Here Begins The Prologue Of The Third Book.

Here Begins The Third Book.

In the mean time lay Troilus repeating his lesson in this manner: “My faith! I will say thus, and thus; I will lament thus to my dear lady. This word is good, and I will make my expression like this. In no way will I forget this.” May God help him to do as he plans! And Lord, how his heart began to flutter and his sighs to come short, as he heard her come. Pandarus, leading her by the robe, approached and began to peep in at the curtain, and said, “May God work a cure on all the sick! See who is come here to visit you; here she is who is to blame for your death”; and at this it seemed as if he almost wept. 64

“Ah, ah,” said Troilus pitifully, “God knows if I am woeful enough! Who is there? In faith, I see nothing.” 67

“You, dear heart? Alas! I am not able to rise to kneel and do you honor.” And with that he raised himself upright, and she at once put both her hands softly upon him. 70

“Ah, for the love of God, do not so to me,” she said. “Ah, what does this mean? Sir, I am come to you for only two causes: first to thank you, and then to beseech you for continued support of your friendly lordship.” 77

When Troilus heard his lady ask him for lordship, he was between life and death for shame, nor could he have said a word in reply, even if someone had been about to smite off his head; and Lord, how red he grew so suddenly! And, sir, the lesson that he thought he knew by heart to beseech his lady with, had fully run out of his memory. 84

Criseyde, because she was wise, noted all this well enough and loved him none the less, even though he was not presumptuous or self-assured or arrogant enough to sing a fool a mass. But what he said, when his shame had begun to pass, I will tell you as well as I can, as I find it in old books. In a voice changed and trembling for true fear, and his pleasant manner abashed, his hue now red now pale, and his look downcast and his expression humble and submissive, lo, the first word that escaped him, twice, was, “Mercy, mercy, dear heart!” 98

1 Daughter of Jove, Venus.
2 Sing a fool a mass. This phrase is not used elsewhere in Chaucer’s time. The whole sentence seems to mean that, although

and perhaps because he did not present himself over-confidently (as if in his singing of the mass he could communicate the sanctity of the faith to a fool), she accepted him.
After these words he stopped a while, and his next words, when he could bring them out, were, “God knows, so far as I have any wit at all, I have always been entirely yours, and shall be until I am buried. Though I neither dare nor know how to make my lament to you, in faith I suffer no less pain. Thus much I can utter now to the perfect woman whom I serve. If this should displease you, very soon I will avenge it upon my own life, and do your heart a pleasure if my death can appease your wrath; for since you have once heard me say this, I do not know how soon I may die."

To behold his manly sorrow at this point might have melted a heart of stone. Pandarus wept as if he would turn to water, and poked his niece repeatedly and said, “It is true hearts that suffer! For the love of God, make an end of this thing, or slay us both at once in this place!”

“Why, what?” she said. “By God and my word, I do not know what you would have me say.”

“What I mean, sweet dear heart, excellent blooming noble one?” said Troilus. “That you would sometimes look on me kindly with the beams of your bright eyes; and then agree that without a hint of evil in any way I may be for my own lady and chief delight the one always to do you faithful service, with all my wit and diligence; and that I should have, at your good pleasure and subject to your rod, comfort as great as my pain has been, and death if I break your commands; and that you grant to honor me so much as to lay any order upon me at any hour; and that I should be your true, humble, trusty servant, patient in my pains, evermore freshly desirous of diligent service, ready to receive your every desire with good will, however sorely I suffer: this is my meaning, my own dear heart.”

“Lo, here is a reasonable request,” said Pandarus, “and a difficult one for a lady to refuse! Now, my niece, if I were a god you should die without mercy before the feast of Jove’s birth, you who have heard that this man desires nothing but honor with prudence and diligence. And if from henceforth I can give him joy, in truth I will not fail."

“Now be all whole again and mourn no longer. But nevertheless I give you this warning, though you are a king’s son, you shall have no more sovereignty over me in love than is right in such a case. If you do wrong, I will not refrain from showing you my wrath; and while you serve me I will cherish you according to your deserts. And in a word be glad, dear heart and my very knight, and be lusty and strong once again, and I will truly with all my power turn all your bitter into sweet. If I am she who may give you joy, for every woe you shall recover a joy.” And then she took him in her arms and began to kiss him.

Pandarus fell on his knees, threw up his eyes to heaven and held his hands on high: “Immortal god Cupid,” he said, “of this you may boast; and Venus, you may make melody. For this miracle I seem to hear each bell in the town ring without hands! But stop, no more now of this; for these people before now will have read the letter and will be up soon. Hark! I hear them. But I ask you, Criseyde, and you, Troilus, when you are able to walk, that you be in my house at my summons when I shall devise your coming. There you shall relieve your hearts very well, and we shall see which shall bear the bell in talking of love,” and with that he laughed, “for there you shall have leisure for it!”

“How long must I wait before this will be done?” said Troilus.

“When you are up and about,” he replied, “this shall be done as I have said.”

With that Helen and Deiphobus were coming up then at the top of the stairway. And Lord! How Troilus began to groan, to hoodwink his brother and sister! Pandarus said, “It is time for us to go. Take your leave of all three, niece, and let them speak together, and come forth with me.”

She took her leave of them discreetly, as she well knew how, and they greeted her with full respect, I guarantee you; and when she was gone, they commended her demeanor, her distinction, and her wit, until it was a joy to hear them.

Now we will leave her on the way to her own house, and turn again to Troilus, who lightly dismissed the letter that Deiphobus had seen in the garden, and would gladly have been rid of Helen and of him. He said that he would gladly sleep, and after all that talk have rest. Helen kissed him and took her leave quickly, and Deiphobus also; and every person went home, Pandarus, as fast as he could, came back to Troilus, and all that joyous night he lay on a pallet by him to chat, and glad they were to be together.
When every other creature had left and the doors were shut tight, to tell it shortly, Pandarus rose up and sat on the bedside, and began to speak soberly to Troilus as I shall tell you: “My most loved lord and dear brother, God knows, and you know, how sorely I grieved this year when I saw you so languishing more and more for love; so that with all my might and wit I have ever since done my duty to bring you to joy, and I have now brought you to the state you know of; so that through me you stand now in a good position to prosper. Yet I say this for no boast, and do you know why? Because (and a shame it is to say it) for your sake I have begun a sort of game which I will never do again for any man, even if he were my brother a thousand-fold. 252

“That is to say, between game and earnest I have become for your sake such a go-between as brings women to men. You know yourself what I mean. I have made my innocent niece to trust your honor so fully that everything shall be just as you desire. But I take the all-wise God to witness that I never completed this work this out of covetousness, but only to relieve that distress for which I thought you were very nearly dying. So good brother, for God’s love, since you have discretion, spare her fair name. 266

“You well know that among the people her name as yet is holy, for I dare to say that there never was creature that ever knew her to do wrong. Woeful am I that I who have caused all this should know that she is my dear niece, and I at once her uncle and betrayer. Were it known that I had contrived to put the fantasy into my niece’s head to do your pleasure and to be wholly yours, why, all the people would cry out upon it and say that I did the worst treachery in the world; she would be ruined and you profited absolutely nothing. 280

