Book I

Proem

1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
   That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,\(^1\)
   In loving how his aventurés fell
   From woe to weal, and after out of joy
   My purpose is, ere that I part from you.
   Thesiphoné,\(^2\) thou help me to endite
   These woeful verse -- that weepen as I write

2. But, you lovers, that bathen in gladness,
   If any drop of pity in you be,
   Remembereth you on passéd heaviness
   That you have felt, and on the adversity
   Of other folk; and thinketh how that ye
   Have felt that Lové dursté you displease,
   Or you have won him with too great an ease.

3. And biddeth eke for them that be at ease,
   That God them grant ay good perséverance,
   And send them might their lovers for to please

---

\(^1\) 1-5: "Before I part from you (the audience) my purpose is to tell the double sorrow of Troilus, son of Priam, King of Troy:-- how his fortunes in love went from sorrow to joy and then out of joy." The poet cultivates the impression that he is addressing a listening audience, but his phrase "as I write" in l. 7 rather gives the game away.

\(^2\) 1.6: The poet calls not on God or the Virgin Mary as many makers of English romances did, nor on the pagan muse as the classical poets did, nor on the god of Love but, because his is a sad story, on a Fury, Thesiphone, the voice of all the Furies, who were agents of retribution. 6-7: It is, apparently, the verses that are weeping.
That it to Love be worship and pleasânce,  
honor & pleasure
For so I hope my soul best to advance,
To pray for them that Lovê's servants be,
And write their woe and live in charity;

4. And for to have of them compassion
As though I were their ownè brother dear,
Now hearken with a good intention,
For now will I go straight to my mattér,
In which you may the double sorrows hear
Of Troilus in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him ere she died.

5. It is well wist how that the Greekès, strong
In arms, with a thousand shippês went
To Troywards, and the city long
Towards Troy
Assiegeðen--nigh ten years ere they stent;¹
besieged / nearly / ceased
And in diversè wise and one intent,
The ravishing to wreaken of Eleyne
abduction of Helen to avenge
By Paris done, they wroughten all their pain.

6. Now fell it so that in the town there was
Dwelling a lord of great authority
A great divine that clepêd was Calchas,
priest who was called
That in sciénce so expert was that he
in knowledge
Knew well that Troyë should destroyèd be
was called
By answer of his god that hightèd thus:
Lord (god) Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus.

7. So when this Calchas knew by calculating
And eke by answer of this Apollo,
calculation
also

¹ 5.3-7: "And they besieged the city for a long time -- for nearly ten years -- before they stopped (stent); and they took all this trouble (wroughten all their pain) in different ways but with one intention: to avenge (wreaken) the abduction (ravishing) of Helen by Paris."
That Greekés shouden such a people bring
Through which that Troyé musté be for-do,
He cast anon out of the town to go.
For well wist he by sort that Troyé should
Destroyéd be, yea, whoso would or n’ould.

8. For which, for to departen softely
Took purpose full this foré-knowing wise,
And to the Greekés' host full privily
He stole anon; and they in courteous wise
Him diden bothé worship and service
In trust that he hath cunning them to redd
In every peril which that is to dread.

9. The noise uprose when it was first espied
Throughout the town, and generally was spoken,
That Calchas traitor fled was and abide
With them of Greece; and casten to be wroken
On him that falsely had his faith so broken,
And said: `He and all his kin at once
Be worthy for to burnen, fell and bones.'

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

11. Criseydé was this lady's name aright.
As to my doom, in all of Troy city
Was none so fair, for-passing every wight
So angel-like was her native beauty,
That like a thing immortal seemèd she,
As doth an heavenish perfect créature
That down were sent in scorning of natúre.
12. This lady which that all day heard at ear
Her father's shame, his falseness and treason,
Well nigh out of her wit for sorrow and fear,
In widow's habit large of samite brown,
On knees she fell before Hector a-down
With piteous voice, and tenderly weeping,
His mercy bade, her-selfen excusing.

