

TROILUS 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
 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,
 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
 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.
 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
 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.
 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**¹, loaded with soldiers and weapons. Sixty nine royal rulers have set sail from Athens towards the **Phrygian**² 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**³, their over-laden ships unloading their military cargo there. Next the fresh and uncontested Greeks set up their splendid tents on the fields surrounding Troy. King Priam's city⁴ 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 talent⁵, 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.

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

² The sea around Troy.

³ An island near Troy.

⁴ King Priam's city is Troy.

⁵ 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 TROILUS armed, and PANDARUS***TROILUS**

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,
 Let him to field; Troilus, alas! hath none.

PANDARUS

Will this gear ne'er be mended?

TROILUS

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,
 Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
 Less valiant than the virgin in the night
 And skilless as unpractised infancy.

Shakescleare Translation*TROILUS carrying weapons and PANDARUS enter.***TROILUS**

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?

TROILUS

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 have a cake out of the wheat must needs tarry the grinding.

15

TROILUS

Have I not tarried?

PANDARUS

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

TROILUS

20 Have I not tarried?

PANDARUS

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

TROILUS

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 heating of the oven and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

25

TROILUS

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?

30

PANDARUS

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

TROILUS

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.

40

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--

45

TROILUS

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 the 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 grind¹ the wheat into flour.

¹ As Pandarus lists the process of making a cake each action has a deliberate sexual innuendo.

TROILUS

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.

TROILUS

Have I not been persistent?

PANDARUS

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

TROILUS

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.

TROILUS

Patience personified, whatever kind of goddess she is, is able to endure less suffering than me. I sit at King Priam²'s royal table³, but when beautiful Cressida comes into my thoughts... No! "When Cressida comes" is a treacherous phrase. For when is she not in my thoughts?

² The King of Troy, father to Paris.

³ Troilus is saying that he gives military advice to King Priam.

PANDARUS

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

TROILUS

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.

⁴ 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.

PANDARUS

If Cressida's hair wasn't quite a bit darker than Helen's...⁴ 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...

TROILUS

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.

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

Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair
75 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 5, it's all the same to
me.

5 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.

TROILUS

Don't I say she is fair 6?

6 Fairness here means pale-skinned, the Renaissance standard for beauty.

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
8 as I found you 7, and that's that.

7 i.e single.

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 8
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? 9 Cressida's bed is like India 10,
and she is like its jewel. The distance between my home
and hers is like a vast ocean, and like a merchant 11 I must

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

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

10 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
Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

105

*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

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

115

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

countries were being discovered and exploited by colonial Europeans.

11 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.

*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 **12** answer like this, and will always be womanly from this moment on.
What news has come from the battlefield today, Aeneas?

12 Women weren't expected, or often allowed, to fight.

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 **13** laughable injury **13** when Paris is injured with Menelaus's **14** horn.

13 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.

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

*Alarum**An alarm is sounded.***AENEAS**

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

AENEAS

Listen, there is good **15** sport **15** outside the city walls today.

15 Fighting or entertainment.

TROILUS

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

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

In all swift haste.

AENEAS

As quickly as I can.

TROILUS

120 Come, go we then together.

TROILUS

Come, let's both go.

*Exeunt**They exit.*

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,
10 And, like as there were husbandry in war,
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

They say he is a very man per se,
20 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 attaint 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 armor. 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 .

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

PANDARUS

Well, I say Troilus is Troilus .

 Pandarus is asserting that Troilus is the perfect man.

CRESSIDA

Then we agree, because he is certainly not Hector .

 Cressida is implying that Hector is the perfect man.

PANDARUS

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

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

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

You have no judgment, niece: Helen
95 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 .

 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
95 swore that Troilus , even though he is a little dark, which
I have to admit he is, although not really that dark...

 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. .

 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

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.
105

PANDARUS

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

CRESSIDA

Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

PANDARUS

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,--
115

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

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

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

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

CRESSIDA

O, he smiles valiantly.

PANDARUS

Does he not?

