Troilus and Criseyde

Book II

1. Out of these blacke wavés for to sail,
O wind, O wind, the weather 'ginneth clear,
For in this sea the boat hath such travail,
Of my cunning that unnethes I it steer.¹
This sea clepe I the tempestuous mattēr
Of dis-espair that Troilus was in.
But now of hope the Kalendēs begin.

2. O lady mine that calléd art Cleo,
Thou be my speed from this forth, and my muse
To rhymē well this book, till I have do.
Me needeth here no other art to use;
For-why to every lover I me excuse
That of no sentiment I this endite
But out of Latin in my tongue it write.

3. Wherefore I will have neither thanks nor blame
Of all this work, but pray you meekēly,
Dis-blameth me if any word be lame;
For as my author said, so say I.
Eke, though I speak of love unfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it no thing of new's:
A blind man cannot judgen well in hues.

¹ 1.4: "That my skill (cunning) is scarcely (unnethes) sufficient to steer it."
4. You know eke that in form of speech is change
   also
   Within a thousand years, and wordës tho
   then
   That hadden price, now wonder nice and strange
   had value / now very odd
   Us thinketh them, and yet they spoke them so
   They seem to us
   And sped as well in love as men now do. ¹
   And succeeded
   Eke for to winnen love in sundry ages
   And / various times
   In sundry landës, sundry been usages.
   customs

5. In May that mother is of monthës glad
   alive
   That freshe flowers blue and white and red
   sweet smell / meadow
   Be quick again, that winter deadë made,
   P = the sun
   And full of balm is floating every mead
   sign of Taurus / it happened
   When Phoebus doth his brightë beamës spread
   customs
   Right in the white bull -- it so betid
   As I shall sing, on Mayës day the third

6. That Pandarus, for all his wisë speech
   sharp arrows
   Felt eke his part of Lovë's shottës keen

¹ 4.1-5: That the words of these five lines are true for English is evident in the grammar and word usage of the lines themselves, even in the present version with its modern spelling and letter forms, but the fact is more dramatically illustrated from the Chaucer manuscripts. Here is the version of these lines as recorded in the Corpus Manuscript:

   3e knowe ek that in fourme of speche is chaunge
   With-inne a thousand 3eer and wordës tho
   That hadden pris now wonder nyce and straunge
   Us thenketh hem and 3et thei spake hem so
   And spedeth as wel in loue as men now do

   In the Campsall MS the first and fourth lines are:
   1. Ye knowe ek þat in forme of speche is chaunge
   4. Vs thenkeþ hem / and yet þay spak hem so.

   It is now 600 years, not 1000, since Chaucer's time, but the reader can see how the language has changed significantly in the use of written characters (e.g. þ and 3), and in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, semantics, punctuation conventions and, less obviously, in pronunciation (notice that so and do no longer rhyme).

   This edition is designed to make Chaucer's text more accessible to modern readers, by modernizing most of the old spelling, and by adding punctuation and glosses to help readers with the syntax and obsolete words of Chaucer's language, which remains intact.
That, could he ne'er so well of loving preach, ¹
It made his hue a-day full often green;
So shope it that him fell that day a teen
In love, for which in woe to bed he went,
And made, ere it was day, full many a went.

7. The swallow Procnè with a sorrowful lay,
When morrow came gan make her waymenting,
Why she forshapen was; and ever lay
Pandáre a-bed, half in a slumbering,
Till she so nigh him made her chittering
How Tereus gan forth her sister take,
That with the noise of her he gan awake.

8. And gan to call and dress him up to rise
Remembering him his errand was to do
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plight was the moon
To do viage, and took his way full soon
Unto his niece's palace there beside.
Now Janus, god of entry, thou him guide.

9. When he was come unto his niece's place,
"Where is my lady?" to her folk said he;
And they him told, and he forth in gan pace
And found two other ladies set and she
Within a pavèd parlor, and they three
Heard a maiden read to them the geste
Of the siege of Thebès, while them lest.²

10. Quod Pandarus: "Ma damè, God you see,
With all your book and all the company!"
"Eh, uncle mine, welcome iwis," quod she;

¹ 6.3: "That no matter how good he was at talking about love..." Pandarus has his occasional bout of lovesickness, a somewhat unconvincing and unnecessary element in the story.

² 9.4-8: In an age of few books it was common for one person to read to a group.
And up she rose, and by the hand in hie in haste
She took him fast, and saidè: "This night thrice -- Last night
To goodè may it turn, -- of you I mett."
I dreamed
And with that word she down on bench him set.

11. "Yea, niecè, you shall farè well the bet, the better
If God will, all this year," quod Pandarus.
"But I am sorry that I have you let prevented
To hearken of your book you praisen thus;
For God's love, what says it? Tell it us.
Is it of love? Oh, some good you me lere." may you teach me
girlfriend, beloved
"Uncle," quod she, "your mistress is not here."¹ girlfriend, beloved

12. With that they gonnen laugh, and then she said:
"This römance is of Thebês that we read; romance = geste in 9
And we have heard how that King Laius died
Through Oedipus his son, and all that deed;
And here we stenten at these letters red,² [actually a soothsayer]
How that the bishop (as the book can tell)
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to hell."

13. Quod Pandarus: "All this I know myself.
And all the siege of Thebês and the care;
For hereof been there makèd bookès twelve. In "The Thebaid"
But let be this, and tell me how you fare.
Do 'way your barb, and show your facè bare; widow's headdress
Do way your book, rise up and let us dance
And let us do to May some òbservance."

Is that a widow's life, so God you save?
By God, you maken me right sore a-dread,
You be so wild, it seemeth that you rave.

¹ 11.7: Troilus had remarked in Bk I that Pandarus had had no success in love. His unrequited love for some unspecified woman (your mistress) is, in spite of stanzas 6 & 7 above, something of a good-natured family joke.

² 12.5: Red letters (rubrics) marked the beginnings of sections in many medieval MSS.
It sits me wel bet ay in a cave
To bid, and read on holy saintês' lives.
Let maidens go to dances, and young wives."

15. "As ever thrive I," quod this Pandarus,
"Yet could I tell a thing to do you play."
"Now uncle dear," quod she, "tell it us
For God's love. Is then the siege away?
I am of Greeks so fearêd that I die."
"Nay, nay," quod he, "as ever may I thrive
It is a thing well better than such five."

16. "Yea, holy God!" quod she, "what thing is that?
What? better than such five? Eh, nay, iwis
For all this world ne can I reden what
It shoulde be: some jape, I trow, is this;
And, but yourselfen tell us what it is,
My wit is for t'arede it all too lean. ¹
As help me God, I know not what you mean."

17. "And I your borrow, ne never shall, for me,
This thing be told to you, as may I thrive."
"And why so, uncle mine, why so?" quod she.
"By God," quod he, "that will I tell as blive;
For prouder woman were there none alive,
An' you it wist, in all the town of Troy.²
I japé not, as ever have I joy."

18. Then gan she wonder morê than before
A thousandfold, and down her eyên cast
For never, since the time that she was born,
To know a thing desirêd she so fast;
And with a sigh she said him at the last:

¹ 16.5-6: "Unless you yourself tell us what it is, my mind is too weak to interpret it."

² 17.5-6: Pandarus, deliberately rousing and teasing Criseyde's curiosity, tells her that if she only knew, she would be the proudest woman in Troy.
"Now, uncle mine, I will you not displease,
Nor asken more that may do you dis-ease."

19. So after this, with many wordês glad
And friendly tales and with a merry cheer,
Of this and that they played and gonnen wade
In many an uncouth, glad, and deep mattër,
As friendês do when they be met ifere,
Till she gan asken him how Hector fared
That was the townê's wall and Greekês' yard.

20. "Full well, I thank it God," quod Pandarus,
"Save in his arm he hath a little wound;
And eke his freshê brother Troilus,
The wisê, worthy Hector the secónd,
In whom that every virtue list abound,
As allê truth and allê gentleness,
Wisdom, honor, freedom and worthiness."

21. "In good faith, eme," quod she, "that liketh me;
They faren well, God save them bothê two,
For truly I hold it great dainty,
A kingê's son in armês well to do,
And be of good condition thereto;
For great power and moral virtue here
Is seldom seen in one person y-fere."

22. "In good faith, that is sooth," quod Padarus;
"But by my truth, the king has sons tway,
That is to mean, Hector and Troilus,
That certainly, though that I shouldê die
They been as void of vices dare I say,
As any men that live under the sun.
Their might is wide y-known, and what they can.

23. "Of Hector needeth nothing for to tell.
In all this world is not a better knight
Than he, that is of worthiness the well
And he well more virtue has than might.  
This knoweth many a wise and worthy wight.  
The same praise of Troilus I say.  
God help me so, I know not such twa."