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

14. And all the honour that men may do you have
As far forth as your father dwellèd here
You shall have, and your body men shall save,
As far as I may aught enquire or hear."
And she him thankèd with full humble cheer.
And oftener would, if it had been his will,
And took her leave, and home, and held her still.

15. But though that Greekès them of Troy in shut,
And their city besieged all about,
Their old usage wouldè they not let,
As for to honour their gods full devout;
But aldermost in honour, out of doubt,
They had a relic high Palladion,
That was their trust aboven every one.

16. And so befell, when comen was the time
Of April when clothèd was the mead

---

1 12.5: Hector, son of Priam, was the greatest of the Trojan heroes. As one of the Nine Worthies of the Middle Ages he took his place among warriors like Julius Caesar and Alexander.
With newè green (of lusty Ver the prime)  
And sweeté smelling flowers white and red --  
In sundry wises showèd (as I read)  
The folk of Troy their observances old,  
Palladion's feast to for to hold.

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

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

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

20. This Troilus as he was wont to guide  
His youngè knightès, led them up and down

---

1 19.7: It is a little difficult to reconcile the somewhat contradictory information about attitudes in stanzas 18 & 19. Criseyde is admired by the people and yet apprehensive; shy and yet self-assured. In stanza 27 below she is even "somedae deynous", somewhat haughty. See also the note to II, stanza 54.
In thilké largè temple on every side,
Beholding ay the ladies of the town
Now here, now there, for no devotion
Had he to none to rieven him his rest,
But gan to praise and lacken whom him lest.¹

21. And in his walk full fast he gan to wait
to watch
If knight or squire in his company
Gan for to sigh or let his eyen bait
eyes rest
On any woman that he could espy.
He wouldë smile and holden it folly
And say him thus: "God wot, she sleepeth soft,
God knows you toss & turn
For love of thee, when thou turnest full oft.

22. I have heard tell, pardee, of your living,
by God / way of life
You lovers, and your lewèd observánces,
foolish behavior
And such labour as folk have in winning
what difficulties
Of love, and, in the keeping, which doutánces;²
And when your prey is lost--woe and penánces!
total fools, silly & b.
Oh very foolës, nice and blind be ye.
warned by the others
There is not one can 'ware by other be."

23. And with that word he gan cast up the brow
As if to say:
Askances: "Lo, is not this wisely spoken?"
paid promptly
At which the god of Love gan looken rough
prepared to be avenged
Right for despite, and shope for to be wroken
he = Love, him = Troilus
He kidd anon his bowë was not broken;
And still (today)
For suddenly he hit him at the full,
And yet as proud a peacock can he pull.

24. Within the temple he went him forth playing,
jesting
This Troilus, of every wight about,
about everyone

¹ 20.6-7: Troilus, who loses no sleep over love-sickness, began to praise or to fault whomever he wanted to.

² 22.3-4: "And the trouble people have getting lovers and the problems in retaining them"
On this lady and now on that looking,
Where so she were of town or of without,
And upon case befell that through a rout
His eyè piercèd, and so deep it went
Till on Criseyde it smote, and there it stent.

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

26. She was not with the least of her statùre
But all her limbs so well answering
Weren to womanhood, that créature
Was never lessè mannish in seeming;
And eke the purè wise of her moving
Showèd well that men might in her guess
Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse.

27. To Troilus right wonder well withall
Gan for to like her moving and her cheer,¹
Which somdeal deynous was, for she let fall
Her look a little aside in such manière
Askances: "What! May I not standen here?"
And after that, her looking gan she light,
That never thought him seen so good a sight.