“Therefore, before I go a step further, I pray you again on your life that secrecy may go with us in this affair, that is, that you never reveal it. Be not angered though I often pray you to hold such an important matter secret, for my request you well know is reasonable. Think what woe has occurred in the past from making boasts, as we read, and what misfortunes there are yet in this world from day to day for that same wicked offence. Therefore, these wise scholars that are dead have ever handed down such proverbs to the young: ‘The first of virtues is to hold your tongue.’ 294

And if it were not for diffuseness of speech, I could produce for you nearly a thousand old stories of women lost through men’s false and foolish bragging. You know enough proverbs yourself against that fault of telling tales, even though men told the truth as often as they lie. Alas, how often has one tongue made many bright skinned ladies to say ‘Alack the day that I was born!’ and renew many maidens’ sorrow; and for the greater part, if it were brought to the test, what men boast of is all untrue. In the very nature of the thing, no braggart is to be believed. 308

“Boaster and liar, both are one. Suppose this: a woman grants me her love and says she will have none other, swears me to keep it secret, and afterwards I go and tell it to two or three; surely at the best I am a braggart, and a liar too, for I broke my promise. Look then if they are not to blame, such people—indeed, what shall I call them?—who make their boast of women, and name their names, who never yet promised them anything, nor knew them more than my old hat! May God save me, it is no wonder that women fear to deal with us men. I do not say this for mistrust of you or of any wise man, but because of silly fools and the harm that comes in this world as much from folly as from malice. No woman, if she will consider well, fears that fault in wise people; for the wise are cautioned by the fools. 329

“But now to the point. Dear brother, keep all this that I have said in mind; keep it to yourself and be of good cheer. In due season you shall find me faithful, and I will set your affair in such train that you shall be well content, for it shall be just as you would have it. I know well that your intent is honest, and therefore I dare fully undertake this. You know what your lady has granted you; the day is set to draw up the charter! And now good-night, for I can no longer wake, but now that you are in bliss pray for me that God will send me soon either death or relief!” 343

Who could tell half the joy and jubilation that the soul of Troilus felt when he heard Pandarus’ promises? His old woe, that had made his heart faint, wasted and melted away in his joy, and all his store of sore sighs took wings at once, and he felt them no longer. Just as these hedge-rows and woods that have been dead and dry through the winter dress themselves again in green when May has come, when every cheerful creature wishes to play, so too was his heart suddenly full of joy, and never was there a gladder man in all Troy. 357

He cast up his look on Pandarus gravely and friendly, and said, “Friend, you will remember how close to death for woe you found me last April, and how busily you tried to learn from me the cause of my distress. You know how long I avoided telling it to you who are the man whom most of all I trust; yet there was no peril in revealing it to you, as I knew well. If you please, since I was so hesitant about even you knowing it and no other person can hear us now, tell me how could I, who am trembling now, dare to tell others of this matter? 371

“But nevertheless I swear to you by that God who governs this whole world at His own pleasure. And may Achilles with his spear cleave my heart, even if my life were as eternal as it truly is mortal, if I swear falsely and if I sooner or later would or dared or could reveal it, for all the wealth that God made under the sun. I swear to you that I would rather die, come to my end in cruel King...
Agamemnon’s prison, in the stocks among wretchedness and filth and vermin; and this I will swear to you tomorrow in all the temples of this town upon all the gods, if you wish to hear me. And I know well that you have done so much for me that I can nevermore deserve it, though I could die for you a thousand times a day. What more can I say than that I will serve you as your very slave, wherever you go, forever until my life’s end? 392

“Oh here I beseech you heartily that you never fancy in me such folly as this. I thought I saw in your speech your fear that I might think what you are doing for me for friendship’s sake to be the acts of a bawd. I am not mad, though I may be uneducated; I know well the difference, by God. He that goes on such an errand for gold or riches, call him what you will; but this thing that you are doing, call it a gentle deed, and compassion and fellowship and trustfulness. All men know that distinctions must be made between things that look alike. 406

And so that you may know I do not think this service of yours to be a shame or scorn, I have for you my fair sister Polyxena, or Cassandra, or Helen or any of the group; however beautiful and shapely she may be, tell me which of them you wish to have for your own, and let me alone to arrange it for you! But since you have done me this benefit to save my life and out of no hope of reward, now for the love of God carry out this great enterprise to the end, for now is there greatest need, and I will always obey all your wishes, great and small. So now good-night, and let us both sleep.” 420

Thus was each of them well content with the other, so that the whole world could not have made them more so. In the morning, when they were up and dressed, each went about his own affairs. But Troilus, though hope and pleasure made him burn in the sharp flames of desire, forgot not his prudent self-control, but restrained in manly manner each hasty act and unbridled look, so that not a living person could have known by word or manner what was in his mind. His true thoughts were as far as the clouds from every creature, so well he could dissemble. 434

And all this time that I am speaking of; this was his life: by day with all his power he served Mars in knightly arms, and for the most part he lay the long night and thought how he might best serve his lady and win her thanks. And though he lay softly, I will not say that he was not somewhat discomforted in his thoughts, and that he did not turn often on his pillows, and he did not long often after the thing he lacked. In such cases, for anything I know, other men do not find it all pleasure, not any more than he did. But meanwhile, to come to the main thing, it certainly is written in the story that he saw his lady sometimes, and also that she spoke with him when she dared and would, and that they both considered warily how they should proceed in everything in this matter. But they spoke so hurriedly and in such watchful dread lest any person should guess or overhear, that more than anything else they wished that Cupid would send them grace to enable them to finish their speech quickly. 462

But in the little that they spoke or did together, he was so heedful of all, that he seemed to her to know what she thought without a word from her, so that she had no need to ask him to do anything, or to forbid anything; for this reason it seemed to her that love, though it had come late, was opening to her the door to all joys. And to pass along in this tale quickly, he so well employed his words and acts that he stood fully in his lady’s grace, and twenty thousand times before she was done she thanked God that ever she had met with him. He knew how to bear himself in this lover’s-service so well that no one in the world could have shown a better way. For she found him in all things so discreet, so secret and so compliant, that she felt he was to her a wall of steel, a shield against everything displeasing, so that she was no longer afraid to be under the governance of so prudent a man, I mean so far as ought to be required. 483

And to keep this fire alive Pandarus was at all times ready and diligent: all his thoughts were set on assisting his friend. He always pushed on, as he was sent to and fro; he fetched letters when Troilus was away. Never did a man bear himself better to help his friend in time of need. 490

But now by chance some man may look for me to rehearse every word or message, every look or smile of Troilus to his lady dear in all this time. I believe it would be a long thing to listen to, or to describe, at length all the words or every look of a man that stands in such a plight! In truth, I, nor anyone here, have never heard it done in any story, I believe. I could not tell it all, even if I wished, for, as my author says, there was one letter passed between them that may well have contained a hundred verses, which he wished not write about; how then should I compose a line of it? 504

But now to the main point. I say this, that--while these two were in quiet and concord, as I have said, during this time that was so sweet, save only that they could not often come together or have leisure to say all they would--Pandarus thought he had found a time for that which he had long striven for, to bring his fair niece and Troilus together sometime at his house, where all this important matter of their love might be fully unraveled at leisure. Earnestly deliberating, he had foreseen and executed everything which might help his plan, and had spared no cost or labor. Let them come if they wished, nothing should be lacking to them. And as for being noticed there at all, he knew that to