24. "By God," quod she, "of Hector that is sooth;  
Of Troilus the same thing trow I.  
For dreadful, men tellen that he doth  
In armes day by day so worthily,  
And bears him here at home so gentilly  
To every wight, that all the praise hath he  
Of them that me were lewest praisèd be."

25. "You say right sooth, y-wis," quod Pandarus,  
"For yesterday, whoso had with him been,  
He might have wondered upon Troilus.  
For never yet so thick a swarm of been  
Ne flew, as Greeks from him gan flee.  
And through the field, in every wighte's ear,  
There was no cry but `Troilus is there!'

26. "Now here, now there, he hunted them so fast  
There n'as but Greek's blood and Troilus,  
Now them he hurt, and them all down he cast.  
Aywhere he went it was arrayed thus:  
He was their death, and shield and life for us,  
That all that day there durst him none withstand  
While that he held his bloody sword in hand.

27. "Thereto, he is the friendliest man  
Of great estate that e'er I saw my life  
And where him list, best fellowship can  
To such as him thinks able for to thrive."  
And with that word then Pandarus, as blive,  
He took his leave and said: "I will go henne."

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1 23.4: "He has even more honor than strength."
"Nay, blame have I, mine uncle," quod she then.

28. "What aileth you to be thus weary soon, 
And namely of women? Will you so?
Nay, sitteth down; by God I have to do 
With you, to speak of wisdom ere you go."
And every wight that was about them tho, 
That heard that, gan far away to stand
While they two had all that them list in hand.

29. When that their tale all brought was to an end 
Of her estate and of her governance,
Quod Pandarus: "Now is it time I wend;
But yet, I say, ariseth, let us dance,
And cast your widow's habit to mischance:
What list you thus yourself to disfigûre,
Since you is tid thus fair an àventure?"

30. "Ah! Well bethought, for love of God," quod she, 
"Shall I not witen what you mean of this?"
"No. This thing asketh leisure," then quod he,
"And eke me would much grieve, iwis,
If I it told and you it took amiss.
Yet were it bet my tongû for to still
Than say a sooth that were against your will.

31. "For, niecè mine, by the goddess Minerve 
And Jupiter that makes the thunder ring,
And by the blisfull Venus that I serve,
You be the woman in this world living,
(Withouten paramours) to my witting,
That I best love, and loathest am to grieve;
And that you witen well yourself, I 'lieve."

32. "Iwis, mine uncle," quod she, "grammercy;
Your friendship have I founden ever yet;
I am to no man holden, truly,
So much as you, and have so little quit;
And, with the grace of God, emforth my wit as far as I know how
As, in my guilt, I shall you ne'er offend, through my fault
And if I have ere this, I will amend. before now

33. "But for the love of God I you beseech Leave off / strange
As you be he that I most love and trust, what you please
Let be to me your fremèd manner speech
And say to me, your neicè, what you list." my beloved
And with that word her uncle anon her kissed
And said: "Gladly, levè niecè dear
Take it for good what I shall say you here."

34. With that she gan her eyén down to cast a little
And Pandarus to coughen gan a lite, tell, embroider
And said: "Niece, always, lo, to the last, tell, embroider
How so it be that some men them delight
With subtle art their tales for to endite, tell, embroider
Yet, for all that, in their intention, tell, embroider
Their tale is all for some conclusion.

35. "And since the end is every talè's strength, appropriate
And this mattër is so bihovely, Why
What should I paint or drawen it on length
To you that be my friend so faithfully?"
And with that word he gan right inwardly intensely
Beholden her, and looken on her face
And said: "On such a mirror, goodè grace!"

36. Then thought he thus: "If I my tale endite God's blessing
tell Aught hard, or make a process any while, or drag it out
She shall no savor have therein but lite, but little satisfaction
And trow I would her in my will beguile.¹
For tender wits weenen all be wile
Thereas they cannot plainly understand; think all is trickery
Where

¹ 36.4-5: "And (she will) think (trow) that I deliberately (in my will) want to deceive (beguile) her."
For-thy her wit to serven will I fond." 

Therefore

37. And lookèd on her in a busy wise
And she was ware that he beheld her so,
And said: "Lord! so fast you me avise!
Saw you me ne'er ere now? What say you? No?"
"Yes, yes," quod he, "and bet will ere I go;
But by my truth, I thought now if that ye
Be fortunate, for now men shall it see.

Therefore

38. "Be not aghast, ne quaketh not. Whereto?
Ne changeth not for fearè so your hue
For hardly, the worst of this is do,
And though my tale as now be to you new
Yet trust always, you shall me findè true.
And were it thing that me thought unsitting,
To you would I no suchè thingè bring."

Don’t shake / Why?

39. "Now, my good eme, for God's love I you pray,
Quod she: "Come off, and tell me what it is;
For I am both aghast what you will say
And eke me longeth it to wite, iwis.
For whether it be well or be amiss,
Say on, let me not in this fearè dwell."
"So will I do; now hearken, I shall tell.

Now listen

40. "Now, niecè mine, the kingè's dearè son,
The goodly, wisè, worthy, fresh and free,
Which always for to do well is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee
That, but you help, it will his banè be.
Lo, here is all, what should I morè say?
Do what you list to make him live or die.

Unless you help / his death

41. "If it be so that you so cruel be
That of his death you listè not to recche,

Reck, care

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1 36.7: “Therefore I will try (fond) to suit my message to her way of thinking.”
That is so true and worthy, as you see,
No more than of a japer or a wretch --
If you be such, your beauty may not stretch
To make amends of so cruel a deed.
Avisément is good before the need.

42. "And also think well that this is no gaude.
For me were lever thou and I and he
Were hangèd, than that I should be his bawd,
As high as men might on us all y-see.
I am thine eme; the shamè were to me
As well as thee, if that I should assent
Through mine abet that he thine honor shent.

43. "Now understand, for I you not require
To binden you to him through no behest,
But only that you make him better cheer
Than you have done ere this, and morè feast,
So that his life be savèd at the least.
This all and some, and plainly our intent. ¹
God help me so, I never other meant."

44. Criseydè, which that heard him in this wise
Thought: "I shall feelen what he means iwis."
"Now, eme," quod she, "what wouldè you devise
What is your redde that I should do of this?"
"That is well said," quod he; "certain best is
That you him love again for his loving
As love for love is skilfull guerdoning.

45. "Think, eke, how Eldè wasteth every hour
In each of you a party of beauty,
And therefore ere that Agè thee devour,
Go love; for, old, there will no wight of thee.
Let this provèrb a lore unto you be:

¹ 43.6: "This is all I have to say, and that is our frank wish."
`Too late aware,' quod Beauty, when it passed.  
`And Eldé daunteth Daunger at the last.'

Age overtakes aloofness

46. "The kingé's fool is wont to cry aloud,  
when that he thinks a woman bears her high:  
`So longé may you liven, and all proud,  
Till crowé's feet be grown under your eye,  
And send you then a mirror in to pry  
In which that you may see your face a-morrow.'  
Niece, I biddé wish you no more sorrow.'  

accustomed  
acts haughtily  
proud (women)  
to look in  
in the morning

47. With this he stint, and cast a-down the head,  
And she began to burst a-weep anon,  
And said: "Alas for woe! why n'ere I dead?  
For of this world the faith is all agone:  
Alas! what should a stranger to me don,  
When he that for my besté friend I wend  
Redds me to love who should it me defend?  
Niece, I biddé wish you no more sorrow."

stopped  
into tears  
Why am I not  
do  
whom I took  
Advises / forbid it to me

48. "Alas! I would have trusted doubtéless  
That if that I through my disáventure  
Had lovéd either him or Achilles,  
Hector, or any other créature,  
You would have had no mercy nor measúre  
On me, but always had me in reprove:  
This falsé world, alas! who may it 'lieve?  

bad fortune  
reproof  
believe, trust

49. "What! is this all the joy and all the feast?  
Is this your redde? is this my blissful case?  
Is this the very meed of your behest?  

advice  
your promised reward

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1 45.7: "Age overcomes aloofness at last." *Daunger* (Fr. daungier) meant literally "power", in romances the power a woman had over her lover, including the power to keep him waiting endlessly without any erotic satisfaction. If this attitude of hers prevails long enough, Age will overtake it.

2 46.7: Perhaps the line should read "Niece, I bid and wish you no more sorrow", where 'bid' and 'wish' mean much the same as the modern phrase: 'I hope and pray (that your sorrow won't be any worse').
Is all this painted process said, alas,  
elaborate yarn
Right for this fine? O lady mine Pallás,  
purpose / Athene
Thou in this dreadful case for me purvey,  
look after me
For so astonèd am I that I die."  
amazed

50. With that she gan full sorrowfully to sigh.  
no better
"Ah! may it be no bet?" quod Pandarus;  
I swear to God
"By God I shall no more come here this week,  
I see full well that you set light of us
And God to-forn! -- that am mistrusted thus;
Or of our death. Alas! I, woeful wretch!
Might he yet live, of me were naught to reck.¹  
If he could / to care

51. "O cruel god, O despitousè Mars,  
fierce
O Furies three of hell, on you I cry
So let me ne'er out of this house depart
If that I meantè harm or villainy!
But since I see my lord must needès die,
And I with him, here I me shrive and say
That wickedly you do us both to die." ²  
absolve myself

52. Criseydè, which that well nigh starved for fear,  
died
So as she was the fearfulest wight
That mightè be, and heard eke with her ear
And saw the sorrowful earnest of the knight,
And in his prayer saw eke no un-right,
And for the harm that might eke fallen more,
She gan to rue, and dread her wonder sore.