CRESSIDA

O yes, an 'twere a cloud in autumn.

PANDARUS

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

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.
7

 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.
8

 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...
130

CRESSIDA

If you can make that happen I am sure Troilus will stand happily.
9

 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, my

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 10.

10 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 11.

11 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

185 Speak not so loud.

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

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.

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.¹²

.¹² April being a month with a lot of rain.

CRESSIDA

I'll grow in his tears like a nettle during May.¹³

.¹³ 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.¹⁴

.¹⁴ A noddie 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

Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess,
240 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

Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to
265 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 ¹⁵ you?

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

CRESSIDA

I would lie ¹⁶ on my back to defend my belly ¹⁷, 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.

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

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.

¹⁸ Pandarus' exclamation is very
much like the modern phrase 'You are
something else'.

TROILUS'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 ¹⁹.

¹⁹ A bawd is a woman who runs a brothel.

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.

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,
Divide thy lips, than we are confident,
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,
We shall hear music, wit and oracle .

75

ULYSSES

Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,
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
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,
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
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!
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 fixture! O, when degree is shaked,
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,
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
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,
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,
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.
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,
Examled 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,
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

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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 forehand 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 scurrl 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 1. 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 2 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 3 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.

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

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

3 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 4. 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.

4 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 surely 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

This Trojan scorns us; or the men of Troy
 240 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,
 Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and,
 245 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 commands,

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 ?

 5 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

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

AGAMEMNON

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

This shall be told our lovers, Lord AEneas;
295 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 .

 6 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 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;
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,
 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,
 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
 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,
 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?
 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.
 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;
 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:
 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
 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
 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
 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;
 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  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.

 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  solve each other, their pride will be the bone that the two dogs fight over.

 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

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

10

Beating him

AJAX

Feel, then.

THERSITES

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

AJAX

15 Speak then, thou viney'd 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, 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 striketh me thus?

AJAX

The proclamation!

Shakescleare Translation

AJAX and THERSITES enter.

AJAX

Thersites!

THERSITES

What if Agamemnon had boils all over him 1 ?

1 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 2? Wouldn't that be a sight.

2 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 3 coming from him.

3 '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 4 of a lord.

4 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 5.

5 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 6 actions.

6 Thersites implies Ajax is both womanly and less than human.

AJAX

Toadstool 7, tell me what the proclamation 8 says.

7 A generic insult.

8 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 ralest 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!

50

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 [9](#) to be a fool, I think.

 [9](#) 'The proclamation' could mean the general rumors in the camp, Thersites is saying that everyone laughs at Ajax.

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](#) [10](#).

[10](#) 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.

AJAX

Mistress [11](#) Thersites.

[11](#) Ajax is implying that Thersites is being difficult by saying he is acting like a woman.

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](#) [12](#).

[12](#) Sailors used to eat hard loaves of bread that needed to be hit to break them.

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.

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

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 nineth 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 13, for he is Ajax.

13 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.'

ACHILLES

I know that, fool 14.

14 Thersites will deliberately mistake
this as 'I know that fool'.

THERSITES

Yes well the fool does not know himself 15.

15 Thersites is saying Ajax is an
unaware fool.

AJAX

Which is why I hit you 16.

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

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.

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 forced¹⁷ into yours.

¹⁷ '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).

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 yes¹⁸, hya Achilles, hya hya Ajax.

¹⁸ 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.

HERSITES

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

PATROCLUS

No more words, Thersites; peace!

HERSITES

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

ACHILLES

There's for you, Patroclus.

HERSITES

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

Exit

PATROCLUS

A good riddance.

ACHILLES

Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host:
That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,
125 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.

HERSITES

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

PATROCLUS

Okay stop now Thersites, be silent.

HERSITES

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

ACHILLES

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

HERSITES

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.

HERSITES 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 surely,
15 Surely 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 tithe 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 dothes 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 as a Trojan life, why shouldn't
we just hand her over?

 A tent is a medical instrument used for examining wounds.

 ² 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 tens 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  ?