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4 Agamemnon. The leader of the allied Greek armies besieging Troy.
be impossible. For certain the wind was clear of every prattling magpie and every spoil-sport; thus all was well, for the whole world, every wild and civilized creature, was blind to the thing. The timber is all ready to set in place; nothing is lacking but that we should know the hour in which she is to come. 532

Troilus, who knew fully of all this planning and watched it longingly, had founded his own plans upon it and devised his pretext, namely, that, if he were missed night or day while he was about this service, he was gone to do his sacrifice, and must watch alone at such and such a temple to receive an answer from Apollo, and to see the holy laurel-tree quake before Apollo spoke from it, to tell him when the Greeks should flee. Therefore, let no man hinder him, God forbid! Rather, pray Apollo to aid him in his need. 546

Now there was little more to do; but Pandarus was up and at it, and (in brief) just after the changing of the moon, when the world is lightless a night or two, and when the heavens seemed preparing a rain, he went directly one morning to his niece, with the intent you have all heard. When he arrived, he began to make sport as he was accustomed; and to mock himself; and finally he swore by this and that and told her that she should not evade him or make him hunt after her any longer; but she must certainly promise to come and dine in his house that evening. At this she laughed and made excuses, and said, “It is raining. Why, how can I go?” 562

“A truce to this,” he replied; “stand not thus debating. This must be done, and you shall soon be there.” 564

So at the last they agreed upon it; otherwise, as he softly swore to her in her ear, he would never come where she was again. And she began to whisper to him, and asked if Troilus were to be there. No, he swore to her, for he was out of town, and added, “Supposing he were, niece, you need not fear, for rather than people should notice him there I would die a thousand times.” 574

My author wishes not to declare fully what she thought when he told her that Troilus was gone out of town, whether she thought he spoke truth in that or not; but he says that without more delay she agreed to go with him, since he begged her, and gave him due obedience as his niece. But nevertheless she begged him, though there would be no real cause of fear, to beware the talk of silly, goosish people, who dream things that never were, and to consider well whom he brought to his house. “Uncle, since I must trust you,” she said, “look that all be well, for I am doing as you wish.” He swore this to her, by stock and stone and by the gods that dwell in heaven; or else, he would rather remain, soul and body, with King Pluto as deep in hell as Tantalus! Why should I make a long story? When all was fixed, he arose and took his leave. 595

That night she came to supper with a certain attendance of her own men, and her fair niece Antigone and eight or nine more of her women. But who was glad now? Who but Troilus, do you think, stood and saw them through a little window in a closet where he was caged up until midnight, unknown to everybody but Pandarus? But now to our point. When she had arrived, with all joy and friendly greeting her uncle took her then in his arms, and after, when the time came, one and all sat themselves down quietly to the supper. God knows, there was no fine food that was lacking! After supper they rose, well content with the world, and with hearts lusty and glad. Happy was he who had the best device to please her, or who made her laugh! One sang, another played, one told a tale of Wade. But at the last, as everything comes to an end, she must be going home, and took her leave. 616

But O Fortune, executor of fates! O, influences of the high heavens! It is true that, under God, you are our governors, though the manner may be veiled from us beasts! This I say now, that Criseyde was about to haste homeward; but entirely without her leave the gods’ will was executed, for which she must remain. The bent moon with her pale horns, and Saturn and Jupiter, were joined in Cancer, so that such a rain came down from heaven that every woman there was in a true fright for that pounding rain. At this Pandarus laughed and said, “Now would be the time for a lady to go away! But, good niece, if I ever pleased you in anything, I beg you now to do my heart such a pleasure as to remain here all night with me; for niece, this is your own house, by God! Now, by my word, I do not say it in sport, for you to go now would shame me. 637

Criseyde, who had as much prudence as half the world all together, took heed of his request, and since it rained so and everything was flooded, she thought, “I may as well remain and agree gladly, in a friendly manner, and win his thanks, as grumble and then remain; for as to going home, that may not be.” 644

“I will,” she said, “sweet dear uncle; since you wish me, it is only reasonable, and I am very glad to remain here with you, and I was but jesting when I said I would go.” 648

“Grant mercy, niece, truly,” he said. “Whether you were jesting or not, I am very glad now that you will remain.” 651

Thus far all was well. And then new joy and festivity began again. But Pandarus would gladly, if he could in manners, have hastened her to bed; and said, “Lord, this is a

5 Stock or stone. Tree stumps or rocks: objects of worship, usually pagan worship.

6 Wade. Legendary hero in the thirteenth-century German epic in which the figure of Kudrun parallels Pandarus as a go-between. The phrase “tale of Wade” may also simply mean a tall tale.
huge rain, this is a storm to sleep through, and my advice is
that we soon begin to try! And, niece, do you know where I
shall lodge you? Right over there in my little inner
chamber, that you may hear no noise of thunder or of rain,
and I alone in the outer house will be guardian of all your
women. They shall all sleep well and soft in this middle
chamber that you see here, and you shall be in there; and if
you rest well tonight, come often, whatever weather is
above you. Now the wine! Whenever you are ready, it is
time to go to rest.” 679

There is nothing more to say but that, the wine having
been drunk, and the curtain having been drawn, every
creature who had nothing else to do that place went out of
the chamber. And evermore it rained so violently and at the
same time blew so amazingly loud that scarcely could one
hear another. Then her uncle Pandarus, as was fitting, with
those of her women who were closest to her, brought her
cheerily to her bed’s side, and took his leave, bowing low
and saying, “Outside this chamber door and just across, lie
all your women, so that you may call here whomever you
wish.” So when she had laid down in the inner chamber,
and all her women in bed in order as I have told, there was
no more skipping or tramping about; but anyone stirring
anywhere was bidden get to bed, and bad luck to them! And
let those who were in bed get to sleep. 693

But Pandarus, who knew well the old game and every
point of it, when he saw that all was well so far, thought he
would begin his work. He softly undid Troilus’ closet door,
sat down by him as still as a stone, and, to come briefly to
the point, told him every word of all this thing, and said,
“Make yourself ready now, for you shall enter into the bliss
of heaven!” 704

“Now, blissful Venus,” said Troilus, “send me grace, for I
have never had such need before, nor half the fear!” 707

“Fear never a bit,” said Pandarus, “for it shall be just as
you have would it. May I be saved, this night shall I make
all well, or else cast all the gruel in the fire!” 711

“Yet do you inspire me, blessed Venus,” said Troilus, “as
surely as I serve you now and ever shall better and better
until I die! And, O motherly goddess, if I was subject to the
evil aspects of Mars or Saturn when I was born, or if you
were rendered powerless by the sun or otherwise withheld
from providing a benign influence at my birth, ask your
father of his grace to turn away all that harm, so that I may
go my way rejoicing, for the love of him whom you did
love in the wood-shaw, I mean Adonis, who was slain by
the boar. And help, Jove, for the love of fair Europa, whom
you in the form of a bull did fetch away! Mars, with your
bloody mantle, do not hinder me, for the love of the
Cyprian woman! Phoebus, think how Daphne shut herself
under the bark and for fear grew laurel; yet for her love,
help me now at this need! Mercury too, for the love of
Herse, for which Pallas was angry with Aglaurus, now
help! And Diana, I beseech you that this enterprise be not
hateful to you! O three sisters of Fate, who spun me my
destiny before any garment was created for me, now help
this work that is beginning!” 735

