Book I

Proem

1. The double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
   That was the son of Priam, King of Troy,
   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, 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

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1 L.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. 1.2: MS.: “That was the kyng Priamus sone of Troye.”

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,  
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 ownê 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 Greekês, strong  
In arms, with a thousand shippês went  
To Troywards, and the city long  
Assiegêden--nigh ten years ere they stent;¹  
And in diversê wise and one intent,  
The ravishing to wreaken of Eleyne  
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,  
That in sciénce so expert was that he  
Knew well that Troyê should destroyêd be  
By answer of his god that hightêd thus:  
Daun Phoebus or Apollo Delphicus.

7. So when this Calchas knew by calculing  
And eke by answer of this Ápollo,

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 Greekès shoulden such a people bring
Through which that Troyè mustë be for-do,
He cast anon out of the town to go.
For well wist he by sort that Troyè should destroyéd be, yea, whoso would or n'ould.

planned quickly
destroyed
knew by divination
like it or not

8. For which, for to departen softely
Took purpose full this foré-knowing wise,
And to the Greekès' 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.

forseeing wise man
secretly
fashion
gave him honor & service
knowledge to advise them

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.'

& living
(they) wanted revenge
skin & 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.

difficulty
unaware
anguish
knew not / to do
and without...
dared confide

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 éxcusing.

13. Now was this Hector piteous of natúre
And saw that she was sorrowfully begone,
And that she was so fair a creäture.
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 oldé usage wouldè they not let,
As for to honour their gods full devout;
But aldermost in honour, out of doubt,
They had a relic hight Palladion,
That was their trust aboven every one.

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

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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 newë green (of lusty Ver the prime)  
And sweetë smelling flowers white and red --  
In sundry wises showëd (as I read)  
The folk of Troy their observances old,  
Palladion’s feast 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 arrayed, bothë most and least,  
Yea, bothë for the season and the feast.

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

19. As was Criseyde, as folk said everyone  
That her behelden in her blackë weed;  
And yet she stood full low and still alone  
Behind the other folk in little brede  
And nigh the door, ay under shamë’s dread,  
Simple of attire and debonair of cheer  
With full assurëd looking and manner. ¹

20. This Troilus as he was wont to guide  
His youngë knightës, 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 “somedee deal deynous”, somewhat haughty. See also the note to II, stanza 54.
In thilkè largè temple on every side,  
Beholding ay the ladies of the town constantly
Now here, now there, for no devotion attachment
Had he to none to rieven him his rest, deplete him of
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 wouldè smile and holden it folly
And say him thus: "God wot, she sleepeth soft, God knows
For love of thee, when thou turnest full oft. you toss & turn

22. I have heard tell, pardee, of your living, by God / way of life
You lovers, and your lewèd observánces, foolish behavior
And such labóur as folk have in winning
Of love, and, in the keeping, which doutánces; what difficulties²
And when your prey is lost--woe and penánces!
total fools, silly & b.
Oh very foolès, 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: prepared to be avenged
Askances: "Lo, is not this wisely spoken?" showed promptly
At which the god of Love gan looken rough
Right for despite, and shope for to be wroken he = Love, him = Troilus
He kidd anon his bowè 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,
Whereso 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 statúre
But all her limbs so well answering
Weren to womanhood, that créature
Was never lessè mannish in seemèng;
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 standèn 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 affection,
That in his heartè's bottom gan to stick
Of her his fixed and deep impressiôn;

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, first sized (her) up
He was then glad his hornès in to shrink.
Unnethé wist he how to look or wink. 1

29. Lo, he that let himselfen so cunning, who had thought himself endure
And scornèd them that Lovè's painès drye, (So) that
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 this (woman) / pleasing to stopped
Over all thing, he stood for to behold;
Nor his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,
He neither cheere made nor wordès told, openly showed nor said (usual) manner
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, dazed
Out of the temple all easily he went,
Repenting him that he had ever japed jested
Of folk's love, lest fully the descent
Of scorn fall on himself; but, what he meant, he felt
Lest it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissimulate and hide.

32. When he was from the temple thus departed

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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;  
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, 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 áventure  
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 lové'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,

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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. ¹

38. And if that at my ownè lust I burn,
From whencè comes my wailing and my 'plaint?
If harm agree me, whero '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 windés 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 owné 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 Greekés had Nor also for the rescue of the town Ne made him there in armés for to mad, But only, lo, for this conclusion To liken her the best for his renown; From day to day in armés 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 Greeks as the death him dread.¹

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 space 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 words 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 heardè not his 'plaint,
And when that he bethought on that folly,
A thousand-fold his woe gan multiply.