 ³ 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 brench 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 Ilion 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. A. 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.

 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 Ilion 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
 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

120 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 glazed, 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 5. If
 Helen is the wife of Menelaus, as we all know she is, the

5 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***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 enginer! If Troy be not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darner of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods and, 10 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 scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and

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.***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! 1 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 2. 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 3, 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 4, a suitable curse for those that go to war over a woman 5. I have said my prayers and

1 Thersites is being sarcastic.

2 Sappers would dig underneath a city's walls and either burn, explode or cave them in.

3 The caduceus is a staff with two snakes wrapped around it, the symbol of medicine.

4 Aching bones was a sign of syphilis a common venereal disease in the period.

5 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,
 20 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.

HERSITES

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

35 What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

HERSITES

Ay: the heavens hear me!

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES

Who's there?

PATROCLUS

Thersites, my lord.

ACHILLES

40 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?

HERSITES

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

PATROCLUS

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

HERSITES

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

PATROCLUS

Thou mayst tell that knowest.

ACHILLES

50 O, tell, tell.

HERSITES

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.

HERSITES

If my memory 6 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?

6 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?

PATROCLUS

What, are you devout? Were you praying?

HERSITES

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 7 ?

7 Achilles asks Thersites to impersonate Agamemnon.

HERSITES

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?

HERSITES

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.

HERSITES

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

PATROCLUS

You rascal!

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  . Go on, Thersites.

 Court clowns were allowed to make fun of their betters and were common in most courts in Christendom.

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  . It is enough for me that you are. Who is coming here?

 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.

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  on the subject! Let war and greed ensnare everyone!

 "Serpigo" is the generic name for a creeping skin disease such as ringworm.

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.

AJAX

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.

90

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 fraction 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  that a fool could break up.

 .11 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  to bow with, its legs are only for walking, not for showing respect.

 .12 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 lunes, 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.¹³

¹³ 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 ruminate 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 enlard 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 push him o'er
 the face.

AGAMEMNON

O, no, you shall not go.

AJAX

An a' be proud with me, I'll pheeze his pride:
 215 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 stews 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

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

ULYSSES

Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

NESTOR

[Aside] Ajax [14](#) could be describing himself!

[14](#) The Greek generals clearly do not speak in front of Ajax, and either speak to the audience or to each other.

AJAX

Is it so much for him to come out?

ULYSSES

[Aside] The pot is calling the kettle black [15](#).

[15](#) The original saying involves birds. Ulysses is noting that earlier Ajax refused to follow orders just as Achilles does.

AJAX

I'll spill his arrogant blood [16](#).

[16](#) Blood-letting was a medical procedure supposed to effect people's moods or cure their sicknesses.

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](#) [17](#)?

[17](#) Ajax uses the word 'carry' as in 'carry the day' meaning to win, which is punned on by Nestor.

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](#) [18](#), I'll make him give in.

[18](#) Compare with Pandarus's discussion of women.

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.

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

Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure;
250 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

There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles
270 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.

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 ¹⁹, even
the mighty athlete Milo ²⁰ seems weak next to Ajax. I
cannot praise the wisdom which disciplines ²¹ your body,
but might compare it to Nestor, who is so old that must be
wise. I'm sorry father ²² Nestor, but I think if you were as
young as Ajax, your natural wit would not exceed his, but
would be its equal.

¹⁹ *The God of War.*

²⁰ Milo was a Greek athlete who famously competed whilst carrying a bull.

²¹ 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.

²² 'Father' is not used literally, but as a sign of respect.

AJAX

Will you be my father and mentor?

NESTOR

Yes, my good son ²³.

²³ 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.

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 ²⁴.

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

Exeunt

They exit.

Act 3, Scene 1

Shakespeare

Shakescleare Translation

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 ¹ of the young lord Paris?

.¹ This means that he is Paris's
servant.

SERVANT

Yes, sir, I follow him when he walks in front of me ².

.² 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 ³.

.³ 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 ⁴ be praised.

.⁴ 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 ⁵.

