your  
heart, strength and support. Carry on, Myrmidons, and cry  
out that "Achilles has killed the mighty Hector."

*A retreat is sounded.*

**ACHILLES**  
Listen, are the Greeks retreating?

**MYRMIDONS**  
The Trojan trumpets are doing the same thing as ours, my  
lord.

**ACHILLES**  
As night comes our armies stop fighting. My sword has only  
just begun to drink blood, and it would have liked to be fed,  
but it can go to bed happy at having killed this man.

*ACHILLES sheathes his sword.*

**ACHILLES**  
Come, tie his body to my horse's tail, I'll drag the Trojan  
through the battlefield.

*They exit.*

## Act 5, Scene 9

### Shakespeare

*Enter AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and  
others, marching. Shouts within*

**AGAMEMNON**  
Hark! hark! what shout is that?

**NESTOR**  
Peace, drums!

*Within*

**NESTOR**  
Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain! Achilles.  
5

**DIOMEDES**  
The bruit is, Hector's slain, and by Achilles.

**AJAX**  
If it be so, yet bragless let it be;  
Great Hector was a man as good as he.

**AGAMEMNON**  
March patiently along: let one be sent  
10 To pray Achilles see us at our tent.  
If in his death the gods have us befriended,  
Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended.

*Exeunt, marching*

### Shakesclare Translation

*AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and  
others enter marching. Shouts are heard within.*

**AGAMEMNON**  
Listen! Listen! Who is shouting like that?

**NESTOR**  
Drums, stop playing!

*Shouts are heard within.*

**NESTOR**  
Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain! Achilles!

**DIOMEDES**  
The message is that Hector's slain, and by Achilles.

**AJAX**  
If that's true he shouldn't boast about it. Great Hector was  
as good a man as Achilles.

**AGAMEMNON**  
Let's carry on walking back, send someone to ask Achilles  
to see us in our tent. If the gods have let Hector die then  
Troy is ours and these awful wars will be over.

*They exit marching.*

## Act 5, Scene 10

## Shakespeare

*Enter AENEAS and Trojans***AENEAS**

Stand, ho! yet are we masters of the field:  
Never go home; here starve we out the night.

*Enter TROILUS***TROILUS**

Hector is slain.

**ALL**

5 Hector! the gods forbid!

**TROILUS**

He's dead; and at the murderer's horse's tail,  
In beastly sort, dragg'd through the shameful field.  
Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed!  
Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy!  
10 I say, at once let your brief plagues be mercy,  
And linger not our sure destructions on!

**AENEAS**

My lord, you do discomfort all the host!

**TROILUS**

You understand me not that tell me so:  
I do not speak of flight, of fear, of death,  
15 But dare all imminence that gods and men  
Address their dangers in. Hector is gone:  
Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?  
Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd,  
Go in to Troy, and say there, Hector's dead:  
20 There is a word will Priam turn to stone;  
Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,  
Cold statues of the youth, and, in a word,  
Scare Troy out of itself. But, march away:  
Hector is dead; there is no more to say.  
25 Stay yet. You vile abominable tents,  
Thus proudly pitched upon our Phrygian plains,  
Let Titan rise as early as he dare,  
I'll through and through you! and, thou great-sized  
coward,  
30 No space of earth shall sunder our two hates:  
I'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,  
That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.  
Strike a free march to Troy! with comfort go:  
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.

*Exeunt AENEAS and Trojans**As TROILUS is going out, enter, from the other side, PANDARUS***PANDARUS**

35 But hear you, hear you!

**TROILUS**

Hence, broker-lackey! ignomy and shame  
Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name!

*Exit*

## Shakescleare Translation

*AENEAS and Trojans enter.***AENEAS**

Keep fighting! We are winning the battle. Never return home, we'll fight throughout the night.

*TROILUS enters.***TROILUS**

Hector is dead.

**ALL**

Hector! Oh gods, don't let it be true!