28. And, of her look, in him there gan to quick
So great desire and such affectïon,
That in his heartè’s bottom gan to stick
Of her his fixed and deep impressïon;

¹ 27.1-2: "Her carriage (moving) and her manner (cheer) pleased Troilus very much (right well)." to like = to be pleasing to.
And though he erst had poréd up and down,
He was then glad his hornès in to shrink.
Unneth wist he how to look or wink.  1

29.  Lo, he that let himselfen so cunning,
And scornèd them that Lové's painès drye,
Was full unaware that Love had his dwelling
Within the subtle streamès of her eye,
That suddenly him thought he felt to die,
Right with her look, the spirit in his heart.
Blessèd be Love, that folk can thus convert!  2

30.  She, this in black, liking to Troilus
Over all thing, he stood for to behold;
Nor his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,
He neither cheerè made nor wordès told,  3
But from afar (his manner for to hold),
On other things his look sometimes he cast
And eft on her, while that the service last.

31.  And after this, not fully all a-whaped,
Out of the temple all easily he went,
Repenting him that he had ever japed
Of folk's love, lest fully the descent
Of scorn fall on himself; but, what he meant,
Lest it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissimulate and hide.

32.  When he was from the temple thus departed

1 28.7: "He hardly knew whether to look or close his eyes."

2 29.7: "folk" is the grammatical object of the verb "convert": "Blessed be Love that can convert folk thus".

3 30.3-4: "Neither by overt action (cheere) nor by word did he show his desire nor his reason for standing that way." That is, he tried to keep up his usual (haughty) manner by pretending to look at various things from a distance to cover up the constant return of his gaze to Criseyde.
He straight anon unto his palace turneth,
Right with her look through-shotten and through-darted,
Al feigneth he in lust that he sojourneth; ¹
And all his cheer and speech also he borneth
And ay of Love's servants every while
Himself to wry, at them he gan to smile.

33. And when that he in chamber was alone,
He down upon his bed's foot him set,
And first he gan to sigh, and eft to groan
And thought ay on her so withouten let,
That as he sat awake, his spirit mett
That he her saw at temple, and all the wise
Right of her look, ² and gan it new avise.

34. Thus gan he make a mirror of his mind
In which he saw all wholly her figúre,
And that he well could in his hearté find
It was to him a right good âventure
To love such one, and if he did his cure,
To serven her, yet might he fall in grace
Or else for one of her servants pass.

35. Thus took he purpose lovè's craft to sue
And thought that he would worken privily,
First to hiden his desire in mew
From every wight y-born, all utterly
But he might aught recovered be thereby, ³

¹ 32.3-7: The meaning is that, smitten as he is with her looks, he still pretends that he is amused by lovers; he goes on pretending that he is totally cheerful, and by his manner and speech mocks the "servants of love" so as to cover up (to wry) his actual love-struck feelings.

² 33.6-7: The precise meaning of the phrase all the wise right of her look is a little uncertain, but it clearly has to do with Criseyde's appearance. Perhaps he saw in his mind's eye "just exactly the way she looked."
Remembering him that love too wide y-blow
Yields bitter fruit, although sweete seed be sow.

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

CANTICUS TROILI

37. "If no love is, O God, what feel I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whencè comes my woe?
If it be wick, a wonder thinketh me
When every torment and adversity
That comes from him may to me savoury think,
For ay thirst I the more that I it drink.

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

1 "Troilus's Song" is a version of Petrarch's sonnet 132 enumerating the paradoxical feelings induced by being in love; this was a literary convention going back to the classics. Troilus's talent as a songwriter, as brief as it is sudden, is not meant to be taken too seriously.

2 This stanza illustrates the unconcern in the poem about a precise distinction between the idea of love as a powerful god (he, him), and love as a natural human phenomenon (it). In stanza 23 above and 40 below the stress is on love as a god.
39. And if that I consent, I wrongfully, Complain, iwis; thus possèd to and fro, All steerless within a boat am I Amid the sea betwixen windès two That in contráry standen evermo'. Alas! What is this wonder malady? For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die." 1

40. In him ne deignèd sparen blood royál The fire of Love, wherefrom God me bless, Nor him forbore in no degree, for all His virtue or his excellent prowess; 2 But held him as his thrall low in distress And burned him so in sundry ways ay new, That sixty times a day he lost his hue.

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

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

---

1 39.7: "I die of heat when it is cold, of cold when it is hot."