“You wretched mouse’s heart!” said Pandarus. “Are you
afraid that she will bite you? Why, put on this furred cloak
over your shirt and follow me. I will take the blame! But
wait, and let me go before you a little.” With that word he
began to undo a trap, and led Troilus in by the corner of his
cloak. 742

The stern wind snorted so loud that no creature could hear
any other noise, and they who lay outside the door were all
safely asleep. Pandarus with a sober countenance went at
once to the door where they lay and softly shut it. As he
was coming back secretly, his niece awoke and asked,
“Who is walking there?” 751

“My dear niece,” he said, “it is I. Wonder not at it, and
fear not.” And he came close and said in her ear, “Not a
word, for the love of God, I beseech you! Let nobody arise
and hear us talking.” 756

“Why, God bless you, which way did you come in,” she
asked, “thus without their knowing?” 758

“Here at this little trap-door,” he said. 759

“Let me call someone,” she said then. 760

“Eh, God forbid that you should do such a folly!” said
Pandarus. “They might imagine what they have never once
thought of. It is not good to wake a sleeping hound or to
give any creature cause for conjecturing. I will promise
your women are all asleep, and will be until sun-up, so that
men might lay siege to the house without waking them.
And when I have said all my say, I will go away unnoticed
just as I came. 770

“Now, my niece, you must understand, as all you women
will grant, that for a woman to hold a man long time in
hand and let him call her “sweetie” and “dear heart,” and
then pull the hood over his cap—I mean love another all this
time--she beguiles him and shames herself. Now why do I
tell you all this? You know yourself as well as any that your
love is fully granted to Troilus, the worthiest knight of this
world, and you have pledged your word to this; so that,
unless it were his fault you should never be false to him
while you live. Now here is what has happened since I left
you, Troilus, to speak plainly, has come in all this rain over
a gutter by a secret route into my chamber quite unknown

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7 Cyprian woman. Venus.
8 Aglaurus. Sister of Herse, turned to stone by Mercury.
9 Diana. Diana, the moon, is here the seventh of the planets to be
 invoked in this passage.
to everyone except to myself; I swear by the faith I owe
King Priam. And in such pain and distress he has come that
unless by now he is quite mad, he must speedily fall into
madness, without God’s help. And the cause is this: he says
he has been told by a friend that you are said to love
another, named Horastes, for sorrow at which this night is
to be the end of all for him!” 798

Criseyde, when she heard all this strange talk, began to
grow cold about her heart, and answered immediately with
a sigh, “Alas, I believed that, whoever told tales, my dear
heart would not so lightly hold me false! Alas for mistaken
fancies, what harm they do! Now I have lived too long!
Horastes! And beguile Troilus! I know him not, so God
help me! Alas, what wicked spirit told such a thing? Now
surely, uncle, if I see him tomorrow, I will as fully acquit
myself of that as ever a woman did, if he will have me. Oh
God!” she sighed, “how worldly happiness, which scholars
call false felicity, is mingled with so much bitterness! God
knows, the condition of vain prosperity is full of anguish,
for either joys come not together or else they will not last.
819

“Oh fragile well unstable earthly joy! With whatever
creature you show yourself merry, either he knows you are
mutable or knows it not; it must be one of the two. Now if
he knows it not, how can he who is ever in the darkness of
ignorance say that he has true joy and bliss? And if he
knows that joy is fleeting, as every worldly joy must be,
then every time he remembers this, the dread of losing joy
keeps him from perfect happiness: and if he cares at all
about losing his joy, it must seem that joy is worth very
little. Therefore I must conclude in this matter that truly, for
anything I can see, there is no true well-being here in this
world. But ah jealousy, you wicked serpent, you
misbelieving envious folly, why have you made Troilus
distrust me, who never yet wittingly offended him?” 840

“This matter has taken place thus—” Pandarus began. 841

“Why, dear uncle,” she cried, “who told him such a thing?
Alas! Why does my dear heart thus?” 843

“You know, my niece, what it is,” he said. “I hope all that
is wrong shall yet be well; you can quench all this if you
wish. And I believe it is best that you do just so.” 847

“So I will tomorrow, in truth, before God,” she said, “so
that it shall suffice.” 849

“Tomorrow? Alas, that would be a fine deed!” he replied.
“No, no, it may not work in this case, for scholars write that
peril goes with delay; no, such dallying is not worth a bean.
There is a time for everything, I dare say. When a chamber
or a hall is afire there is more need to save it promptly than
to dispute and ask, ‘How did that candle fall into the
straw?’ Ah, God bless you! In all this bother the harm is
done, and—farewell, thrush!11 And now, my niece, take this
not badly, but if you allow him to be in this woe all night,
so God help me, you never loved him; here between you
and me alone I am bold to say that. But I know well you
will not do so, you are too wise to do such great folly as to
jeopardize his life all night.” 868

“I never loved him? By heaven, I believe you never loved
anything so well,” she said. 870

“By my word now,” he said, “we shall see that. For since
you make this comparison with me, if I wished to see him
all night in sorrow, for all the treasure in Troy, I pray God I
may never see happiness again! Look now, if you that are
his love put his life in jeopardy all night for a venture of
nothing, by the God above us this delay comes not only
from folly but from malice, and that I swear to. What! I tell
you flatly, if you leave him in his pain, it is neither a wise
nor a gentle deed!” 882

“You may do one thing,” answered Criseyde, “and with it
cure his distress. Take this blue ring and bear it to him, for
there is nothing that might better please him, except I
myself; or more rest his heart. And tell my dear heart that
his grief is causeless, and that he shall see tomorrow.” 889

“A ring?” said he. “Yes, the hazel-woods shake. Yes, dear
niece, that ring should have a stone that could make dead
men live, and such a ring I believe you do not have!
Discretion has gone out of your head; I can see that, and
that is a pity. O time lost, well you may curse sloth! Do you
not know that a noble and high heart neither sorrows nor is
calmed for a little thing? Were a fool in a jealous rage, I
should not care a bit about his sorrow, but should present
him with a few soft words some day when I should chance
to see him. But this thing stands in quite another fashion.
This man is so noble and so tender of heart that he will
avenge his sorrow on himself by his own death, for trust
well, however he may suffer, he will speak no jealous word
to you. 907

“And therefore before you break his heart, niece, speak to
him of this matter, for with a single word you can control
his heart. Now I have told you his peril, and his coming is
unknown to everybody, and there can be no harm or sin in
it, by God. I will be with you myself all the time. You know
how he is your own knight and that by rights you ought to
trust him; so I am ready to fetch him when you wish.” 917

This entire tale was so piteous to hear, and sounded at
first thought so like a truth, and Troilus her knight was so
dear to her that, with his secret coming and the security of
the place considered, it is no wonder she granted him such a

10 Horastes. Though the name, Orestes, is a real and famous one, here it is just part of Pandarus’ fabrication.

11 Farewell, thrush! The bird has flown. It is too late.
favor, since she did all in innocence. “So God rest my soul,” she answered, “as I am truly sorry for him! And if heaven grant me grace, I gladly would do the best I can. But in faith, unless God will send me better guidance, I am right at my wit’s end, at dulcarnoun, whether you stay or go for him.” 931