53. And thoughtè thus: "Unhappès fallen thick  
handled
Alday for love, and in such manner case
As men be cruel in themselves and wikke.
And if this man slay here himself, alas!

¹ 50.7: "If only he could live, there would be no need to care about me," i.e. I don't really matter.

² 51.6-7: Since Pandarus is neither making nor hearing a confession, but accusing someone, *shrive* seems to mean "I absolve myself."
54. "Of harmès two, the less is for to choose
Yet have I lever maken him good cheer
In honor, than mine emè's life to lose.--
You say you nothing else of me require?" ¹
"No, wis," quod he, "mine ownë niece so dear."
"Now, well," quod she, "and I will do my pain.
I shall my heart against my lust constrain.

55. "But that I will not holden him in hand:
Nor love a man ne can I not nor may
Against my will; but elsë will I fond
(Mine honour safe) please him from day to day.
Thereto would I not once have saidé nay
But that I dread, as in my fantasy.
But cease the cause, ay ceaseth malady.²

56. "And here I make a protestatïon:
That in this process if you deeper go,
That certainly for no salvation
Of you, though that you starven bothë two,
Though all the world on one day be my foe,
Ne shall I ne'er on him have other ruth."
"I grant it well," quod Pandare, "by my truth.

57. "But may I trusten well thereto," quod he,
"That of this thing that you have hight me here,
You will it holden truly unto me?"

¹ 54.1-4: It would appear that Criseyde is speaking the preceding stanza and the first three lines of this to herself, the fourth line aloud to Pandarus. Criseyde's terrified timidity of 52 seems at odds with her shrewd assessment of the situation in 53.7 and 54, and with her firm, self confident declaration of 55 and 56.

² 55.7: "When the cause of the illness is removed, the illness goes away." There is no fear when the cause of fear is removed.
"Yea, doubtèless," quod she, "mine uncle dear!"
"Ne that I shall have cause in this mattér,"
Quod he, "to 'plain or after you to preach?"
"Why no, pardee; what needeth morè speech?"

58. Then fellen they in other talès glad,
Till at the last: "O good eme!" quod she tho,
"For love of God, which that us both y-made,
Tell me how first you wisten of his woe;
Wot none of it but you?" He saidè: "No."
"Can he well speak of love?" quod she: "I pray?
Tell me, for I the bet me shall purvey."

59. Then Pandarus a little gan to smile,
And saidè: "By my truth I shall now tell.
This other day, not gone full long a while,
Within the palace garden by a well
gan he and I well half a day to dwell,
Right for to speaken of an ordinance
How we the Greeks might do a disadvance.

60. "Soon after that began we for to leap
And casten with our darts to and fro,
Till at the last he said that he would sleep,
And on the grass adown he laid him tho;
And I afar gan roamen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as that I walked alone,
How he began full woefully to groan.

61. "Tho gan I stalk full softly him behind,
And sikerly, the soothè for to sayn,
As I can clepe again now to my mind,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to 'plain.
He said: `O, Lord, have ruth upon my pain;
All have I rebel been in mine intent,
Now *mea culpa*, Lord, I me repent.\(^1\)

62. `For certês, Lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stood in black with looking of her eye,\(^2\)
That to mine hearte's bottom it is sounded,
Through which I wot that I must needês die.
This is the worst: I dare me not bewray,
And well the hotter be the gleedês red
That men them wry with ashes pale and dead.'\(^3\)

63. "With that he smote his head a-down anon,
And gan to mutter I n'ot what truly,
And I with that gan still away to gon,
And let thereof as nothing wist had I,
And came again anon and stood him by,
And said: `Awake, you sleepen all too long;
It seems me not that Love doth you to long.'\(^4\)

64. "That sleepen so that no man may you wake;
Who ever saw ere this so dull a man?'
`Yea, friend,' quod he, `do you your headês ache
For love, and let me liven as I can.'
But though that he for woe was pale and wan,
Yet made he then as fresh a countenance
As though he should have led the newê dance.

65. "This passêd forth, till now, this other day,

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\(^1\) 61.7: *mea culpa*, a Latin phrase meaning "through my fault", is from the Catholic confessional prayer called the "Confiteor" (I confess). Its use here is one of the more noticeable anachronisms of the poem. See also 51.6 & 58.3 above.

\(^2\) 62.2: "in black": a reference back to the temple scene in which Troilus first saw Criseyde: "Among these other folk was Cressida / In widow's habit black". (Bk. I, 18.1-2)

\(^3\) 62.5-7: "The worst part is that I cannot betray myself (by declaring my love openly). So (I am like) the red coals (gleeds) which stay hotter when one covers them with dead ashes."

\(^4\) 63.7-64.1: "It does not seem to me that love causes you to yearn, because you sleep so soundly that one cannot wake you." *Doth you to long* (63.7) = "Causes you to long for (something)".
It fell that I came roaming all alone
Into his chamber, and found how that he lay
Upon his bed; but man so sorely groan
Ne heard I ne'er, and what that was his moan
Ne wist I not, for as I was coming
All suddenly he left his complaining.

I did not know

66. "Of which I took somewhat suspicïon
And near I came, and found he weptè sore,
And God so wise be my salvation,
As ne'er of thing had I no ruthè more
For neither with engine nor with no lore
Unnethès might I from the death him keep,
That yet I feel my heartè for him weep.

greater pity
ingenuity nor skill
Scarcely

67. "And, God wot, never since that I was born
Was I so busy no man for to preach,
Ne never was to wight so deepè sworn
Ere he me told who might have been his leech.¹
But now to you rehearsen all his speech
Or all his woeful wordès for to sound
Ne bid me not but you will see me swoon.

Don't ask me unless

68. "But for to save his life, and elsè nought,
And to no harm of you, thus am I driven;
And for the love of God that us hath wrought
Such cheer him do that he and I may liven.
Now have I plat to you my heartè shriven;
And since you wot that mine intent is clean,
Take heed thereof, for I no evil mean.

no other reason
has made us
Give him such hope
plainly / confessed
you know

69. "And right good thrift, I pray to God, have ye
That have such one y-caught without a net,

good fortune

¹ 67.3-4: "No man was ever so deeply sworn to secrecy (as I was) before he told me -- the very man who might be his physician" i.e. I might be the one able to help cure him. Pandarus seems to have re-created this incident from the actual scene in Bk I where he squeezes the truth out of Troilus with difficulty.
An' you be wise as you be fair to see,¹
Well in the ring then is the ruby set.
There were never two so well y-met
When you be his all whole, as he is yours,
There mighty God yet grant us see that hour."

70. "Nay! Thereof spoke I not, aha!" quod she,
"As help me God, you shenden every deal." you ruin everything
"Oh, mercy, dear niece," anon quod he,
"Whatso I spoke, I meanté not but well,
By Mars the god, that helméd is of steel.
Now be not wroth, my blood, my niecé dear." Whatever
"Now, well," quod she, "forgiven be it here."

71. With this he took his leave, and home he went
And, Lord, how he was glad and well begone! pleased
Criseyde arose, no longer she ne stent, delayed
But straight into her closet went anon, her room
And set her down as still as any stone,
And every word gan up and down to wind
That he had said as it came to her mind.

72. And waxed somedeal astonished in her thought And became
Right for the newé case; but when that she when she
Was full aviséd, then found she right naught Had thought about it
Of peril why she ought afearéd be; nothing to be afraid of
For man may love of possibility to point of heartbreak
A woman so his hearté may to-burst, unless she please
And she not love again, but if her lest.²

73. But as she sat alone and thoughté thus, A cry
Ascry arose at skirmish all without,
And men cried in the street: "See! Troilus

¹ 69.3: "If you are as wise as you are pretty to look at."

² 72.5-7: A.C. Spearing remarks astutely of these lines: "it is as though Chaucer's thoughts and ours mingle with hers: in this early instance of style indirect libre it is unclear who is offering the generalization." The Medieval Poet as Voyeur, p. 127.
Has right now put to flight the Greekés rout."
With that gan all her meinee for to shout:
"Ah! go we see; cast up the gatés wide,
For through this street he must to palace ride,

74. "For other way is from the gaté none
Of Dardanus where open is the chain."
With that came he and all his folk anon
An easy pacé riding in routs twain,
Right as his happy day was, sooth to sayn,
For which, men say, may not disturbéd be
What shall betiden of necessity.