2 40.1-7: "The fire of Love did not deign to spare his (Troilus's) royal blood (God save me from that fire). And it did not spare him because of his courage and his excellent achievements, but kept him in deep distress like a slave, and burned him in so many new and different ways, that he lost color sixty times a day."
That all the Greekés as the death him dread.  

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

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

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

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

1 42. This stanza expresses the standard romance convention that love improves, among other things, a man's military prowess. See also below stanzas 96 and 97.
47. Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his that called was Pandâre
Came in once unaware, and heard him groan,
And saw his friend in such distress and care.
"Alas!" quod he, "who causeth all this fare?
Oh mercy God, what unhap may this mean?
Have now, thus soon, the Greekês made you lean?

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

49. These wordês said he for the nonês all,
That with such thing he might him angry make,
And with an anger do his sorrow fall
As for the time, and his couráge awake.
But well he wist as far as tonguês spake¹
There n'as a man of greater hardiness
Than he, ne more desirèd worthiness.

Has guided thee to see my languishing
That am refused of every creäture?
But for the love of God, at my praying
Go hence away, for certés my dying
Will thee dis-ease, and I must needês die.
Therefore go 'way; there is no more to say.

51. "But if thou ween I be thus sick for dread,
It is not so, and therefore scorné nought.

¹ 49.5-6: He knew that everybody agreed (as far as tongues spoke) that Troilus was a man of the greatest courage and honor.
There is another thing I take of heed  
Well more than aught the Greeks have y-wrought,  
Which cause is of my death for sorrow and thought.  
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,  
Be thou not wroth. I hide it for the best."

51.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."  

don't wish to tell you

angry

52. This Pándare that nigh melts for woe and ruth  
Full often said: "Alas! What may this be?  
Now friend," quod he, "if ever love or truth  
Hath been or is betwixen thee and me,  
Ne do thou never such a cruelty  
To hidé from thy friend so great a care.  
Wost thou not well that it am I, Pandáre?"

53. "I will parten with thee all thy pain  
If it be so I do thee no comfórt,  
As it is friend's right, sooth for to sayn,  
To interparten woe as glad desport.  
I have and shall, for true or false report,  
In wrong and right, y-loved thee all my life  
Hide not thy woe from me, but tell it blive."

54. Then gan this sorrowful Troilus to sigh  
And said him thus: "God leave it be my best  
To tell it thee, for since it may thee like,  
Yet will I tell it though my hearté burst;  
And well wot I thou mayst me do no rest.  
But lest thou deem I trusté not to thee,  
Now hearken, friend, for thus it stands with me.

55. "Love, (against the which whoso defendeth  
Himselfen most, him alderleast availeth)  
With despair so sorrowful me offendeth

1 51.4: "Much more than anything that the Greeks have done."
That straight unto the death my hearté saileth.¹
Thereto, desire so burning me assaileth,
That to be slain it were a greater joy
To me than king of Greece to be or Troy.

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

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

58. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandáre,
"Though I be nice; it happeth often so
That one that excess doth full evil fare³
By good counsel can keep his friend therefro.
I have myself eke seen a blind man go
There as he fell that couldé looken wide;⁴
A fool may eke a wise man often guide.

¹ 55.1-4: "Love (against which he who tries to defend himself, does least well) has so overwhelmed me with despair that my heart is sailing straight to death."

² 57.3-4: "Perhaps you are longing for someone with whom I can be of help."

³ 58.2-4: "It often happens that one who fares badly because of excess ... " It is not clear what "excess" Pandarus is referring to.

⁴ 58.5-6: "I have seen a blind man walk safely where a man who could see all round him fell down."
59. "Right so fare I, unhappily for me. I love one best and that me smarteth sore. And yet, paraunter, can I redden thee perhaps / can advise And not myself; reproveth me no more. I have no cause, I wot well, for to soar wants to As does a hawk that listeth for to play, But to thy help yet somewhat can I say.

