

# УИЛЬЯМ ШЕКСПИР

THE HISTORY  
OF TROILUS  
AND CRESSIDA

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**The History of Troilus and Cressida**

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# William Shakespeare

## The History of Troilus and Cressida

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRIAM, King of Troy

His sons:

HECTOR

TROILUS

PARIS

DEIPHOBUS

HELENUS

MARGARELON, a bastard son of Priam Trojan commanders:

AENEAS

ANTENOR

CALCHAS, a Trojan priest, taking part with the Greeks

PANDARUS, uncle to Cressida

AGAMEMNON, the Greek general

MENELAUS, his brother Greek commanders:

ACHILLES

AJAX

ULYSSES

NESTOR

DIOMEDES

PATROCLUS

THERSITES, a deformed and scurrilous Greek

ALEXANDER, servant to Cressida

SERVANT to Troilus

SERVANT to Paris

SERVANT to Diomedes

HELEN, wife to Menelaus

ANDROMACHE, wife to Hector

CASSANDRA, daughter to Priam, a prophetess

CRESSIDA, daughter to Calchas Trojan and Greek Soldiers, and Attendants

## **SCENE: Troy and the Greek camp before it**

### **PROLOGUE TROILUS AND CRESSIDA PROLOGUE**

In Troy, there lies the scene. From isles of Greece  
The princes orgillous, their high blood chaf'd,  
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships  
Fraught with the ministers and instruments  
Of cruel war. Sixty and nine that wore  
Their crownets regal from th' Athenian bay  
Put forth toward Phrygia; and their vow is made  
To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures  
The ravish'd Helen, Menelaus' queen,  
With wanton Paris sleeps-and that's the quarrel.  
To Tenedos they come,  
And the deep-drawing barks do there disgorge  
Their war-like fraughtage. Now on Dardan plains  
The fresh and yet unbruised Greeks do pitch  
Their brave pavilions: Priam's six-gated city,  
Dardan, and Tymbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,  
And Antenorides, with massy staples  
And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts,  
Sperr up the sons of Troy.  
Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits  
On one and other side, Troyan and Greek,  
Sets all on hazard-and hither am I come  
A Prologue arm'd, but not in confidence  
Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited  
In like conditions as our argument,  
To tell you, fair beholders, that our play  
Leaps o'er the vaunt and firstlings of those broils,  
Beginning in the middle; starting thence away,  
To what may be digested in a play.  
Like or find fault; do as your pleasures are;  
Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war.

## ACT I. SCENE 1. Troy. Before PRIAM'S palace

Enter TROILUS armed, and PANDARUS

TROILUS. Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again.

Why should I war without the walls of Troy  
That find such cruel battle here within?  
Each Troyan that is master of his heart,  
Let him to field; Troilus, alas, hath none!

PANDARUS. Will this gear ne'er be mended?

TROILUS. The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,  
Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant;  
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,  
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,  
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,  
And skillless as unpractis'd infancy.

PANDARUS. Well, I have told you enough of this; for my part,  
I'll not meddle nor make no farther. He that will have a cake  
out of the wheat must needs tarry the grinding.

TROILUS. Have I not tarried?

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

TROILUS. Have I not tarried?

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

TROILUS. Still have I tarried.

PANDARUS. Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet in the word  
'hereafter' the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating  
of the oven, and the baking; nay, you must stay the cooling  
too,

or you may chance to burn your lips.

TROILUS. Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,  
Doth lesser blench at suff'rance than I do.

At Priam's royal table do I sit;  
And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts-  
So, traitor, then she comes when she is thence.

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

TROILUS. I was about to tell thee: when my heart,  
As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,  
Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,  
I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,  
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile.  
But sorrow that is couch'd in seeming gladness  
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

PANDARUS. An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's-  
well,  
go to- there were no more comparison between the women. But,  
for

my part, she is my kinswoman; I would not, as they term it,  
praise her, but I would somebody had heard her talk  
yesterday, as

I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit;  
but-

TROILUS. O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus-  
When I do tell thee there my hopes lie drown'd,  
Reply not in how many fathoms deep  
They lie indrench'd. I tell thee I am mad  
In Cressid's love. Thou answer'st 'She is fair'-  
Pourest in the open ulcer of my heart-  
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,  
Handlest in thy discourse. O, that her hand,  
In whose comparison all whites are ink  
Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure  
The cygnet's down is harsh, and spirit of sense  
Hard as the palm of ploughman! This thou tell'st me,  
As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;  
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,  
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me  
The knife that made it.