75. This Troilus sat on his bayé steed
All arméd save his head full richély,
And wounded was his horse, and gan to bleed,
On which he rode a pace full softely;
But such a knightly sighté, truly
As was on him was not, withouten fail
To look on Mars, that god is of battaile.¹

76. So like a man of armès and a knight
He was to see, fulfilled of high prowéss,
For both he had a body and a might
To do that thing, as well as hardiness,
And eke to see him in his gear him dress,
So fresh, so young, so wieldy, seeméd he,
It was a heaven on him for to see.

77. His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissue hung his back behind,
His shield to-dashéd was with swords and maces,
In which men might many an arrow find
That thirléd had the horn and nerve and rind;
And ay the people cried: "Here comes our joy,
And, next his brother, holder up of Troy!"

¹ 75.6-7: He was better to look at than Mars, the god of war.
78. For which he waxed a little red for shame
When he the people heard upon him cry,
That, to behold, it was a noble game
How soberly he cast adown his eye.
Creseyde anon gan all his cheer espy,
And let so soft it in her heartē sink
That to herself she said: "Who gave me drink?"

79. For of her ownē thought she waxed all red,
Remembering her right thus: "Lo! this is he
Which that mine uncle swears he must be dead
But I on him have mercy and pitý."
And with that thought for pure ashaméd she
gan in her head to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the people forth by passed.

80. And gan to cast and rollen up and down
Within her thought his excellent prowés,
And his estate, and also his renown,
His wit, his shape, and eke his gentleness;
But most her favour was, for his distress
Was all for her, and thought it was a ruth
To slayen suchē one, if he meant truth.

81. Now mighten some envious jangle thus:
`This was a sudden love; how might it be
That she so lightly lovéd Troilus?
Right for the firstē sightē, yea, pardee!'
Now whoso says so, may he never thee, ¹
For everything beginning has it need
Ere all be wrought withouten any dread.

82. For I say not that she so suddenly
Gave him her love, but that she gan incline

¹ 81.5: "Now, whoever says so, may he never prosper." *thee* is the verb "to prosper", not a pronoun.
To like him first, and I have told you why;  
And after that, his manhood and his pain  
Made love within her hearté for to mine  
For which, by process and by good service  
He got her love, and in no sudden wise.

83. She thoughtè well that Troilus' person  
She knew by sight, and eke his gentleness,  
And thus she said: "All were it naught to do  
To grant him love, yet for his worthiness  
It were honour with play and with gladness  
In honesty with such a lord to deal  
For mine estate, and also for his heal.¹

84. "Eke well wot I my kingé's son is he,  
And since he has to see me such delight,  
If I would utterly his sight y-flee,  
Paraunter he might have me in despite,  
Through which I mighté standen in worse plight:  
Now were I wise, me hate to purcháse  
Withouten need, where I may stand in grace?²

85. "Now set a case, the hardest is iwis,  
Men mighten deemen that he loveth me;  
What dishonour were it to me this?  
May I him let of that? Why nay, pardee;  
I know also, and alday hear and see,  
Men loven women all this town about.  
Be they the worse? Why nay, without a doubt.

86. "I think eke, how he able is to have  
Of all this noble town the thriftiest

¹ 83.5-7: "It would be an honor for me to associate with such a lord, cheerfully and pleasantly and decently; and it would be for my good and for his health."

² 84.6-7: "Would I be wise to invite hate needlessly, when I could have favor?"
To be his love so she her honour save;¹
For, out and out, he is the worthiest,
Save only Hector, which that is the best;
And yet his life lies all now in my cure,
But such is love, and eke mine aventure.

87. "Nor me to love a wonder is it naught,
For well wot I myself (so God me speed,
Al' would I that none wisten of this thought),
I am one the fairest, out of dread,
And goodliest, whoso that taketh heed,
And so men say in all the town of Troy;
What wonder is though he of me have joy?

88. "I am mine own woman, well at ease,
I thank it God, as after mine estate,
Right young, and stand untied in lushy leas,
Withouten jealousy or such debate.
Shall no husband say to me `Checkmate'!
For either they be full of jealousy,
Or masterfull, or loven novelty.

89. "What shall I do? To what fine live I thus?
Shall I not love in case if that me lest?
What! pardee, I am not religious;
And though that I mine heart set at rest
Upon this knight that is the worthiest,
And keep always mine honour and my name,
By all rights it may do to me no shame."

90. But right as when the sunnè shineth bright
In March, that changeth oftentimes his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flight
Which overspread the sun as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan through her soulé pace,
That overspread her brighté thoughtés all

¹ 86.3: so she ...: "provided that she kept her reputation intact."
So that for fear almost she gan to fall.

91. That thought was this: "Alas! since I am free, Should I now love and put in jeopardy
My sikerness, and thrallen liberty? security / give up
Alas! how durst I thinken that folly? how dare I
May I not well in other folk espy
Their dreadful joy, their cónstraint and their pain?
There loveth none that she n'as why to 'plain. ¹ reason to complain

92. "For love is yet the mostè stormy life
Right of himself that ever was begun, itself
For ever some mistrust or nicè strife silly
There is in love; some cloud is o'er that sun;
Thereto we wretched women nothing can, can (do) nothing
When us is woe, but weep, and sit, and think. When we're unhappy
Our wrecche is this, our ownè woe to drink. unhappiness

93. "Also these wicked tonguès be so prest eager
To speak us harm; eke men be so untrue,
That right anon as ceasèd is their lust as soon as
So ceaseth love, and forth to love anew:
But harm y-done is done, whoso it rue; whoever has to regret it
For though these men for love them first to-rend,
Full sharp beginning breaketh oft at end.
tear themselves

94. "How often times hath it y-knownen be
The treason that to women has been done!
To what fine is such love I cannot see, To what purpose
Or where becometh it when it is gone. where it goes
There is no wight that wot -- I trouwè so -- no one who knows, I guess
Where it becomes. Lo! No wight on it spurneth;²
What erst was nothing, into nought it turneth. What first

¹ 91.5-7: "Can't I see in others the joy mixed with dread, their distress and pain? There is no woman in love who does not also have cause (that she n'as why) to complain."

² 94.6: "Nobody falls over it." That is, it is not lying around in an obvious place.
95. "How busy, if I love, eke must I be
To pleasen them that jangle of love and deem,
And coy them, that they say no harm of me!
For though there be no cause, yet them can seem
All be for harm that folk their friendès queme.¹
And who may stoppen every wicked tongue,
Or sound of bellès while that they be rung?"

96. And after that her thought gan for to clear,
And said: "He which that nothing undertaketh
Nothing achieveth, be him loth or dear;"
And with another thought her heartè quaketh;
Then sleepeth hope, and after dread awaketh;
Now hot, now cold; but thus betwixen tway,
She rose her up and went her for to play.

97. Adown the stair anon right then she went
Into her garden with her nieces three,
And up and down there maden many a went
Flexippè, she, Tharbe and Antigone
To playen, that it was joy to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her followed in the garden all about.

98. This yard was large, and railèd all the alleys,
And shadowed well with blossomý boughs green,
And benchèd new, and sanded all the ways,
In which she walketh arm in arm between,
Till at the last Antigone the sheen
gan on a Trojan song to singen clear,
That it a heaven was her voice to hear.

¹ 95.4-5: "It can seem suspicious to them even when people are just doing something to please their friends."
Antigone's Song

99. She said: "O Love, to whom I have and shall
Be humble subject, true in my intent,
As I best can, to you, lord, give I all
For evermore, my heartè's lust to rent.  
my h's joy in tribute
For never yet thy gracè no wight sent
So blissful cause as me, my life to lead
In allè joy and surety, out of dread.  
(to) no person

100. "You, blissful god, have me so well beset
In love, iwis, that all that beareth life
Imaginen ne could how to be bet.
For, lord, withouten jealousy or strife
I love one which that is most ententife
attentive
To serven well, unwearly or unfeigned
That ever was, and least with harm distrained;  
(to) me

101. "As he that is the well of worthiness
Of truth the ground, mirror of goodlihead,
Of wit Apollo, stone of sikerness
rock of certainty
Of virtue root, of lust finder and head,
of joy the source
Through which is allè sorrow from me dead.
Iwis, I love him best, so does he me;
Indeed
Now good thrift have he, whereso that he be.
good fortune

102. "Whom should I thank but you, O god of love,
Of all this bliss in which to bathe I 'gin
And thankèd be you, lord, for that I love.
This is the rightè life that I am in
To flemen allè manner vice and sin.
put to flight
This does me so to virtue for t'intend
to incline
That day by day I in my will amend.
improve

1 Antigone's Song is a literary device which articulates what Criseyde is beginning to feel.

2 100.7: Distrained: variously glossed by editors and lexicographers: "stained, sullied, misled, overcome, oppressed."
103. "And whoso says that for to love is vice
Or thralldom, though he feel in it distress,
He either is envious or right nice.
Or is unmighty for his shrewèdness
To lovè, for such manner folk, I guess,
Defamen Love, as nothing of him know;
They speaken, but they never bent his bow.