60. "And of one thing right siker mayst thou be quite sure That certain, for to dien in the pain, die under torture That I shall never more discover thee. give you away Nor, by my truth, I keep not to restrain I care not Thee from thy love, though that it were Elaine Helen of Troy That is thy brother's wife, if I it wist. knew Be what she be, and love her as thee list. as you please

61. "Therefore, as friend fully in me assure, confide And tell me plat what is thine encheson plainly / reason And final cause of woe that you endure: For, doubteth nothing, mine intention rebuke Is not to you of reprehensïon nobody can prevent To speak as now, for no wight may bereave till he wants to A man to love till that him list to leave.

62. "If God will, thou art not aghast of me afraid Lest I would of thy lady thee beguile? steal from you Thou wost thyself whom that I love pardee, know / by God As I best can, gone sithen a long while. a long time now And since thou wost I do it for no wile, you know / no trick And since that I am he thou trustest most, And since thou be thou trustest most, Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wost." thou knowest

63. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said, came to But long he lay as still as he dead were. And after this with sighing he abrayd, And to Pandárus' voice he lent his ear. And up his eyen cast he, that in fear eyes / (so) that
Was Pándarus lest that in frenzy
He shouldé fall or elsé sooné die,

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

65. And with that Pándare of his word's stent,
But Troilus yet him no word answered,
For why to tellen was not his intent
Never to no man, for whom that so he fared.¹
For it is said: "Man maketh oft a yard
With which the maker is himself y-beat
In sundry manner," as these wise men treat.

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

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

¹ 65.3-4: "It was his intention never to tell anyone (the name of the woman) for whom he was behaving in this manner."
68. "Now know I that there reason in thee faileth.
But tell me: if I wisté what she were
For whom that thee all this misaunter aileth,
Durst thou that I told her in her ear
Thy woe (since thou dar'st not thyself for fear)
And her besought on thee to have some ruth?"
"Why, nay," quod he, "by God and by my truth."

69. "What? Not as busily," quod Pândarus
As though my own life lay upon this need?"
"No, certès, brother," quod this Troilus.
"And why?" "For thou shouldest never speed."
"Wost thou that well?" "Yea, that is out of dread,"
Quod Troilus, "for all that e'er you can,
She will to no such wretch as I be won."

70. "What may she deemen other of thy death
(If thou thus die and she n'ot why it is),
But that for fear is yielden up thy breath
For Greekès have besiegèd us iwis? ¹
Lord, what a thank then shalt thou have of this!
This will she say, and all the town at once:
'The wretch is dead. The devil have his bones.'

71. "Thou mayst alone here weep and cry and kneel,
But, love a woman that she wot it not!
And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel,
Unknown, un kissed, and lost that is unsought.²

¹ 70: "What else is she to think of your death, if you die without telling her, but that you died out of fear of the Greeks who have besieged us? And the thanks you will get from her and all the town is: The coward is dead; to hell with him."

² 71.2-7: "But if you love a woman who does not know it [because you have not told her], she will return your love in a way you cannot feel [i.e. not at all]. The woman who does not know you love her, who remains un kissed and unpursued, is lost [as a lover]. Many a man has loved a lady who has known about his love, for 20 years, and has remained unrewarded even by a kiss from her mouth."
What! Many a man has love full dear y-bought
Twenty winters that his lady wist,
And never yet his lady's mouth he kissed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

79. "Look up, I say, and tell us what she is
Anon, that I may go about thy need.
Know I her aught? For my love tell me this.
Then would I hopen rather for to speed."
Then gan the vein of Troilus to bleed

---

1 75-77: One of the standard ways of portraying Fortune was as a woman, sometimes with a blindfold, who spun a wheel at her whim. On the wheel were people, who went to the top or were thrown down as it turned.

2 77.4-5: "How do you know whether her changeableness may not do for you just what you want?"
For he was hit, and waxed all red for shame.
"Aha!" quod Pándare. "Here beginneth game"

80. And with that word he gan him for to shake
And said: "Thief, thou shalt her namé tell."
But then gan silly Troilus to quake
As though men should have led him into Hell
And said: "Alas! of all my woe the well!
Then is my sweeté foe callèd -- Criseye."
And well nigh with that word for fear he died.