PANDARUS. I speak no more than truth.

TROILUS. Thou dost not speak so much.

PANDARUS. Faith, I'll not meddle in it. Let her be as she is:  
if

she be fair, 'tis the better for her; an she be not, she has  
the  
mends in her own hands.

TROILUS. Good Pandarus! How now, Pandarus!

PANDARUS. I have had my labour for my travail, ill thought on  
of

her and ill thought on of you; gone between and between, but  
small thanks for my labour.

TROILUS. What, art thou angry, Pandarus? What, with me?

PANDARUS. Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair  
as

Helen. An she were not kin to me, she would be as fair a  
Friday

as Helen is on Sunday. But what care I? I care not an she  
were a

blackamoor; 'tis all one to me.

TROILUS. Say I she is not fair?

PANDARUS. I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to  
stay

behind her father. Let her to the Greeks; and so I'll tell  
her

the next time I see her. For my part, I'll meddle nor make no  
more i' th' matter.

TROILUS. Pandarus!

PANDARUS. Not I.

TROILUS. Sweet Pandarus!

PANDARUS. Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all  
as I found it, and there an end. Exit. Sound

alarum

TROILUS. Peace, you ungracious clamours! Peace, rude sounds!

Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,

When with your blood you daily paint her thus.

I cannot fight upon this argument;

It is too starv'd a subject for my sword.

But Pandarus-O gods, how do you plague me!

I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;

And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo

As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.

Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,

What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?

Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl;

Between our Ilium and where she resides

Let it be call'd the wild and wand'ring flood;

Ourselves the merchant, and this sailing Pandar

Our doubtful hope, our convoy, and our bark.

Alarum. Enter AENEAS

AENEAS. How now, Prince Troilus! Wherefore not afield?

TROILUS. Because not there. This woman's answer sorts,

For womanish it is to be from thence.

What news, Aeneas, from the field to-day?

AENEAS. That Paris is returned home, and hurt.

TROILUS. By whom, Aeneas?

AENEAS. Troilus, by Menelaus.

TROILUS. Let Paris bleed: 'tis but a scar to scorn;

Paris is gor'd with Menelaus' horn.

[Alarum]

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

TROILUS. Better at home, if 'would I might' were 'may.'

But to the sport abroad. Are you bound thither?

AENEAS. In all swift haste.

TROILUS. Come, go we then together.

Exeunt

## ACT I. SCENE 2. Troy. A street

Enter CRESSIDA and her man ALEXANDER

CRESSIDA. Who were those went by?

ALEXANDER. Queen Hecuba and Helen.

CRESSIDA. And whither go they?

ALEXANDER. Up to the eastern tower,  
Whose height commands as subject all the vale,  
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience  
Is as a virtue fix'd, to-day was mov'd.  
He chid Andromache, and struck his armourer;  
And, like as there were husbandry in war,  
Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,  
And to the field goes he; where every flower  
Did as a prophet weep what it foresaw  
In Hector's wrath.

CRESSIDA. What was his cause of anger?

ALEXANDER. The noise goes, this: there is among the Greeks  
A lord of Trojan blood, nephew to Hector;  
They call him Ajax.

CRESSIDA. Good; and what of him?

ALEXANDER. They say he is a very man per se,  
And stands alone.

CRESSIDA. So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have  
no  
legs.

ALEXANDER. This man, lady, hath robb'd many beasts of their  
particular additions: he is as valiant as a lion, churlish as  
the

bear, slow as the elephant-a man into whom nature hath so  
crowded

humours that his valour is crush'd into folly, his folly  
sauced

with discretion. There is no man hath a virtue that he hath  
not a

glimpse of, nor any man an attainment but he carries some stain  
of

it; he is melancholy without cause and merry against the  
hair; he

hath the joints of every thing; but everything so out of  
joint

that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or  
purblind

Argus, all eyes and no sight.

CRESSIDA. But how should this man, that makes me smile, make  
Hector  
angry?

ALEXANDER. They say he yesterday cop'd Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

Enter PANDARUS

CRESSIDA. Who comes here?

ALEXANDER. Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

CRESSIDA. Hector's a gallant man.

ALEXANDER. As may be in the world, lady.

PANDARUS. What's that? What's that?

CRESSIDA. Good morrow, uncle Pandarus.

PANDARUS. Good morrow, cousin Cressid. What do you talk of? - Good

morrow, Alexander. - How do you, cousin? When were you at Ilium?