“Paandarus said, “Yes, niece, will you listen? Dulcarnoun is the banishment of wretches: it seems hard, for wretches will never learn, because of true sloth and other deliberate flaws. But this is only for those who are not worth two beans in any case; you are wise, and know that this cause of mine is neither hard nor reasonable to withstand.” 938

“Well, uncle,” she replied, “do here as you wish. But before he comes I will first arise; and for the love of God, since all my trust is on you two prudent men, now manage so discreetly that I may keep my fair name as well as he his happiness, for I am here in your power.” 945

“That is well said, dear niece,” he replied; “blessings on that wise, gentle heart! But lie still, you need not spring up for him; receive him right here, and each of you for God’s love relieve the other’s pain! And ah! Venus, I praise you, for I hope soon we shall be all merry.” 952

Soon Troilus was on his knees right at her bedside, and soberly in his best fashion greeted his lady. But, Lord, how red she grew suddenly! Even if men were to cut off her head, she could not have brought out a word, because of his sudden arrival. But Pandarus, whose feeling was so quick in every case, began then to make sport, and said, “Niece, see how this lord can kneel now to beg for your pledge! Only see this nobleman now!” And with that word he ran for a cushion and said, “Kneel now as long as you wish! And may God soon bring your hearts to rest!” 966

If she let him kneel for a time, I cannot say whether sorrow made her forget, or whether she took it as only due from her suitor; but well I know that she did him this much pleasure, that she kissed him, though she was sighing sorely, and then told him sit down. 973

“And at that he drew toward the fire and took a light and within the curtains, so that each may hear the other better.” 980

Criseyde, who felt herself truly Troilus’ lady and clearly stood upon secure ground, thought her servant and knight should not have fancied any faithlessness in her. Yet nevertheless, considering his distress and that greatness of love is one cause of such folly, she spoke gently to him of his jealousy: “Lo, my dear heart, it is the excellent glory of love, against which no man can or ought to make resistance, that drives me thus to take pity on your pain, and also because I know your heart to be all mine, and I have felt well and always seen your great fidelity and daily service and your constant goodness; for which, my dear heart and own knight, I thank you as far as my wit extends, though I cannot as much as would be right. And to the extent of my knowledge and power I have always been, and shall be, whatever it may cost me, true to you and wholly yours with all my heart, and doubt you not that the test shall find it so. 1002

“What this is all about, dear heart, I shall well say to you, so you grieve not though I complain to you of yourself; for by this I mean to put a final end to the pain that holds your heart and mine in heavy case, and to redress every wrong. My own good knight, I know not why or how that wicked viper jealousy has crept into you so causelessly; I gladly would do away with the harm which he has created. Alas that he, or a piece of him, should make his dwelling place in so worthy a place. May Jove soon tear him from there! 1015

“But O Jove, author of nature, is it an honor to your godhead that innocent people suffer injury and he who is guilty goes free? Ah! If it were lawful to complain against you who permit undeserved jealousy, I should cry out against you. And all my woe is that now people are accustomed to say, ‘Yes, jealousy is love,’ and would excuse a bushel of venom because one grain of love is dropped into it! But the great God in heaven knows if it may be like love, or hate, or anger! And thereafter it ought to have its rightful name. 1029

“But certain it is that one kind of jealousy is more to be excused than another; as when there is cause, or when the jealous fantasy is so well and dutifully repressed that it scarcely does or says anything wrong, but generously consumes all its own distress. Such jealousy I excuse for the nobleness of it. Some jealousy is so full of fury and malice that it surmounts all repression. But you, dear heart, are not in such case, as I thank God, wherefore this passion of yours I will but call an illusion forged by abundance of love and overactive anxiety, which causes your heart to endure this pain; for which I am very sorry but not angered. 1044

“But now, to clear me and rest your heart, for the love of God let us test this suspicion, whether by ordeal or by oath, by casting of lots, or in whatever manner you wish! If I am

12 Dulcarnoun. In the state of perplexity. The expression comes from an Arabic epithet meaning “two-horned.” It was also the name of the 47th proposition of Euclid’s geometry. [RAS]

13 Banishment of wretches. A translation of fuga miserorum, corresponding to Eleufuga, a name for Euclid’s 5th proposition (also a difficult one). Pandarus may be confusing his terms. [RAS]
guilty, let me be slain! Alas, what more can I do or say?"

1050

With that a few bright fresh tears fell from her eyes, and she cried, “O God! You know that never yet was Criseyde false to Troilus in action or thought!” And then she laid her head down in the bed, covered it with the sheet, sighing sorely, and held her peace. 1057

But now may God help to quench this sorrow, and so I trust He will, for He can best! I have often seen a misty morning follow a merry summer’s day, and again green May follows after winter. We always see and read in books that after sharp conflicts come victories. 1064

When Troilus heard her words, trust me, he cared not to sleep. It seemed to him no light punishment to see his lady Criseyde’s tears, but indeed, for every tear that escaped her, he felt the cramp of death creep and clutch him about the heart. In his mind he began to curse the time that ever he came there or ever was born, for now had bad turned into worse, and all the labor which he had done already he deemed lost, and himself lost as well. 1076

“Ah Pandarus, alas” he thought, “your wiles serve for nothing, alack the day!” He hung down his head and fell on his knees and sorrowfully sighed. What could he say? He felt himself nothing but dead, for she who only could lighten his sorrows was angered. But nevertheless, when he felt himself nothing but dead, for she who only could lighten his sorrows was angered, he began to curse the time that ever he came there or ever was born, for now had bad turned into worse, and all the labor which he had done already he deemed lost, and himself lost as well. 1092

It was no little sorrow to see this, but all remained hushed, for Pandarus was up quickly; “Not a word, niece,” he said, “or we are lost! Be not afraid!” At last in spite of anything he cast himself upon the bed, saying, “Thief; have you a man’s heart?” and tore off his mantle. “Niece,” he said, “unless you help now, your own Troilus is lost.” 1101

“In faith,” she said, “I would gladly if I only knew how! Alas that I was born!” 1103

“Ah! my niece, if you wish to pull out the thorn,” he said, “that sticks in his heart, say ‘All is forgiven,’ and all the trouble will be over.” 1106

“Yes,” she answered, “that would be full preferable to me than all the good the sun goes around!” And at that she vowed to him in his ear, “Indeed, dear heart, I am not angered, I pledge my word,” and she swore many other vows; “now speak to me, for it is I, Criseyde.” 1113

Yet he did he come to any more. They began to rub his wrists and the palms of his hands and to wet his temples; and to deliver him from his bitter bonds she often kissed him, and in a word she did all she could to revive him. At last he began to draw breath, and soon after that to come out of his swoon, and memory and reason began to dawn upon him. When he was more fully awake, “Oh mercy, God” he cried, “what is this?” 1124

“Why do you behave so strangely?” said Criseyde. “Is this a man’s game? What, Troilus, for shame! Will you do thus?” With that she laid her arm over him, often kissed him, and forgave him all. And he thanked her, and relieved his heart by talking to her, and she answered him, and with her courteous words cheered him up and comforted his sorrows. 1134

Then Pandarus said, “For anything I can see, neither I nor this candle serve any purpose here. Light is not good for sick people’s eyes! But now for the love of God, since you are brought into this pleasant plight, let no heavy thought be hanging in your two hearts!” And then he carried his candle to the chimney. 1141