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

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

83. "But well is me that ever I was born,
That thou beset art in so good a place;
For by my truth in love I durst have sworn
Thee never should have tid thus fair a grace.¹
And wost thou why? For thou wert wont to chase
At Love in scorn, and for despite him call
'Saint Idiot, lord of these foolés all.'

¹ 83:3-4: "On my word, I would have sworn that such good fortune in love would never have happened to you."
84. "Now beat thy breast, and say to God of Love:
Thy grace, O lord! For now I me repent
If I mis-spoke, for now myself I love’;
Thus say with all thine heart in good intent."
Quod Troilus: "Ah, lord, I me consent,
And pray to thee my japès thou forgive,
And I shall nevermore, while that I live."¹

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

86. "And wost thou why I am the less afeared
do you know?
Of this mattère with my niece to treat?²
For this have I heard said of wise y-lered
'Was never man nor woman yet begot
That was unapt to suffer lovè’s heat
Celestial, or elsè love of kind.'³
Forthy some grace I hope in her to find.

87. "And for to speak of her in special:
Her beauty to bethinken and her youth
to consider
It sits her not to be celestial
As yet, though that her listè both and couth.
But truly, it sits her well right nouth
A worthy knight to loven and to cherish

¹ 84: This stanza and part of the next one contain a parody of Catholic sacramental confession with Pandarus the "priest" giving instructions on contrition to the "penitent" Troilus, who obediently complies.
² 86.2: Chaucer or Pandarus drops the news of this crucial relationship very casually.
³ 86.4-6: "No man ever born has been incapable of love, either human or divine."
And but she do, I hold it for a vice.

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

89. When Troilus had heard Pandáre assented
To be his help in loving of Criseyde,
Waxed of his woe, as who says, untormented, ¹
But hotter waxed his love, and thus he said
With sober cheer although his heartè played:
"Now blissful Venus, help ere that I starve.
Of thee, Pandáre, I may some thank deserve.

90. "But dearè friend, how shall my woe be less
Till this be done? And good, eke tell me this
How wilt thou say of me and my distress
Lest she be wroth? -- This dread I most, iwis --
Or will not hear or trowen how it is.
All this dread I, and eke for the mannér
Of thee, her eem, she will no such thing hear."²

91. Quod Pandarus: "Thou hast a full great care
Lest that the churl may fall out of the moon!
Why, Lord! I hate of thee thy nicé fare!

¹ 89.3: "Became, shall we say, `untormented' by woe."

² 90.6-7: for the manner / Of thee ... : The meaning of this difficult phrase may be that because of her relationship to Pandarus she will be embarrassed and so will not listen to love overtures from him on Troilus's behalf.
Why intermit of what thou'st not to do?  
For God's love I biddè thee a boon:    
So let me alone and it shall be the best." 
"Why, friend," quod he "now do right as thee lest."  

92. "But hearken, Pándare, one word.  
That thou in me wendest so great folly,  
That to my lady I desiren should  
What toucheth harm or any villainy  
For dreadèless me werè lever die  
That she of me aught elsè understood  
But what that mightè sounen unto good."  

93. Then laughed this Pandare, and anon answered:  
"And I thy borrow? Fie! no wight does but so;  
I roughtè not though that she stood and heard  
How that thou sayst;  
Adieu! Be glad! God speed us bothè two.  
Give me this labour and this busyness  
And of my speed be thine all the sweetness."  

94. "Now, Pandarus, I can no morè say  
But thou wise, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all!  
My life, my death whole in thine hand I lay.  
Help now." Quod he: "Yes, by my truth, I shall."  
"God yield thee, friend, and thus in specïal."  

1 91.4: "Why interfere with what you are not concerned with? [since you have handed the matter over to me]." Thou'st not = "thou hast not".