.⁵ 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 ⁶?

.⁶ Either: 'Are you a Duke?' or 'Are
you trying to improve your
spirituality?'

PANDARUS

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

.⁷ A duke?

Music comes from off-stage.

PANDARUS

What is this music?

SERVANT

I only partly know, sir, but the music has many parts ⁸.

.⁸ 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

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

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

SERVANT

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

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

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

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 ⁹ and you are too quick-witted. Who has asked these people to play?

⁹ 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 ¹⁰, the real expression of ideal beauty, love itself...

¹⁰ 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 ¹¹. I am here to speak with Paris on behalf of Prince Troilus, I will go on a charm offensive ¹² as my business with him is boiling hot ¹³

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

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

¹³ 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 ¹⁴.

¹⁴ Helen notes that Pandarus used the term 'fair' eight times.

PANDARUS

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

¹⁵ The music is "broken" as it is being played by many different people.

PARIS

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.

55

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

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

60

HELEN

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

PANDARUS

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

65

HELEN

My Lord Pandarus; honey-sweet lord,--

PANDARUS

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

70

HELEN

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

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.

75

HELEN

My Lord Pandarus,--

PANDARUS

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

80

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 ¹⁶.

¹⁶ 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 ¹⁷ a song for sure!

¹⁷ 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 ¹⁸ lord...

¹⁸ Helen is implying that Pandarus is both dear to her and a flatterer.

PANDARUS

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

¹⁹ "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 ²⁰ offense.

²⁰ 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

Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cressida? no, 90 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 cousin²¹ will fall out with you. I cannot say where he will be eating.

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

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 Cressida²² is unwell.

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

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 spy²³ ...

²³ 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.

PANDARUS

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

²⁴ 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.

HELEN

Oh, suddenly you are very keen to play.

PANDARUS

My niece is jealous of you²⁵, sweet queen.

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

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 them²⁶.

²⁶ 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.

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 me²⁷ like that.

²⁷ 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

Is this the generation of love? hot blood, hot

thoughts, and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers:

130

is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's a-field to-day?

PARIS

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?

135

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. 28

28 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.

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 29.

The arrow 30 confuses,

But doesn't hurt,

It tickles the wound.

The lovers cry "Oh! Oh! I am dying 31!"

But the arrow that seems to pierce the wound 32,

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!

29 Male and female deer.

30 An innuendo.

31 An innuendo.

32 An innuendo.

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.

*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***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 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 Where I may wallow in the lily-beds Proposed for the deserver! O gentle Pandarus, From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings And fly with me to Cressida!

 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.

PANDARUS

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

20

*Exit***PANDARUS**

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

PANDARUS exits.

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
Love's thrice repurposed nectar? death, I fear me,
25 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 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 is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere 55 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 bereave you o' the deeds too, if she call your activity in question. What, billing again? Here's 60 '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? 2? 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. 3. Go on, go on, start the game, kiss her! 4. [*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 5, go on, go on.

2 Pandarus uses imagery common to training hawks.

3 An innuendo.

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

5 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 6 again? The debate seems to be going well with both sides in agreement... come on in, I'll get a fire going.

6 '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! 7

7 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 dredg espies my sweet lady in the fountain of our love?

CRESSIDA

70 More dredgs 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

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 monstruosity 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 desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus shall be such to Cressid 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

I thank you for that: if my lord get a boy of you, 105 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? 8?

8 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 9 there are no monsters.

9 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

Thank you for the offer! If you do become pregnant by Troilus, you can "dedicate" it to me. 10 Stay faithful to Troilus. If he pulls away from you, blame me for it.

10 Pandarus deflects Cressida's mockery.

TROILUS

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

PANDARUS

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

CRESSIDA

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

TROILUS

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

CRESSIDA

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.
 120 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 wo'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!

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.

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.

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

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.

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,
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 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! ¹⁴ 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."

¹⁴ 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.

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-betweens 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.

CRESSIDA

Amen.

PANDARUS

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!