And then, when she had taken of Troilus such oaths as she wished, though there were no need of them, she felt no fear or cause to bid him rise. In some cases a thing less than an oath may be enough, for every creature who truly loves means nothing but what is noble. But she wished to know toward what man, and why, and on what occasion he felt this jealousy, since there was no cause; and she told him to tell her carefully the signs from which he conceived it, or otherwise certainly she affirmed that this was of malice, to test her. In a word, he must obey his lady’s wish, and feign a cause to avoid a greater ill. He told her, “when she was out at such and such a festival she might at least have looked at him.” I know not what he said, something not worth a farthing, having to fish for an excuse. 1162

“Sweet, even if it were so,” Criseyde answered, “what harm was that, since I meant no evil? For, by that God who made us both, my intent is innocent in all things. Such talk is not worth a bean! Will you act like the childish jealous lover? Now truly you deserve to be beaten!” 1169

Then Troilus began to sigh sorrowfully, and his heart died within him lest she should be angered, and he said, “Alas, my sweetest heart Criseyde, have mercy upon my sick fancies. If there might be any wrong in those words that I said, I will trespass no more. Do what you wish: I hang on your grace!” 1176

“For guilt, mercy,” answered Criseyde. That is to say, I forgive it all. And evermore you must remember this night, and be sure that you offend no more. 1180

“No, my dear heart, in truth,” he said. 1181
“And now,” she said, “forgive me that I caused you pain, my own sweet heart!” 1183

This faithful, loving Troilus, taken by surprise with the bliss of it, put all in God’s hand, as one who meant nothing but good, and by a sudden resolve caught her to him fast in his arms. And Pandarus with good intent laid himself to sleep, saying, “If you are prudent, swoon no more now, lest more people arise.” 1190

What can the poor lark do when the sparrow-hawk has her in his foot? I know no more. Even if I were to delay a year, at some time in the future I will be able to do no less than follow my author in telling about these same two, of their joy as well as their heaviness, whoever may find the tale sweet or sour! Criseyde, as scholars write in their old books, began to quake like an aspen-leaf when she felt him fold her in his arms. And Troilus, entirely recovered after his cold cares, began to thank the seven bright gods. And thus various pains bring people to paradise. So Troilus began to hold her tightly in his arms, and said, “Oh sweet, as sure as I am alive now you are caught! Now there is nothing but the two of us! Now yield yourself, for there is no escape!” 1208

And to that Criseyde answered, “Had I not before this yielded myself; my sweet, dear heart, in truth I would not be here now!” 1211

Ah, truly it is said, and men may always see, that to be healed of a fever or other great sickness men must drink bitter drink; and to win gladness men often must swallow pain and great woe. And here we see it, for this adventure after pain has won its cure. And now sweetness seems sweeter because bitterness was tasted before. Out of woe they are floating into bliss, such as they had never felt since they were born. Is this not better than if both should be lost? Let every woman take heed, for the love of heaven, to do thus when need comes. 1225

Criseyde, all free now from dread and trouble, and with just cause to trust him now, that she knew his faithfulness and honest intent, made so much ado over him that it was a joy to see. As the sweet woodbine with many twists twines about a tree, each wound arms about the other. And as the little abashed nightingale stops at first when she begins to sing, if she might hear any herdsman’s voice or any creature stirring in the hedge, and afterwards confidently lets her voice ring out, so Criseyde, when her fear was over, opened her heart and told all her thoughts. And as a man who sees certain death before him, for anything that he can tell, and by a sudden rescue escapes, and out of death is brought into security, for all the world in exactly such present gladness was Troilus with his lady dear. (May God grant that we never meet with worse luck!) Thus he began to delight himself in this heaven, and with all this he kissed her a thousand times until he scarcely knew what to do for joy. 1253

“O Love, O Charity,” then he cried out, “and your mother Cytherea the sweet, next after you may she be praised, I mean Venus the benevolent planet! And next I salute you, Hymen! For never was a man so indebted to you gods as I, whom you have brought out of my cold cares. Benign Love, holy bond of all creatures, whoever would have grace and will not honor you, his desire attempts to fly without wings. All would be lost, I dare to say, unless your grace passed our deserts, unless you from your loving-kindness would aid those who in all ways labor and serve you best. I who have least desert among all that are admitted to your grace; you have helped me where I was likely to die, and have bestowed me in so high a station that no bliss can go beyond it. I can say no more, but may laud and reverence be given to your kindness and your might!” And at this he kissed Criseyde, at which in truth she felt no discomfort! 1274

“Now I wish to God, my sweetest heart,” he began again, “I knew how I could please you! What man ever had so happy a lot as I, upon whom the best and most beautiful person that I ever saw has granted to rest her heart! Here men can see that mercy surpasses justice: the experience of that is felt in me, who is unworthy to serve so sweet a creature. But my dear heart, I pray you of your benignity to think that, though I am unworthy, I must grow better in some manner through the virtue of your high service. And for the love of God, dear lady, as He has created me to serve you—by this I mean that he wills that you should be my guide, to let me live, if you will, or die—teach me how to deserve your thanks, so that through my ignorance I may do nothing to displease you. For surely I dare swear, joyous perfect woman, that all my life you shall find in me fidelity and devotion, and that I shall never break your command; and if I do, present or absent, for the love of God let me instantly be slain, if it should so please your womanhood!” 1302

“On this is all my trust,” she said; “gramercy indeed, my own dear heart, my ground of comfort, my own heart’s desire! But let us forget all this, for we have said enough. And finally, in one word, welcome, my knight, my peace, my sufficiency.” 1309

One of the least of their joys it would be impossible for my wit to tell. But you who have been at such a feast of gladness, judge if they were glad! I can say no more but that this time, between dread and security, these two felt the full worthiness of love. O blissful night, sought by them so long, how joyful you were to them both! Why had I not bought such a time with my soul, yes, or the least joy that

14 Seven bright gods. Seven planets, all named for gods.
15 Cytherea. Venus.
16 Hymen. The god of marriage.
was there! Away, you foul fear and you coy disdain, and leave them dwelling in this heavenly bliss, which is so high that none can tell it! 1323

But though I cannot tell all, as my author can with his goodly pen, yet, before God, I have ever told and shall tell the main part of his words. And if, in reverence of Love, I have added anything, do with it as you will. For all my words, here and everywhere, I speak under the correction of you who have feeling in the art of love, and commit them wholly to your discretion, to increase or diminish what I have written; and to do so I beseech you. But now to my former narrative. 1337

These two that we left in each other's arms were so loath to part that it would have seemed violent ravishment; or rather this was their greatest fear, that all this might prove to have been a foolish dream. Therefore very often each of them said, "Sweet, am I holding you thus, or am I dreaming it?" And Lord! With so pleasant a look he gazed upon her that his eyes never moved from her face. "Oh dear heart!" he said, "can it be that you are really here?" 1348

"Yes, my own heart, may God be thanked for His goodness," said Criseyde, and kissed him until for joy he knew not where his spirit was. Often he kissed her two eyes, and said, "Oh bright eyes, it was you that made me this woe, you modest nets of my dear lady! Though there is mercy written in your looks, God knows the text is hard to read. How were you able to bind me without cords?" And then once more he would take her strongly in his arms, and would sigh a thousand times; not such grievous sighs as men utter for woe, or when they are sick, but gentle sighs, such as give ease and show the feeling within. Of such sighs he could never heave enough. 1365