¹42. 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 callèd was Pandárè
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 Greekès 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 fearè, caught contrition?
God save them that besieged have our town,
And so can lay our jollity on press,
And bring our lusty folk to holiness."

49. These wordès said he for the nonès 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 tonguès 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 creáture?
But for the love of God, at my praying
Go hence away, for certès my dying
Will thee dis-ease, and I must needès 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 scornè 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 Greekès have y-wrought, ¹
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.”

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 hid 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 comfort,
As it is friend's right, soothe 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 heartè burst;
And well wot I thou mayst me do no rest.
But lest thou deem I trustè 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 desespair 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."

58. "Yea, Troilus, now hearken," quod Pandáre,
"Though I be nice; it happeth often so
That one that excess doth full evil fare
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;
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
And not myself; reproveth me no more.
I have no cause, I wot well, for to soar
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
That certain, for to dien in the pain,
That I shall never more discover thee.
Nor, by my truth, I keep not to restrain
Thee from thy love, though that it were Elaine
That is thy brother's wife, if I it wist.
Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

61. "Therefore, as friend fully in me assure,
And tell me plat what is thine encheson
And final cause of woe that you endure:
For, doubteth nothing, mine intention
Is not to you of reprehension
To speak as now, for no wight may bereave
A man to love till that him list to leave.

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

63. Yet Troilus, for all this, no word said,
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
Was Pândarus lest that in frenzy
He should fall or else soon 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 stringès 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 stent,
But Troilus yet him no word answered,
For why to tellen was not his intent
Because Never to no man, for whom that so he fared.
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 secrete
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 heartè cast.

67. But natheless, when he had heard him cry
"Awake", he gan to sighen wonder sore
And said: "Friend, though that I stillè lie
I am not deaf; now peace, and cry no more,
For I have heard thy wordès and thy lore;
But suffer me my mischief to bewail,
For thy proverbès 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 wiste what she were 
if I knew who
For whom that thee all this misaunter aileth, 
this distress ails you
Durst thou that I told her in her ear  
Would you prefer if I told Thy woe (since thou dar'st not thyself for fear)  
pity
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 Pándarus 
Not (if I worked) as hard
As though my own life lay upon this need?"
"No, certès, brother," quod this Troilus.  
certainly
"And why?" "For thou shouldest never speed."  
succeed
"Wost thou that well?" "Yea, that is out of dread,"  
Do you know? / certain
Quod Troilus, "for all that e'er you can, 
whatever you do
She will to no such wretch as I be won."

70. "What may she deemen other of thy death  
think
(If thou thus die and she n'ot why it is),  
does not know
But that for fear is yielden up thy breath  
Just because Greeks
For Greekès have besieged us iwis?  
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, 
knows it not
But, love a woman that she wot it not!  
requite
And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel,  
Unknown, unkissed, 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 unkissed 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.”

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 joyés 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 caus 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

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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 Pândare. "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 -- Criseyde."
And well nigh with that word for fear he died.

81. And when that Pandare heard her namé neven,
Lord! he was glad, and said: "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

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 Pandáre, "and now I hope
That thou the goddë's wrath hast all appeased.
And sithen thou hast weepen many a drop
And said such things wherewith thy god is pleased,
Now wouldë 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
Of this mattérer 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 lovë's heat
Celestial, or elsë 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
It sits her not to be celestial
As yet, though that her listë 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 paine me to do you this service,
For both of you to please thus hope I
Hereafterward; for you be both 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,
But hotter waxed his love, and thus he said
With sober cheer although his heart 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 mannèr
Of thee, her eem, she will no such thing hear."

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 nicè 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.
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".

92. "But hearken, Pándare, one word. For I n'ould That thou in me wendest so great folly, That to my lady I desiren should What toucheth harm or any villainy For dreadéless me werè lever die That she of me aught elsé understood But what that mighté 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; but farewell I will go. 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,"

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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 thriftiest and one the besté knight²
That in his timé was, or mighté be.
Dead were his japês and his cruelty,
His highé 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, ¹
And thus he dryeth forth his àventure.

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.| E-Text of Troilus and Criseyde.
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