210

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 pander¹⁵ to help them along!

¹⁵ As noted above, Pandarus's name was the origin of a word that meant a "go-between in romantic affairs" or a "pimp."

They exit.

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.

5

10

15

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.

20

25

30

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.

35

DIOMEDES

This shall I undertake; and 'tis a burden Which I am proud to bear.

Exeunt DIOMEDES and CALCHAS

Shakescleare 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 ¹, 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.

¹ "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 ² 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.

² 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

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 unpleasing 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

AGAMEMNON and NESTOR 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.

ACHILLES and PATROCLUS leave their tent and enter the stage.

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](#)

AJAX exits.

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 commands 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,
reverberates
130 The voice again, or, like a gate of steel

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 ⁴. There is nothing unusual about what
the man says.

⁴ 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.

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

⁵ 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 ingratitudes:
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'er top 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 corner: 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 wouldest 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 drove great Mars to faction.

being exploited. By nature 5, 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 6 od deeds only last a moment and then become worthless. Only perseverance, my lord, keeps honor fresh and bright. To have done 7 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 8!

6 In the original *Time* is personified as a man who collects money for Forgetfulness, this is based on an old saying.

7 This may be a pun on "dun" which means dull-colored.

8 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 expression 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 ⁹. 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.

⁹ 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 guarantees 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
Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,--a stride
270 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 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 i'n 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 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."¹⁰

¹⁰ 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.¹¹

¹¹ 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 wont 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.

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

325 My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd; And I myself see not the bottom of it.

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 is¹². I don't know what sense will be in him when Hector has dashed out his brains, but it would take Apollo¹³ to make him understand.

¹² Thersites's answer puns on Achilles's question.

¹³ 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.

Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS

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.

Shakesclare 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

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,
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:
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
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

Good morrow, all.

55

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

Both alike:
He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,
Not making any scruple of her soilure,
With such a hell of pain and world of charge,
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,
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
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

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
As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.

DIOMEDES

Yes, and we both hope that the other will be worse¹ as well.

¹ 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 whore². 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.

² 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.

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.

Exeunt

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 Cressida! 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.

Shakescleare 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

How now, how now! how go maidenheads? Here, you maid! where's my cousin Cressid?

CRESSIDA

Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle!
You bring me to do, and then you flout me too.

PANDARUS

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

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

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

How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in:
I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

Exeunt TROILUS and CRESSIDA

PANDARUS

Who's there? what's the matter? will you beat
down the door? How now! what's the matter?

55

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? 3 Hey, you there young girl 4! Where's my cousin Cressida?

3 How go...? would be a common way of asking the price of something at a market.

4 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 5? Do what? Let her say what, what have I helped you do?

5 '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 6. Haven't you slept last night? Would the naughty boy not let the thing sleep? Oh what a naughty man! 7

6 Pandarus is speaking dirty Italian, referring to Troilus's sexual member.

7 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 París,
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; '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

120 Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks, 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**TROILUS exits.***PARIS**

I know what 'tis to love;
And would, as I shall pity, I could help!
Please you walk in, my lords.

*Exeunt***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
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 3, 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 4.
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.

3 This means that they cannot kiss
and also, perhaps, that their mouths
are hanging open.

4 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?

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 5 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."

5 "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 Greek
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 6. [TROILUS gives
CRESSIDA a sleeve]

6 In the Renaissance sleeves were
detachable, Troilus is giving Cressida
something to remember him by.

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 7 ... Which I hope you
can consider a virtuous sin... Makes me afraid.

7 There was a contested idea in
Christian theology that God was
jealous when man was not faithful to
him.

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," 8 I don't sweeten my speech 9, 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.

8 The "volta" or "lavolt" was a very
physically demanding dance.

9 With eloquence or praise. This is
ironic, because Troilus's speech is full
of rhetorical and poetic aspects.

CRESSIDA

Do you think I will be?

TROILUS

No. But sometimes things happen against our will 10, and
sometimes we are devils to ourselves if we assume that our
power to resist temptation will not change.