2 92: Troilus does not want Pandarus to think that he, Troilus, is so insensitive that he wants anything wrong or unbecoming from Criseyde, asserting that he would rather die than have her think his intentions dishonorable.

3 93.1-4: The lines seems to mean: 'Pandarus laughed and answered: 'With me as your surety! (chaperone?). Oh, nobody says anything else. I wouldn't mind if she stood here and heard what you say.' This seems sardonic in Pandarus, but if so, it is at odds with his concern expressed earlier that Troilus should not do anything to dishonor Criseyde (82.6-7) and similar concerns later. And I your borrow occurs again in Pandarus's mouth at II.17.1 where it seems to mean "I assure you."
Quod Troilus, "that thou me recommend
To her that to the death me may command."

95. This Pandare then, desirous for to serve
His fullé friend, then said in this mannér:
"Farewell, and think I will thy thanks deserve.
Have here my truth, and that thou shalt well hear."
And went his way, thinking on this mattér
And how he best might her beseech of grace,
And find a timé thereto, and a place.

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

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

98. Now let us stint of Troilus a stound
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is some deal of aching of his wound
Y-lissèd well, but healèd no deal more.
And as an easy patient, the lore
Abides of him that goes about his cure,
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.

somewhat
Much relieved but not healed
the instructions
endures his fortune

Here ends Book I

1 98.5-6: “Like a good patient, he pays attention to the instructions (lore) of him (i.e. the physician) who is trying to cure him.”
Troilus and Criseyde (/ˈtrɔɪləs ˈkrɛsɪdə/) is an epic poem by Geoffrey Chaucer which re-tells in Middle English the tragic story of the lovers Troilus and Criseyde set against a backdrop of war during the Siege of Troy. It was composed using rime royale and probably completed during the mid-1380s. Many Chaucer scholars regard it as the poet’s finest work. As a finished long poem it is more self-contained than the better known but ultimately unfinished The Canterbury Tales. This poem is often Love is central to Chaucer’s tale, and Troilus and Criseyde’s love affair follows many conventions of the medieval concept of “courtly love.” This includes worship of the maiden from afar (Book 1), rejection of the male by the virtuous lady (Book 1). Troilus and Criseyde literature essays are academic essays for citation. These papers were written primarily by students and provide critical analysis of Troilus and Criseyde. Why Don't We Like Troilus? Chaucer's Troilus & Criseyde: The Frivolity of Femininity. Chaucer's Use of “Tender” in Troilus and Criseyde. Fortune in Troilus and Criseyde. Inevitability of Criseyde's Choice. View our essays for Troilus and Criseyde.
The double sorrow of Troilus to tellen, That was the king Priamus's son of Troye, In lovinge, how his adventures fellen Fro wo to wele, and after out of joye, My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye. Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte! To thee clepe I, thou goddeesse of torment, Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne; Help me, that am the sorrowful instrument That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne! For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne, A woful wight to han a drery fere, And, to a sorrowful tale, a sory chere. Chaucer wrote Troilus and Criseyde in Middle English sometime during the 1380s. Chaucer's work, like Shakespeare's after him, had the ability to touch both the common people and nobles at Court; for this reason, courtly romances like Troilus and Criseyde gained popularity among different classes. Although the story had been told before in France and Italy, Chaucer's version is slightly less cynical and misogynistic. In the centuries that followed, many writers referenced Chaucer's version of the story, including Shakespeare, who brought it to the stage as Troilus and Cressida. The narrative Troilus and Criseyde is an epic poem by Geoffrey Chaucer which tells the tragic story of the lovers Troilus and Criseyde set against a backdrop of war during the Siege of Troy. It was composed using rime royale and probably completed during the mid-1380s. Many Chaucer scholars regard it as the poet's finest work. As a finished long poem it is more self-contained than the better known but ultimately unfinished The Canterbury Tales. This poem is often Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde. A new complete, downloadable English modernisation. Geoffrey Chaucer. Troilus and Cressida. A modernised version. Home. Download. Buy This Book. Book I - Troilus's Love.