**TROILUS**

He's dead, and he is being dragged through the shameful battlefield from his killer's horse's tail like an animal. Be angry at this, gods, and smite them! Oh gods, sitting on your thrones, and smile on Troy! Put us out of our misery, and don't prolong our destruction!

**AENEAS**

My lord, you are upsetting our army.

**TROILUS**

You don't understand me, I'm not saying we should run away, or be afraid, or that we will die, but I challenge all imminent dangers from gods and men that they are preparing for me. Hector is dead, and who is going to tell Priam or Hecuba? Send someone who is prepared to tell this ominous news go to Troy and tell them that Hector is dead. That word will make Priam turn to stone, that will make young women and wives turn into wells of tears <sup>1</sup>, and, with that one sentence, scare Troy out of its senses. Go, march away, Hector is dead, there's nothing else to say. But you hateful tents that are pitched proudly outside our city, you can stay. Let the sun rise early tomorrow, because I will run you through with my sword! And you, huge coward <sup>2</sup>, there is no distance that shall stop me hating you. I'll haunt you like a bad conscience that created goblins as quick as frenzied thoughts. March quickly into Troy, and go with the comfort: hope of revenge will hide our inner sorrow.

<sup>1</sup> A Niobe was a weeping or bereaved woman.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to Achilles, presumably.

*AENEAS and the Trojans exit.**As TROILUS is about to leave, PANDARUS enters from the other side.***PANDARUS**

Listen, listen!

**TROILUS**

Go away, you middleman! May dishonor and shame follow you for the rest of your life, and may your name always mean "pimp."

*TROILUS exits.*

**PANDARUS**

40 A goodly medicine for my aching bones! O world!  
world! world! thus is the poor agent despised!  
O traitors and bawds, how earnestly are you set  
a-work, and how ill requited! why should our  
endeavour be so loved and the performance so loathed?  
what verse for it? what instance for it? Let me see:  
45 Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing,  
Till he hath lost his honey and his sting;  
And being once subdued in armed tail,  
Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.  
Good traders in the flesh, set this in your  
50 painted cloths.  
As many as be here of pander's hall,  
Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall;  
Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,  
Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.  
55 Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,  
Some two months hence my will shall here be made:  
It should be now, but that my fear is this,  
Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss:  
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,  
60 And at that time bequeathe you my diseases.

*Exit*

**PANDARUS**

Oh, this is a good medicine for my aching bones! Oh world!  
World! World! In this way the poor servant is hated! Oh  
traitors and matchmakers, how honestly are you made to  
work, and how badly are you rewarded? Why should people  
love what we make possible, but hate us when we do it?  
What poem can describe this? What argument can I used to  
object to this? Let me see: *[Singing]*  
The bumble bee <sup>3</sup> sings very merrily,  
Until he has lost his honey and his sting <sup>4</sup>.  
And when his weapon has been subdued,  
His sweet praise and happy words are spent.  
*[Stops singing]* Men who trade in flesh, make pictures out of  
this: "As many people here are in Pandar's house <sup>5</sup>, even  
though your eyes are half-gone <sup>6</sup>, you should still cry for  
Pandar's sad fate. If you cannot weep, groan instead, and  
if not for me then for your aching bones <sup>7</sup>." Brothers and  
sisters <sup>8</sup> of the prostitution business, two months from  
now I'll die and my will will be read. I would put it on now,  
but I am worried that some bitter Winchester goose <sup>9</sup>  
would shout at me. Until then I will try to find something to  
help ease my symptoms, and at that time I will let you  
inherit my diseases.

*PANDARUS exits. The End.*

<sup>3</sup> Womaniser.

<sup>4</sup> This is an innuendo.

<sup>5</sup> Pandarus's house could refer to a brothel or the theater.

<sup>6</sup> From venereal diseases, presumably.

<sup>7</sup> A symptom of a common STI, syphilis.

<sup>8</sup> Pandarus is talking directly to the audience here.

<sup>9</sup> The brothels near The Globe Theatre were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester.

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