10 He is playing on her question,
turning "will" into a question of will-
power.

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?

TROILUS

Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:
Whiles 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

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 Ilion.

DIOMEDES

Fair Lady Cressid,
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!
The prince must think me tardy and remiss,
155 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 [1], and
command me wholly.

[1] 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 [12] I will cut your throat.

[12] 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 [13], 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."

[13] "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

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 spher'd 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

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 you 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

O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!
35 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

I'll make my match to live,
The kiss you take is better than you give;
Therefore no kiss.

45

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

No, Paris is not; for you know 'tis true,
50 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  to kiss.

 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 .

 **3** 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  . This one is
your kiss from Patroclus. [*PATROCLUS kisses CRESSIDA again*]

 **4** 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  . Therefore I won't kiss you.

 **5** 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  man. Give equally or don't give at all.

 **6** 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 .

 **7** 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 8. May I,
sweet lady, beg for a kiss from you?

8 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 9.

9 Ulysses is saying he won't beg for a kiss.

CRESSIDA

I will honor that when what you say is true 10.

10 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 vindictive 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 Ilion thus translate him to me.

Alarum. 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.

11 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 impression 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  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!

 12 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;
Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;
I will go eat with thee and see your knights.

180

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
Shall find him by his large and portly size.

185

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
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:
She's well, but bade me not command her to you.

205

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.¹³

¹³ 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.¹⁴ topic.

¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶, 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.¹⁷
him. He was a good soldier, but by Mars, the captain of
us all.¹⁸, I never saw anyone like you before. Let an old

¹⁵ This term can mean both brave and flippant.

¹⁶ Perseus was a legendary Greek hero.

¹⁷ Against or alongside is unclear.

¹⁸ 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

First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;
305 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 ¹⁹.

¹⁹ 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 tabourines, 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 wails 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.

*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 20.

20 *Troilus implies that erotic love is
subject to Fortune, and never remains
constant.*

*Exeunt**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 1. Patroclus, lets
entertain him well.

1 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 2, from Troy.

2 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-gripping, 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

Why no, you ruinous butt, you whoreson
30 indistinguishable cur, no.

THERSITES

No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle
immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green saracenit
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

With too much blood and too little brain, these two
50 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 3.

3 A tent is a medical instrument
that is used to stop bleeding.
Thersites is punning on the idea of
Achilles being hurt.

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? 4

4 If Patroclus said yes he would be
agreeing that he was all the things
that Thersites called him.

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 5, you ornament, you? Ah the
whole world is filled with leeches like you.

5 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.

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

6 "Quails" was also a term meaning
prostitutes. Thersites seems to be

that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as
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
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
against destiny. Ask me not, what I would be, if I
were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse
of a lazarus, 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

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.

85

ACHILLES
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, Diomed,
Keep Hector company an hour or two.

loves eating quails [6](#). 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 mule, a cat, 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:
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 Brabbler 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
110 after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets!

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 Diomed 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.

Shakescleare 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

Cressid 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

Roguery!

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 ?

 **1** 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  with any man without knowing them first.

 **2** The imagery here is musical, Cressida can play men like an instrument without any sheet music.

THERSITES

And any man may sing her song  , if he can find her key  . She's noted like an instrument.

 **3** Any man may very quickly get to know her.

 **4** 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 .

 **5** 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

How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and
potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery,
70 fry!

DIOMEDES

But will you, then?

CRESSIDA

In faith, I will, ha; never trust me else.

DIOMEDES

Give me some token for the surety of it.

CRESSIDA

I'll fetch you one.

75

Exit

ULYSSES

You have sworn patience.

TROILUS

Fear me not, sweet lord;
I will not be myself, nor have cognition
Of what I feel: I am all patience.

80

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

It is no matter, now I have't again.
90 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 , like a little devil with a fat bottom and thick
fingers is getting these two excited. Go on, Lechery, go on!

 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  so that I can be sure.

 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

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;
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

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

'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

To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,
And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.