And then soon they fell to speaking of various matters which had to do with their case, and in sport exchanged rings, of which I find nothing more in my books. But I know well that Criseyde gave him a brooch of gold and azure, in which was set a ruby like a heart, and stuck it on his garment. 1372

Lord! Could a man believe that a miser or a wretch, who blames love and scorns it, was ever yet granted such delight from all the coins that he can scratch together and hoard, as there is in one moment of perfect love? No, may God save me, no niggard can have such perfect joy. They will say yes, but Lord, how the anxious wretches lie in their throats, full of woe and fear! They call love a folly or madness, but it only happens to them as I shall tell you: they shall forego the white and the red as well, and live in woe; may God give them bad fortune, and promote every faithful lover! I wish to God that these wretches who despise the service of love had ears as long as greedy Midas had, and had drunk as hot and strong a drink as Crassus drank for his evil lusts, to teach them that greed is sin, and love, despite the fact that men hold it folly, is virtue. 1393

These two of whom I am telling you were talking joyously in full trust of each other, and began to rehearse how and when and where each first knew the other, and every woe and fear that now had passed. All that heaviness, God be thanked, was turned to joy! When they came to speak of any woe of times past, the tale would always break off in kissing and fall into a new joy; and since they were now one, they used all their might to recover their bliss and be at rest, and to countervail past woe with joy. Reason wishes not that I even speak of sleep, for it has nothing to do with my matter. God knows, they thought of it very little! Lest this time so dear to them should in any way escape in vain, it was passed entirely in eager and noble joy. 1414

But soon the cock, the widely-known astronomer, began to flap on his breast and crow, and Lucifer, messenger of day, began to rise and throw out his beams, and eastward also rose Jupiter for any man to see, and then with sore heart Criseyde said to Troilus, "Alas that I was born, my heart's life, my trust, my joy! What woe that day must sever us! For it is time for you to go away, or else I am ruined forever. Alas, night, why will you not hover over us as long as when Jove lay with Alcmena? O black night, that was created by God, as people read in books, at certain times to hide this world with your black weeds, so that under it people may rest, well may beasts complain and men scold you, that when day is to break us with labor, you flee thus away and grant not to give us rest. Too shortly you do your duty, you hasty night! Because you in malice so hasten downwards, may God, author of nature, curse you and bind you to our hemisphere so that nevermore you shall revolve under the earth! For it is through your rash hurrying out of Troy that I have so soon foregone my heaven!" 1442

At those words Troilus seemed to feel bloody tears distill out of his heart; never yet had he felt such heaviness to grow out of such joy. He began to hold his lady dear tightly in his arms, and said, "Cruel day, accuser of the happiness that love and night have stolen and covered up, cursed be your coming into Troy, for every little hole has one of your..."
bright eyes! Envious day, why do you wish to spy so? What have you lost? What do you seek here? May God of His grace quench your light forever! Alas, pitiless day, how have lovers offended you? May yours be the pain of hell! Many lovers have you slain, and shall slay! You pour in and let them rest nowhere. Why do you offer your light here for sale? Go sell it to those who engrave little seals. We do not want you; we do not need to have day!” 1463

And he would scold Titan, the sun, and say, “O fool, well may men despise you, that has Aurora all night by your side, and allow her so soon to rise up from you, thus to plague lovers! What! Keep your bed, you and your precious Morning! I pray God for ill luck to both of you!” 1470

Then he sighed sorely and said, “My own lady, very root of my wellness and woe, O my goodly Criseyde, must I be gone too? Must, I, alas? My heart will burst in two! How shall I keep my life an hour, since with you is all the joy I have? What shall I do? I know not how or when I shall see the time to be with you again. God knows how it will fare with my life. Since longing for you even now so constrains me that I am dead unless I return, how can I remain long away from you? But, my own radiant lady, if I knew utterly that your own servant and knight were as firmly enclosed in your heart as you in mine (which would be more precious to me to know than to possess two such worlds as this), I should better endure my pain.” 1491

To this Criseyde answered with a sigh, “Dear heart, in truth the game has now gone so far that sooner shall Phoebus fall from his sphere, and every eagle mate with the dove, and every rock move from his place, than Troilus shall fade from Criseyde’s heart! You are so deeply engraved upon my heart that, even if I were to die upon the rack and even if I wished to turn you from my thoughts, may God save me, I could not! For the love of God who made us, let no other fancy creep into your brain and cause me to die! I beg you to have me as firmly in mind as I have you; if I could be sure that I would find that to be true, God could not increase my happiness by one point. Dear heart, be true to me, or else it would be a pitiful thing, for by heaven and by my word I am yours! Be glad therefore, and live in trust; this I never said before, nor shall to another. If it were a great gladness to you to return after you are gone, I would be as glad as you that you should, as surely as I hope for rest for my soul!” And then she took him in her arms and kissed him often. 1519

Against his will, since it must be, Troilus rose up and prepared to go, and a hundred times took his lady dear in his arms; and hurried on his way, saying in such voice as though his heart were bleeding. “Farewell, dear sweet heart, may God grant us to meet again safe and soon.” To this she answered not a word for sorrow, so sorely did their parting pain her, and Troilus went to his own palace as woebegone, to say the truth, as she was. 1530

So hard wrung him the pain of sharp desire to be again in bliss that it would not out of his remembrance. Having returned to his royal palace, he crept softly to his bed, to sleep long, as he was accustomed. But all for nothing; for all he lay and shut his eyes, sleep would not sink into his heart, for thinking how she for whom desire burned him was worth a thousand-fold more than he had believed. And in his mind he began to revolve up and down every word and look of her, and firmly to imprint in his thoughts even the least point of all that joy; and truly, from the very remembrance, longing burned him newly again, and the sweetness of love began to breed more than before, and yet there was nothing that he could do. 1547

Criseyde also, in the very same way, was enclosing in her heart the worthiness of Troilus, his lustiness, his prudent acts, his nobility, and every point of their meeting; thanking Love that he had laid siege to her so well, and longing to have her dear love again in such a situation where she dared treat him kindly. 1554

In the morning came Pandarus to his niece and greeted her fairly, saying, “All night long it rained so hard that, alas, I fear you had little chance for sleep and dreams, sweet niece! All night the rain so kept me awake that some of us must have a headache, I believe!” Then he came nearer and said, “How is it now, this bright morning? Niece, how are you doing?” 1563

“Never the better for you,” Criseyde answered, “fox that you are. May God give your heart anxiety! Before God, for all your innocent words it was you who caused all these doings. Ah, one who first sees you knows you little! With that she covered her face with the sheet and grew red for shame. 1570

Pandarus began to pry under it, and said, “Niece, if I am to be slain, here is a sword; smite off my head!” With that he thrust his arm behind her neck, and at last kissed her. 1575

I pass over all that which needs not to be said. What! God forgives our sins, and she also forgave, and began to talk merrily with her uncle, for she had nothing else against him except this. But to make an end of this thing, when the time came she went home to her house. So now Pandarus has wholly gained his purpose. 1582

Now let us turn again to Troilus, who lay long in bed restlessly, and secretly sent after Pandarus to come to him in all haste. He came at once. Little did he refuse, and greeted Troilus soberly and sat down upon his bed’s side. With all the emotion of friendly love that heart can think of;

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23 Seals. Presumably because they need extra light.