104. "What is the sunnè worse, of kindè right,
Though that a man for feebleness of eye
May not endure on it to see for bright?
Or love the worse, though wretches on it cry?
No weal is worth that may no sorrow dry.
And therefore who that has a head of ver
From cast of stones beware him in the war.

105. "But I with all my heart and all my might,
As I have said, will love unto my last
My dearè heart, and all my ownè knight,
In which my heartè growèn is so fast,
And his in me that it shall ever last.
Al' dread I first to love him to begin,
Now wot I well there is no peril in."

106. And of her song right with that word she stent,
And therewithal: "Now niecè," quod Criseyde,
"Who made this song now with so good intent?"
Antigone answered anon, and said:
"Madame, iwis the goodliestè maid
Of great estate in all the town of Troy,
And leads her life in most honóur and joy."

107. "Forsoothè so it seemeth by her song."
Quod then Criseyde, and gan therewith to sigh,
And saidè: "Lord! is there such bliss among
These lovers, as they can fair endite?"

__________________________

1 104.5: "No happiness (or good fortune) is worth anything that has not cost some sorrow."
"Yea, wis," quod fresh Antigone the white, 
For all the folk that have or be alive 
Ne could not well the bliss of love describe.

108. "But weenen you that every wretchè wot 
The perfect bliss of love? Why nay, iwis. 
They weenen all be love if one be hot; 
Do way, do way! they wot nothing of this: 
Men must ask at saintès if it is 
Aught fair in heaven. And why? For they can tell; 
And asken fiends if it be foul in hell"

109. Criseyde unto the purpose naught answered, 
But said: "Iwis it will be night as fast." 
But every word which that she of her heard 
She gan to printen in her heartè fast, 
And ay gan love her less for to aghast 
Than it did erst, and sinken in her heart, 
That she waxed somewhat able to convert.

110. So when it likèd her to go to rest, 
And voided weren they that voiden ought, 
She saidè that to sleepen well her lest; 
Her women soon unto her bed her brought. 
When all was hushed, then lay she still and thought 
Of all this thing the manner and the wise; 
Rehearse it needeth not, for you be wise.

111. A nightingale upon a cedar green 
Under the chamber wall there as she lay, 
Full loudè sang against the moonè sheen, 
Paraunter, in his birdè's wise, a lay 
Of love, that made her heartè fresh and gay;

---

1 109.5-6: The word order is "and ay love gan to aghast her less than it did erst," meaning "And always (i.e. more and more) love began to terrify her less than it had at first."

2 111.4: "By chance, in his bird's fashion, a song."
That hearkened she so long in good intent
Till at the last the deadē sleep her hent.

112. And as she slept, anon right then she mett
How that an eagle, feathered white as bone,
Under her breast his longē clawēs set,
And out her heart he rent, and that anon;
Of which she naught agrose, ne nothing smart,
And forth he flew, with heartē left for heart.

113. Now let her sleep, and we our talē hold
Of Troilus, that is to palace riden
From the skirmish of the which I told,
And in his chamber sat and hath abiden
Till two or three of his messengers yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast
Till they him found, and brought him at the last.

114. This Pandarus came leaping in at once,
And saidē thus: "Who hath been well y-beat
Today with swordēs and with slingē-stones
But Troilus, that hath caught him a heat?"
And gan to jape, and said: "Lord so you sweat!
But rise and let us sup and go to rest,"
And he him answered: "Do we as thee lest."

115. With all the haste goodly that they might,
They sped them from the supper unto bed;
And every wight out at the door him dight,
And where him list upon his way he sped;
But Troilus thought that his heartē bled
For woe till that he heardē some tiding.
He saidē: "Friend, shall I now weep or sing?"

116. Quod Pandarus: "Lie still, and let me sleep,
And don thy hood; thy needes spedde be,\(^1\) put on / have been met
And choose if thou wilt sing or dance or leap:
At shorte wordes, thou shalt trowen me, believe me
Sir, my niecè will do well by thee
And love thee best, by God and by my troth,
But lack of pursuit mar it in thy sloth.\(^2\) Unless

117. "For thus far forth I have thy work begun
From day to day, till this day by the morrow in the morning
Her love of friendship have I to thee won,
And thereto has she laid her faith to borrow;
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorrow." \(^3\) pledged herself
What should I longer sermon of it hold?
As you have heard before, all he him told.

118. But right as flowers, through the cold of night recover in the bright sun
Y-closed, stoopen in their stalkes low,
Redressen them against the sune bright, their nature / row by r.
And spreaden, in their kindè, course by row,
Right so gan then his eyen up to throw
This Troilus, and said: "O Venus dear!
Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here." praised

119. And to Pandare he held up both his hands, I am healthy
And said: "Lord, all thine be that I have,
For I am whole; all bursten be my bands,
A thousand Troyes whoso that me gave
Each after other (God so wise me save)

---

\(^1\) 116.2: *don thy hood; thy needes spedde be* may mean: "put your hat back on", i.e. you don't have to beg any more; your wishes have been met". Or "keep your hat on" i.e. don't get excited; your wishes have been met."

\(^2\) 116.7: The meaning seems to be: "Unless your lazy failure to pursue the matter spoils things."

\(^3\) 117.5: An odd expression which appears to say: "At least one foot of your sorrow is lamed," and therefore sorrow will not be able to pursue you so fast. Hence: your problem is half solved.
Ne might not me so gladden.\(^1\) Lo! my heart
It spreadeth so for joy it will to-start.

120. "But, Lord, how shall I do? how shall I liven?
When shall I next my dear heartè see?
How shall this longè time away be driven
Till that thou be again at her from me?
Thou mayst answer: `Abide, abide'; but he
That hangeth by the neck, the sooth to sayn,
In great dis-ease abideth for the pain."

121. "All easily now, for the love of Mart,"
Quod Pandarus, "for everything hath time;
So long abide till that the night depart.
For all so siker as thou liest here by me,
And, God to-forn, I will be there at prime,
And forthy, work somewhat as I shall say,
Or on some other wight this charge lay.

122. "I wot well that thou wiser art than I
A thousand fold; but if I were as thou,
God help me so, as I would utterly
Of mine own hand write her right now
A letter, in which I would her tellen how
I fared amiss, and her beseech of ruth.
Now help thyself, and leave it not for sloth.

123. "And I myself shall therewith to her go
And when thou wost that I am with her there,
Worth thou upon a courser right anon
Yea, hardily right in thy bestè gear
And ride forth by the place, as naught ne were,
And thou shalt find us, if I may, sitting
At some window into the street looking.

\(^1\) 119.4-6: "Anyone giving me a thousand Troys one after the other, I declare to God, could not make me so glad."
124. And if thee list, then mayst thou us salue
And upon me make thy countenance;
But by thy life, beware and fast eschew
To tarry aught, God shield us from mischance.
Ride forth thy way, and hold thy governance.
And we will speak of thee somewhat, I trow,
When thou art gone, to do thine earës glow.

125. Touching thy letter, thou art wise enough.
I wot thou wilt it not dignely endite.¹
As make it with these arguments tough;
Nor scrivenish nor crafty thou it write
Be-blot it with thy tears also a lite;
And if thou write a goodly word all soft,
Though it be good, rehearse it not too oft.

126. This counsel likëd well to Troilus,
But, as a dreadful lover, said he this:
"Alas! my dear brother Pandarus!
I am ashamed for to write iwis,
Lest of mine innocence I said amiss,
Or that she n'ould it for despite receive;
Then were I dead, there might it nothing waive."

127. To that Pandárus answered: "If thee lest,
Do what I say, and let me therewith gon,
For by that Lord that formëd east and west,
I hope of it to bring answer anon
Right of her hand; and if that thou wilt none,
Let be, and sorry may he be his life,
Against thy lust that helpeth thee to thrive."²

128. Quod Troilus: "Depardieu, I assent;

¹ 125.2: "I know you will not write it over-elaborately."

² 127.5-7: "And if...: "But if you want none of my advice, forget it, and may anyone who helps you to succeed be sorry as long as he lives."
Since that thee list, I will arise and write,
And, blissful God, I pray with good intent
The voyage and the letter I shall endite
So speed it, and thou Minerva white,
Give thou me wit my letter to devise."
And set him down, and wrote right in this wise.

129. First he gan her his righté lady call,
His hearté 's life, his lust, his sorrow's leech,
His bliss, and eke those other termés all
That in such cases all these lovers seek,
And in full humble wise, as in his speech,
He gan him recommend unto her grace.
To tell all how, it asketh muchel space.