TROILUS

Wert thou the devil, and worest 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

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 virginal 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,
The error of our eye directs our mind:
What error leads must err; O, then conclude
135 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.

HERSITES

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 inseparable
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 Ariadne'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?

HERSITES

He'll tickle it for his concupise.

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.

HERSITES

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 Ariadne's broken spider web ¹⁰. 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.

¹⁰ 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?

HERSITES

He'll beat him for his lover ¹¹.

¹¹ Hershites 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

Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would
croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode.
210 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

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

You train me to offend you; get you in:
5 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.

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.

.12 Both: 'I hope they are punished
for their sins' and 'I hope they catch a
disease from their sins'.

THERSITES exits.

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.

.1 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

The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:
They are polluted offerings, more abhor'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,
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

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

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,
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

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

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,
The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,
Spur them to Ruthful 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.²

² 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 lion³, you are a man.

³ 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!
 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. Alarms

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

120 A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so
 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

130 Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.
 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. Alarms 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 head?

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 thing what else I might have. What does
 she say in the letter?

.5 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 doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm: I would fain see 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. 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 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

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

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

No, no, I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave:
a very filthy rogue.

HECTOR

I do believe thee: live.

Exit

THERSITES

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, command 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, handless, 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.

 Nestor is imagining Hector as a figure much like the Grim Reaper with a scythe.

ULYSSES enters.

ULYSSES

Be brave, be brave, princes! Great Achilles is arming himself, weepings, cursing, and promising revenge. Patroclus' 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.

 The Myrmidons were Achilles personal retinue or band of soldiers.

AJAX enters.

AJAX

Troilus! You are a coward Troilus!

*Exit**Ajax exits.***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**ACHILLES enters.***DIOMEDES**

Yes, over there, over there.

NESTOR

We are pulling together now.

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 wouldest thou?

DIOMEDES

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**

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

Come, both you cogging Greeks; have at you both!

15

*Exeunt, fighting**Enter HECTOR***HECTOR**

Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!

Shakesclare 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 crush 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**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***Shakescleare 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. Follow me, men, and
watch where I go. I demand that the great Hector must die.

They exit.

1 This is quite obviously not an
honorable tactic, and Achilles's
actions can be opposed to the mercy
Hector shows him.

THERSITES

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!

10

*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 2. Go, Paris, go! The bull can fight, watch out for his horns, woah!

1 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.

*PARIS and MENELAUS exit.**MARGARELON enters.***MARGARELON**

Turn, slave 3, and fight.

3 Here 'slave' is just an insult.

THERSITES

Who are you?

MARGARELON

One of Priam's bastards.

THERSITES

I am a bastard 4 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 5 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.

4 Thersites plays on the two meanings of bastard: a child whose parents aren't/weren't married and an unpleasant, underhand person.

5 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.

*THERSITES exits.***MARGARELON**

Curse you, coward.

MARGARELON exits.

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 veil and darkling 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 1, Hector. Now night 2 is pursuing him. Just as a dark shadow is coming over the earth, Hector's life is over.

1 It is both late in the evening, and late in Hector's life.

2 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

Shakescleare 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! ignominy 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 ¹, 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 ², 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.

¹ A Niobe was a weeping or bereaved woman.

² 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

A goodly medicine for my aching bones! O world!
40 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.

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 ³ sings very merrily,
Until he has lost his honey and his sting ⁴.
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 ⁵, even
though your eyes are half-gone ⁶, you should still cry for
Pandarus's sad fate. If you cannot weep, groan instead, and
if not for me then for your aching bones ⁷." Brothers and
sisters ⁸ 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 ⁹
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.

³ Womaniser.

⁴ This is an innuendo.

⁵ Pandarus's house could refer to a brothel or the theater.

⁶ From venereal diseases, presumably.

⁷ A symptom of a common STI, syphilis.

⁸ Pandarus is talking directly to the audience here.

⁹ The brothels near The Globe Theatre were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester.

[Exit](#)

PANDARUS exits. *The End.*

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