24 Aurora. The dawn.
Troilus fell on his knees before Pandarus, and before he would arise from the spot he thanked him earnestly a thousand times and blessed the day that Pandarus was born to bring him out of his trouble. 1596

“Ah friend, best of all friends that ever were,” he said, “you have brought my soul to rest in heaven out of Phlegethon, the fiery river of hell. Though I could give up my life a thousand times a day in your service, it would not help a bit to pay my debt. The sun which sees all the world never saw yet, I dare stake my life, one so wholly fair and good as she whose I wholly am and ever shall be until I die. And for the fact that I am hers, may thanks be given to the high majesty of Love, and to your kind diligence! It is no little thing that you have given me, for which my life is your property forever. For it is through your help that I live, or else I had been dead now many days!” And with that word he laid himself down in his bed. 1615

Pandarus listened seriously until all was said, and then answered, “My dear friend, if I have done anything for you, God knows I am glad, as glad as a man could be of it, so God help me. But do not take what I say in the wrong way. For the love of God beware of this, that you yourself should bring to an end the joy into which you have come. For of all fortune’s sharp adversities the worst is this: for a man to have been in happiness and to remember it when it is gone. You are wise enough; therefore, make no error. Though you now sit warm and comfortable, do not be too rash; if you are, surely it will ruin you. Now you are at ease, and in this way keep yourself well in hand. For as sure as fire burns, it is as great a skill to keep something as to gain it. Bridle your speech always, and your passions, for we hold to worldly joy only by a wire, as we know well because it always breaks so often. Therefore, we must be gentle with it! 1638

“Before God, my dear friend,” said Troilus, “I hope I shall so bear myself that nothing shall be lost through my fault; nor shall I ever be so rash as to hurt her. It is not necessary to bring up this matter often. If you knew my heart well, Pandarus, in faith you would have little anxiety about this!” 1645

Then he began to tell him about that happy time, and how at first he feared that he had angered her. And then he said, “Friend, as I am a true knight, and by the faith that I owe to God and to you, I have never had it half as hot as at this moment! And the more love stings me, the more it delights me. I know not certainly how it is, but now I feel a new quality in my love, yes, quite another one than I felt before now.” 1655

“He that once has been in the joy of heaven,” answered Pandarus, “I dare be sworn, ever afterwards feels otherwise than when he first heard tell of it.” 1659

To say all in one word, Troilus was never tired of talking about this matter, with praising to Pandarus the goodness of his own dear lady and with thanking and making much of him. This talk was begun over and over again, brand-new, until night parted them. 1666

Soon after this, as Fortune would have it, came the blissful sweet time when Troilus was forewarned that he should meet his lady again where they met before, for which he felt his heart swim in joy, and duly praised all the gods. Let us see now if he can be merry! The form and manner of her coming, and of his, were observed as before, and need not be described; in joy and security Pandarus brought the two together when they wished, and left them in quiet and peace. 1680

Now that they are together you need not ask me if they are joyful. If it was well before, it now was better a thousand-fold, I need not tell you; gone was every sorrow and fear, each sought only to please the other, and both had and knew they had as much joy as a heart can contain. This is no little thing to say; it passes every wit to describe. It is not enough to call it that perfect felicity which these wise scholars so commend. This joy cannot be written with ink; this passes all that heart can conceive. 1694

But alas, the time! They began to see the well-known signs of day’s approach, for which they seemed to feel death’s wound. They changed color for woe, and they began anew to revile day, calling it envious, traitor, and more evil names, and bitterly cursing the morning light. 1701

“Alas!” said Troilus, “now I see that Pyrois and the three other swift steeds that draw the sun’s chariot have gone by some shortcut to spite me, which makes it so soon day. And now because the sun so hastens to be up, I will never again make a sacrifice to him!” But day must part them as before, and when their loving talk and endearments were over, they set a time for another meeting. 1712

And many times they did the same, and thus for a while Fortune left Criseyde and the Trojan prince in bliss. So in contentment, bliss and singing Troilus led his life. He spends, jousts, gives feasts; he gives freely on all sides and wears many garments, and at all times keeps about him, as suited to his nature, a world of people, the best and lustiest he can find; so that such a report of him for honor and generosity spread throughout the world that it rang upwards to the gate of heaven! And as to his love, he was in such gladness that in his heart he deemed, I believe, that there was no lover in the world so well at ease as he; and thus did love please him. 1722

The goodness or charm that nature had placed in any other lady could not untie so much as one knot of the net that Criseyde had woven about his heart. It was so closely meshed and knit that to undo it anywhere--for anything that
might happen—would never be possible. Often he would lead Pandarus by the hand into a garden, and there make such a long and joyous tale of Criseyde and her womanhood and beauty that it was heaven to hear his words; and then he would sing, in this manner:— 1743

“Love, that has the rule of earth and sea, Love that has set his laws in high heaven, Love, that with a saving bond holds the peoples joined as he wishes, Love, that frames laws for true friendship and makes wedded couples to dwell in virtue, may he bind the harmony of which I tell! 1750

“That the world with eternal fidelity holds his diverse times and seasons in concord; that the warring elements observe an ever-during bond; that Phoebus must lead forth his rosy day, and that the moon has lordship over the nights—all this is caused by Love, may his power always be praised! 1757

“The sea, ever greedy to flow, constrains his floods in a certain limit so that they will grow not fiercely to drown the earth and all things for evermore. And if Love ever relaxed his bridle, all that now love should leap asunder, and all would be lost that now Love holds together. 1764

“And so I wish to God, Who is the author of nature, that Love with his strong bond would encircle all hearts and tie them so firmly that none should know the way out of his bondage! And to cold hearts I wish that he should give a wrench, to make them love and have pity on sore hearts and protect those who are faithful.” 1771

In all that the siege demanded he was foremost, always the first to be clad in arms, and certainly, unless books err, most dreaded of any creature, save Hector. And this increase of hardihood came to him from love, to gain his lady’s thanks, which so changed the spirit within him. In time of truce he would ride to go hawking or else hunt boar, lion or bear. The small beasts he ignored! When he came riding back to town, often his lady, as fresh as a falcon that has just come out of the cage, was ready at her window to give him a pleasant greeting. 1785

His talk was mostly of love and virtue, and scorned all meanness, and there was no need, I promise you, to beg him to honor the worthy and relieve those in distress. And he was very glad when he heard that any lover was faring well. For, to tell the truth, he considered everyone to be lost unless they were in Love’s high service, I mean people who rightfully well should be so. And beyond all this, he could compose his complete behavior so well from personal experience and in such a marvelous manner, that every lover thought all was well, whatever he did or said. Though he had come from royal blood, he took care not to mistreat anyone with too much pride; to each person he was kind, which won him thanks on every side. Love—praised be his grace—made him flee pride and envy, anger and greed, and every other vice. 1806

You beautiful lady, daughter to Dione, and your blind and winged son Lord Cupid as well, you nine sisters that by the Helicon River on Mount Parnassus choose your abode, since you must leave me now, I can say no more but may you be praised forever, without end. Through you I have told in my song fully the joyous course of Troilus’ love, albeit there may have been some distress mingled in it, as my author chooses to describe. My third book thus I now end and leave Troilus in joy and peace with Criseyde, his own sweet heart. 1820

Here Ends the Third Book

Translated and Edited by Gerard NeCastro
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