130. And that she would have his cunníng excused,
That little was; and eke he dread her so,
And his unworthiness ay he accused;
And after that then gan he tell his woe;
But that was endèless withouten ho;
And said he would in truth always him hold;
And read it o'er and gan the letter fold.

131. And with his salté tearés gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it set
Upon the wax deliverly and rathe,
Therewith a thousand timés ere he let
He kissèd then the letter that he shut,
And said: "Letter, a blissful destiny
Thee shapen is: my lady shall thee see!"

132. This Pandare took the letter, and betime
A-morrow to his niece's palace start,
And fast he swore that it was passéd prime,
And gan to jape, and said: "Iwis mine heart
So fresh it is (although it sorè smart)
I may not sleepè never a May's morrow,
I have a jolly woe, a lusty sorrow."  

133. Criseydë, when that she her uncle heard,  
With dreadful heart, and désirous to hear  
The cause of his coming, right thus answered;  
"Now by your faith, mine uncle," quod she, "dear!  
What manner windë guideth you now here?  
Tell us your jolly woe and your penánce;  
How far forth be you put in lovë's dance?"

134. "By God," quod he, "I hop always behind."  
And she to-laughed it thought her heartë burst.  
"What manner windë guideth you now here?  
Tell us your jolly woe and your penánce;  
How far forth be you put in lovë's dance?"

135. "Into the garden go we, and you'll hear  
All privily of this a long sermôn."  
With that they wenten arm in arm ifere  
Into the garden from the chamber down;  
And when that he so far was, that the sound  
Of what he spoke no man it hearen might,  
He said her thus, and out the letter plight:

136. "Lo! he that is all wholly yourës free,  
Him recommedeth lowly to your grace,  
And sends to you this letter here by me;  
Aviseth you on it when you have space,  
And of some goodly answer you purcháse,

1 132.7: These are the oxymorons of love applied jokingly by Pandarus to himself.

2 133.2: *Dreadful* cannot here mean "filled with dread" in our sense of the word "dread." In view of the self-mockery of Pandarus's opening remark and Criseyde's own lighthearted response, it has to mean something more like "bursting with curiosity."

3 134.2: "until she thought her heart would burst."
Or, help me God so, plainly for to sayn,
He may not longē liven for his pain."

137. Full dreadfully then gan she standen still,¹
And took it not, but all her humble cheer
Gan for to change, and saidē: "Scrip nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such matté,
Ne bring me none; and also, uncle dear!
To mine estate have more regard, I pray,
Than to his lust: what should I morē say?"

138. This Pandarus gan on her for to stare,
And said: "Now is this the greatest wonder
That e'er I saw; let be this nicē fare:
To deathē may I smitten be with thunder
If for the city which that standeth yonder
Would I a letter to you bring or take
To harm of you! What list you thus it make?"

139. "But thus you faren -- well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him you recken least where he become,
And whether that he live or elsē starve;
But for all that, that e'er I may deserve,
Refuse it not," quod he, and hent her fast,
And in her bosom down the letter thrust,

140. And said to her: "Now cast it away anon
That folk may see and garen on us tway."
Quod she: "I can abide till they be gone,"
And gan to smile, and said him: "Eme, I pray,
Such answer as you list, yourself purvey,
For truly I will no letter write."
"No! then will I," quod he, "so you endite."

¹ 137.1: As with 133.2, dreadfully here can hardly mean "full of dread", but neither can it mean "full of curiosity" in the context. "With uncertainty? apprehension? offended modesty? "

manner
writing nor letter
deals with
my position
his desires
stop this foolishness
to gain the city
why do you take it so?
you = women
care least what happens
die
grabbed her hard
stare at us both
I can wait
Uncle
as you please, carry
provided you dictate
141. Therewith she laughed, and said: "Go we dine;"
And he gan at himself to japen fast,
And said: "Niece, I have so great a pine
For love, that every other day I fast;"
And gan his best japès forth to cast,
And made her so to laugh at his folly
That she for laughter weened for to die.

142. And when that she was come into the hall,
"Now eme," quod she, "we will go dine anon
And gan some of her women to her call,
And straight into her chamber gan she gon;
But of her busïnesses this was one
Amongèst other thingèses, out of dread,
Full privily this letter for to read.

143. Avisèd word by word in every line,
And found no lack, she thought he couldè good;
And put it up, and went her in to dine;
And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
Ere he was 'ware she took him by the hood,
And said: "You were caught ere that you wist."
"I vouchèsafe," quod he; "do what you list."

144. Then washen they, and set them down and eat;
And after noon full slily Pandarus
Gan draw him to the window nigh the street,
And said: "Niece, who hath arrayèd thus
The yonder house that stands afore-gainst us?"
"Which house?" quod she, and gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told.

145. And fellen forth in speech of thingèses small,
And saten in the window bothè tway.
When Pandarus saw time unto his tale,
And saw well that her folk were all away,
"Now, niecè mine, tell on," quod he, "I pray;
How liketh you the letter that you wot?"
Can he thereon? for by my truth I n'ot."  

146. Therewith all rosy hued then waxèd she,  
And gan to hum, and saidè: "So I trow."  
"Acquit him well for God's love," quod he,  
Myself to-meèdès will the letter sew;"  
And held his handès up, and fell on knee.  
"Now, goodè niecè, be it ne'er so lite,  
Give me the labor it to sew and plite."

147. "Yea, for I can so writè," quod she tho,  
"And eke I n'ot what I should to him say."  
"Nay, niece," quod Pandarus, "say you not so,  
Yet, at the leastè, thanketh him I pray  
Of his good will.  O do him not to die!  
Now for the love of me, my niecè dear  
Refuseth not at this time my prayèr."

148. "Depardieu!" quod she, "God leve all be well;  
God help me so, this is the firstè letter  
That e'er I wrote, yea all or any deal,"  
And into a closet for t'avise her better  
She went alone, and gan her heart unfetter  
Out of Disdain's prison but a lite,  
And set her down and gan a letter write.

149. Of which to tell in short is mine intent  
Th' effect as far as I can understand:  
She thankèd him of all that he well meant  
Towardès her, but holden him in hand  
She would not, ne make herselfen bound  
In love, but as his sister him to please  
She would ay fain, to do his heart an ease.

---

1 145.7: "Does he know how to write well, for, on my word, I don't know".

2 146.7: A parchment letter would have been sewn shut.
150. She shut it, and to Pandare in gan gon
There as he sat and looked into the street,
And down she sat her by him on a stone
Of jasper on a cushion gold y-beat,
And said: "As wisly help me God the great,
I never did a thing with moré pain
Than writé this, to the which you me constrain."

151. And right as they declaréd this mattér,
Lo! Troilus right at the streeté's end
Came riding with his tenthé some ifere ¹
All softly, and thitherward gan bend
There as they sat, as was his way to wend
To palace-ward, and Pandare him espied,
And said: "Niece! See who comes heré ride!

152. "O fly not in! He sees us, I suppose,
Lest he may thinken that you him eschew."
"Nay, nay," quod she, and waxed as red as rose.
With that he gan her humbly to salue
With dreadful cheer, and oft his hues mue, ²
And up his look he debonairly cast,
And beckéd on Pandáre, and forth he passed.

153. God wot if he sat on his horse aright,
Or goodly was beseen that ilké day!
God wot whe'r he were like a manly knight!
What should I dretch, or tell of his array?
Criseydé, which that all these thingés saw,
To tell in short, her likéd all ifere,
His person, his array, his look, his cheer,

¹ 151.3: with his tenthë sum ifere: tenthë sum is a relic of an OE idiom meaning "one of ten," i.e. he and nine others.

² 152.5: Once again the precise connotation of dreadful is difficult to pin down. (See 133 & 137 above). It might have a range of meaning from 'courteous' to 'apprehensive'. and oft his hues (gan) mue: 'and his color changed often' implies shyness and apprehension.
154. His goodly manner and his gentleness,
   So well, that never since that she was born
   Ne hadde she such ruth of his distress; such pity on
   And how so she had hard been here-beforn,
   To God hope I she hath now caught a thorn
   She shall not pull it out this nexte week;
   God send her more such thornés on to pick!
   And although

155. Pandárus, which that stood her faste by,
   Felt iron hot, and he began to smite,
   And saidé: "Niece, I pray you heartily
   Tell me what I shall asken you a lite;
   A woman that were of his death to wite,
   Without his guilt, but for her lack of ruth,
   Were it well done?" Quod she: "Nay, by my truth."
   strike
   to blame
   pity

156. "God help me so," quod he, "you say me sooth,
   You feelen well yourself that I naught lie.
   Lo! yond he rides." Quod she: "Yea, so he doth."
   "Well," quod Pandáre, "as I have told you thrice,
   Let be your nicëty and your follý,
   And speak with him in easing of his heart:
   Let nicëty not do you both to smart."
   tell truth
   yonder
   3 times
   squamishness
   cause you pain

157. But thereon was to heaven and to don,
   "Considering all things, it may not be."
   "And why?" "For shame. And it were eke too soon
   To granted him so great a liberty."
   For plainely her intent, as saidé she,
   Was, for to love him únwist if she might,
   And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.
   And reward

---

1 157: Many editions have no quotation marks in this stanza. They would seem to regard it all as authorial comment. If they are right, the stanza is an interesting example of a technique many of us regard as very modern, especially joycean, where the narrator is "speaking" in the "voice" of one or more of his characters, the style indirect libre referred to by Spearing in an earlier passage. (See above, II.72.5-7). My quotation marks and punctuation could easily be changed in a number of ways. In 157.3 Riverside has speche for shame, and glosses it as '(fear of) malicious speech.'
158. But Pandarus thought: "It shall not be so;
If that I may, this nice opinion
Shall not be holden fully yearès two."
What should I make of this a long sermón?
He must assent on that conclusion
As for the time, and when that it was eve,
And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

159. And on his way full fast he homeward sped,
And right for joy he felt his hearté dance,
And Troilus he found alone a-bed,
That lay, as do those lovers, in a trance,
Betwixen hope and dark dis-ésperance.
But Pandarus right at his in-coming
He sang, as who saith: "Lo! somewhat I bring."

160. And said: "Who is in his bed so soon
Y-buried thus?" "It am I, friend," quod he.
"Who? Troilus! nay, help me so the moon,"
Quod Pandarus, "Thou shalt up rise and see
A charm that was y-sent right now to thee,
The which can healen thee of thine access,
If thou forthwith do all thy busyness."

161. "Yea, through the might of God," quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan him the letter take,
And said: "Pardee, God hath holpen us.
Have here a light, and look on all these black."
But often gan the hearté glad and quake
Of Troilus while he it gan to read,
So as the wordès gave him hope or dread.

162. Wherefore I say always, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he did erst through hope, and did his might
To pressen on, as by Pandárus’ lore,
And writen to her of his sorrows sore
From day to day: he let it naught refreid
That by Pandare he somewhat wrote or said.

163. But to Pandare always was his recourse,
And piteously gan ay to him to 'plain,
And him besought of rede and some succour;
And Pándarus, that saw his woed pain,
Waxed well nigh dead for ruth, sooth to sayn,
And busily with all his heart cast
Some of his woe to slay, and that as fast;

164. And saidé: "Lord and friend and brother dear,
God wot that thy dis-eas doth me woe.
But wilt thou stinten all this woeful cheer,
And, by my truth, ere it be day's two,
That thou shalt come into a certain place
Thereas thou may'st thyself her pray of grace.

165. "But, Troilus, yet tell me, if thee lest,
A thing now which that I shall asken thee:
Which is the brother that thou lovest best,
As in thy very heart's privity?"
"Iwis my brother Deiphebe," quod he.
"Now," quod Pandare, "ere hourès twicè twelve
He shall thee ease, unwist of it himself.

166. "Now let me alone and worken as I may,"
Quod he, and to Deiphebus went he tho,
Which had his lord and greatè friend been ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovèd so.
To tell in short, withouten wordès mo,
Quod Pandarus: "I pray you that you be
Friend to a causè which that toucheth me."

167. "Yes, pardee," quod Deiphebus, "well thou wost,

1 163.2-3: "And [Troilus] constantly to him [Pandar] made his complaint and begged him for advice and help."
In all that e'er I may, and God to-fore, before God
Al n'ree it but for the man that I love most,
My brother Troilus. ¹ But say wherefore
It is; for since that I was bore,
I n'as, ne nevermore to be, I think, ²
Against a thing that mightë thee for-think.
displease you

168. Pandárus gan him thank, and to him said:
"Lo, sir, I have a lady in this town,
That is my niece and calléd is Criseyde,
Which some men woulden do oppression,
And wrongfully have her possessions.
Wherefore I of your lordship you beseech
To be our friend, withouten morë speech."

169. Deiphebus answered him: "Oh, is not this
That thou speak'st of to me thus strangely,
Críseyde, my friend?" He saidë: "Yes."
"Then needeth," quod Deiphebus, "hardly,
"No more to speak; for trusteth well that I
Will be her champion with spur and yard:
I roughtë not though all her foes it heard.

170. "But tell me, thou that wost all this mattër,
How I might best availen." ² Now let's see,"
Quod Pandarus. "If you, my lord so dear,
Would as now do this honour unto me,
To prayen her to-morrow, lo, that she
Come unto you her 'plaintës to devise,
Her adversaries would of it agrise."

171. Deiphebus, which that comen was of kind
To all honoúr and bounty to consent,

¹ 167.1-4: "Yes indeed," said Deiphebus. "You know well that [I will help you] in any way I can, I swear to God, [sooner than I would help any other man] except for the man I love most in the world, my brother Troilus."

² 167.6: "I wasn't and I will never be, I hope"
Answered: "It shall be done, and I can find
Yet greater help to this in mine intent.
What wilt thou say if I for Helen sent
To speak of this? I trow it be the best,
For she may leaden Paris as her lest.

172. "Of Hector, which that is my lord, my brother,
It needeth not to pray him friend to be;
For I have heard him, one time and eke other,
Speak of Criseydé honour such that he
May say no bet, such hap to him has she.
It needeth not his helpè for to crave;
He shall be such right as we will him have.

173. "Speak thou thyself also to Troilus
On my behalf, and pray him with us dine."
"Sir, all this shall be done," quod Pandarus,
And took his leave, and never gan to fine,
But to his niece's house as straight as line
He came, and found her from the meat arise,
And set him down, and spoke right in this wise.

174. He said: "O very God! so have I run,
Lo! niecè mine, see you not how I sweat?
I n'ot whether you moré thank me can;
Be you not 'ware how falsé Poliphet
Is now about eftsoonès for to plead,
And bringen on you advocacies new?"
"I? No," quod she, and changéd all her hue.

175. "What! Is he more about me for to dretch,\(^1\)
And do me wrong? What shall I do? alas!
Yet of himselfen nothing would I reck
N'ere it for Antenor and Aeneas,

---

\(^1\) 175.1: "Is he about to annoy me again?"
That be his friends in such a manner case;¹
But for the love of God, mine uncle dear!
No force of that, let him have all ifere;

176. "Withouten that I have enough for us."
"Nay," quod Pandâre, "it shall be no thing so,
For I have been right now at Deíphibus,
At Hector, and mine other lordés mo',
And shortly makèd each of them his foe,
That, by my thrift, he shall it never win
For aught he can, when so that he begin."

177. And as they casten what was best to don,
Deiphebus, of his owné courtesy,
Came her to pray in his proper persón
To hold him on the morrow company
At dinner, which she would not deny,
But goodly gan his prayer to obey.
He thankèd her, and went upon his way.

178. When this was done this Pándare up anon,
(To tell in short) and forth gan for to wend
To Troilus as still as any stone,
And all this thing he told him ord and end,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blend,
And said him: "Now is time, if that you can,
To bear thee well to-morrow, and all is won.

179. "Thou shalt go overnight, and that as blive,
To Deiphebus' house, as thee to play,
Thy malady away the bet to drive;
For why thou seemest sick, the sooth to say;

¹ 175.4-5: Benoit de Saint-Maure and Guido delle Colonne (sources for Chaucer's story) wrote that Antenor and Aeneas were both involved in the treacherous act of removing the Palladium, a holy relic on which depended the safety of Troy. As we shall see later in this poem, Antenor, taken prisoner by the Greeks, is exchanged for Criseyde, and then betrays Troy. See Bk IV, st. 15-27 below.
Soon after that, down in thy bed thee lay, And say thou may'st no longer up endure, And lie right there and bide thine áventure."

180. Quod Troilus: "Iwis, thou needèless
Counselest me that sickly I me feign, For I am sick in earnest, doubtèless,
So that well nigh I starvè for the pain." Quod Pandarus: "Thou shalt thee better 'plain,
And hast the lessè need to counterfeit,
For him men deemen hot that men see sweat."

181. "Lo, hold thee at thy tristè close, and I
Shall well the deer unto thy bowè drive." Therewith he took his leave all softèly, And Troilus to palace wentè blive.
So glad ne was he never in all his life, And to Pandárus' redd gan all assent, And to Deiphebus' house at night he went.

182. What needeth it to tellen all the cheer
That Deiphebus to his brother made,
Or his access, or his sickly mannèr,
How men go him with clothès for to lade,
When he was laid, and how men would him glad?
But all for naught; he held forth ay the wise
That you have heard Pandáre ere this devise.

183. The morrow came, and nighen gan the time
Of mealtide, that the fairè Queen Elaine
Shope her to be an hour after prime
With Deiphebe, to whom she would not feign,
But as his sister, homely, sooth to sayn,
She came to dinner in her plain intent;
But God and Pándare wist all what this meant.

184. Came eke Criseyde all innocent of this,
Antigone her niece and Tarbe also:
But fly we now prolixity best is,\(^1\)
For love of God, and let us fast y-go
Right to th' effect withouten talés mo',
Why all this folk assembled in this place,
And let us of their saluingês pace.\(^2\)

185. Great honour did them Deíphebe certáin,
And fed them well with all that might them like,
But evermore, "Alas!" was his refrain:
"My goodé brother, Troilus the sick,
Lies yet;" and therewithal he gan to sigh,
And after that he painèd him to glad
Them as he might, and cheerèd good he made.

186. Complainèd eke Elaine of his sickness
So faithfully, that pity was to hear,
And every wight gan waxen for access
A leech anon, and said: "In this mannér
Men curen folk; this charm I will thee lere."\(^2\)
But there sat one, al' list her not to teach,
That thought: "Best could I be his leech."

187. After complaint, him 'gonnen they to praise,
As folk do yet when some wight has begun
To praise a man, and up with praise him raise
A thousand fold yet higher than the sun;
"He is, he can, what fewè lordês can;"
And Pandarus, of that they would affirm,
He naught forgot their praising to confirm.

188. Heard all this thing Criseydê well enough,
And every word gan for to notify,
For which with sober cheer her heartè laughed;

\(^1\) 184.3: "The best thing for us is to avoid wordiness here."

\(^2\) 186.3-5: "Everyone began to turn into a doctor (leech) of fevers: `This is the way to cure people. I'll show you a charm.' Access is fever or sudden illness."
For who is that ne would her glorify
To mowen such a knight do live or die? ¹
But all pass I, lest you too longè dwell;
But for one fine is all that e'er I tell.

188. "Tell thou thy niece's case," quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, "for thou canst best it tell."
"My lords and my ladies, it stands thus;
What should I longer," quod he, "do you dwell?"
He rung them out a process like a bell
Upon her foe that hight was Polyphete,
So heinous that men mighten on it spit.

190. Spoke then Elaine, and said to Pandarus:
"Wot aught my lord my brother of this mattër,
I mean Hectór, or wot it Troilus?"
He said: "Yea, but will you now me hear?
Methinketh this, since Troilus is here,
It werè good, if that you would assent,
She told herself him all this ere she went;

191. "For he will have the more her grief at heart,
Because, lo!, she a worthy lady is;
And by your leave I will but in right start,
And do you wit, and that anon iwis,
If that he sleep or will aught hear of this;"
And in he leaped and said him in his ear:
"God have thy soul! for brought have I thy bier."

192. To smilen of this then gan Troilus;
And Pandarus, withouten reckoning,
Out went to Helen and Deiphebus,
And said them: "So there be no tarrying,

¹ 188.4-5: "Who is [she] who would not glorify her[self] to be able to make (mowen ... do) such a knight live or die?" i.e. What woman would not be proud to be in a position to decide whether such a warrior should live or die? 188.6: But all ... dwell: "But I pass over this lest you be delayed too long."
No morê press, he will well that you bring
Crisêydê, my lady that is here,
And as he may enduren, he will hear.

193. "I say for me, best is as I can know,
That no wight in ne wentê but you tway,
But it were I, for I can in a throw
Rehearser her case unlike what she can say,
And after this she may him oncê pray
To be good lord, in short, and take her leave;
This may not muchel of his ease him reve."

194. "And eke, for she is strange, he will forbear
His easê, which that him thar not for you;
Eke other thing that toucheth not to hear
He will it tell, I wot it well right now,
That secret is, and for the townê's prow."
And they, that nothing knew of his intent,
Withouten more to Troilus in they went.

195. Elaine in all her goodly softê wise
gan him salute and womanly to play,
And said: "Iwis you must algate arise;
Now, faïre brother, be all whole I pray;"
And gan her arm right o' er his shoulder lay,
And him with all her wit to recomfórt;
As she best could, she gan him to disport.

196. So after this quod she: "We you beseech,
My dearê brother Deïphebe and I,
For love of God, and so does Pândare eke,
To be good lord and friend right heartily
Unto Crisyèdê, which that certainly
Receivêd wrong, as wot well here Pandâre,
That can her case well bet' than I declare."

---

1 194.3-5: "Other things that should not be discussed publicly (toucheth not to hear) he wants to talk about (I know that well) -- state secrets that are for the city's welfare."
197. This Pándarus gan new his tongue affile,
And all her case rehearse, and that anon.
When it was said, soon after in a while
Quod Troilus: "As soon as I may gon,
I will right fain with all my might be one,
(Have God my truth), her causé to sustain."
"Good thrift have you," quod the Queen Elaine.

198. Quod Pandarus: "An' it your willè be
That she may take her leave ere that she go?"
"O, elsé God forbid it," then quod he,
"If that she vouchèsafe for to do so."
And with that word quod Troilus: "You two,
Deiphebus and my sister lief and dear,
To you have I to speak of one mattér,
If she wants

199. "To be avisèd by your redd the better;"
And found, as hap was, at his bed's head
The copy of a treatise and a letter
That Hector had him sent to asken redd
If such a man was worthy to be dead.
Wot I not who, but in a grisly wise
He prayèd them anon on it avise.

200. Deiphebus gan this letter to unfold
In earnest great, so did Elaine the Queen,
And roaming outward fast it gan behold,
Downward a stair, into an arbour green;
This ilkè thing they readen them between,
And largely the mountance of an hour
They gan on it to readen and to pore.

201. Now let them read, and turnè we anon
To Pandarus, that gan full fast to pry
That all was well, and out he gan to gon
Into the greatè chamber, and that in hie,
And said: "God save all this company!
Come, niecè mine, my lady Queen Elaine
Abideth you, and eke my lord's twain.

202. "Rise. Take with you your niece Antigone, Or whom you list, or, no force hardly; ¹ The less press the better. Come forth with me, And looketh that you thanken humbly
Them allè three, and when you may goodly Your time y-see, taketh of them your leave, Lest we too long him of his rest bereave."

203. All innocent of Pandarus' intent
Quod then Criseydè: "Go we, uncle dear!"
And arm in arm inward with him she went,
Avising well her wordés and her cheer;
And Pandarus in earnestful mannér
Said: "Allè folk, for God's love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softly you play." ²

204. "Aviseth you what folk be here within,
And in what plight one is, God him amend!
And inward thus: "Full softly begin,
Niece, I conjure and highly you defend,
On his behalf which that soul all us sends,
And in the virtue of the crowns twain, ³
Slay not this man that has for you this pain."

205. But now to you, ye lovers that be here,
Was Troilus not in a cankédort,
That lay and might the whispering of them hear?
And thought: "O Lord! right now runneth my sort
Fully to die or have anon comfórt;"

¹ 202.2: "Or whomever you want. Oh, it doesn't matter really."

² 203.7: "Stay right here and entertain yourselves quietly."

³ 204.6: All annotators agree that the phrase in virtue of the crowns twain is obscure and not adequately explained. I add one more guess to the others: "for the sake of two heads," i.e. two lives, his and mine. In 50.1 - 51.7 above Pandarus had said that her obdurate refusal would kill both of them.
And was the firstè time he should her pray
Of love; O mighty God! what shall he say?

Here ends Book II
Other syntactic variations in Troilus and Criseyde include VS constructions (to the clepe I; alday failleth thyng), Aux-S-V constructions (can he pulle), and, in dependent clauses, SOV constructions (that love hem bring; til he a lasshe have). For a modern reader, these take getting used to, but the patterns are relatively few, and and they become familiar with practice. Troilus and Criseyde is Chaucer’s longest complete work and in many ways his most polished; he wrote it at the peak of his creative powers and may well have expected it to endure as his most important literary achievement. Indeed, it has only been in the last century or two that readers have come to rank it a step beneath the incomplete and somewhat experimental The Canterbury Tales. [OMACL release #5].

Troilus and Criseyde. by. Geoffrey Chaucer. 

Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente. And sodeynly he wax ther-with astoned, 275 And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wyse

Troilus and Criseyde Summary & Study Guide includes comprehensive information and analysis to help you understand the book. This study guide contains the following sections: Chapters.

Troilus appears in All Books. A knight of Troy and son of King Priam. As a prince of Troy, Troilus is also a military leader who tries to set an example for the younger knights. Part of his duty, he feels, is to keep them from getting entangled in love affairs and he openly mocks the other young men who cry over their beloved women. Aided by Criseyde’s uncle Pandarus, Troilus and Criseyde are united in love about halfway through the poem, but then she is sent to join her father in the Greek camp outside Troy. Despite her promise to return, she is loved by the Greek warrior Diomedes and comes to love him. Troilus, left in despair, is killed in the Trojan War. 