CRESSIDA. This morning, uncle.

PANDARUS. What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector arm'd

and gone ere you came to Ilium? Helen was not up, was she?

CRESSIDA. Hector was gone; but Helen was not up.

PANDARUS. E'en so. Hector was stirring early.

CRESSIDA. That were we talking of, and of his anger.

PANDARUS. Was he angry?

CRESSIDA. So he says here.

PANDARUS. True, he was so; I know the cause too; he'll lay about

him today, I can tell them that. And there's Troilus will not come far behind him; let them take heed of Troilus, I can tell

them that too.

CRESSIDA. What, is he angry too?

PANDARUS. Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

CRESSIDA. O Jupiter! there's no comparison.

PANDARUS. What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man

if you see him?

CRESSIDA. Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

PANDARUS. Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

CRESSIDA. Then you say as I say, for I am sure he is not Hector.

PANDARUS. No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

CRESSIDA. 'Tis just to each of them: he is himself.

PANDARUS. Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were!

CRESSIDA. So he is.

PANDARUS. Condition I had gone barefoot to India.

CRESSIDA. He is not Hector.

PANDARUS. Himself! no, he's not himself. Would 'a were himself!

Well, the gods are above; time must friend or end. Well,  
Troilus,  
well! I would my heart were in her body! No, Hector is not a  
better man than Troilus.  
CRESSIDA. Excuse me.  
PANDARUS. He is elder.  
CRESSIDA. Pardon me, pardon me.  
PANDARUS. Th' other's not come to't; you shall tell me another  
tale  
when th' other's come to't. Hector shall not have his wit  
this  
year.  
CRESSIDA. He shall not need it if he have his own.  
PANDARUS. Nor his qualities.  
CRESSIDA. No matter.  
PANDARUS. Nor his beauty.  
CRESSIDA. 'Twould not become him: his own's better.  
PANDARUS. YOU have no judgment, niece. Helen herself swore th'  
other day that Troilus, for a brown favour, for so 'tis, I  
must  
confess- not brown neither-  
CRESSIDA. No, but brown.  
PANDARUS. Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.  
CRESSIDA. To say the truth, true and not true.  
PANDARUS. She prais'd his complexion above Paris.  
CRESSIDA. Why, Paris hath colour enough.  
PANDARUS. So he has.  
CRESSIDA. Then Troilus should have too much. If she prais'd him  
above, his complexion is higher than his; he having colour  
enough, and the other higher, is too flaming praise for a  
good  
complexion. I had as lief Helen's golden tongue had commended  
Troilus for a copper nose.  
PANDARUS. I swear to you I think Helen loves him better than  
Paris.  
CRESSIDA. Then she's a merry Greek indeed.  
PANDARUS. Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him th' other  
day  
into the compass'd window-and you know he has not past three  
or  
four hairs on his chin-  
CRESSIDA. Indeed a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his  
particulars therein to a total.  
PANDARUS. Why, he is very young, and yet will he within three  
pound  
lift as much as his brother Hector.  
CRESSIDA. Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?  
PANDARUS. But to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came  
and

puts me her white hand to his cloven chin-  
CRESSIDA. Juno have mercy! How came it cloven?  
PANDARUS. Why, you know, 'tis dimpled. I think his smiling  
becomes  
him better than any man in all Phrygia.  
CRESSIDA. O, he smiles valiantly!  
PANDARUS. Does he not?  
CRESSIDA. O yes, an 'twere a cloud in autumn!  
PANDARUS. Why, go to, then! But to prove to you that Helen  
loves  
Troilus-  
CRESSIDA. Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll prove it  
so.  
PANDARUS. Troilus! Why, he esteems her no more than I esteem an  
addle egg.  
CRESSIDA. If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle  
head, you would eat chickens i' th' shell.  
PANDARUS. I cannot choose but laugh to think how she tickled  
his  
chin. Indeed, she has a marvell's white hand, I must needs  
confess.  
CRESSIDA. Without the rack.  
PANDARUS. And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his  
chin.  
CRESSIDA. Alas, poor chin! Many a wart is richer.  
PANDARUS. But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laugh'd  
that  
her eyes ran o'er.  
CRESSIDA. With millstones.  
PANDARUS. And Cassandra laugh'd.  
CRESSIDA. But there was a more temperate fire under the pot of  
her  
eyes. Did her eyes run o'er too?  
PANDARUS. And Hector laugh'd.  
CRESSIDA. At what was all this laughing?  
PANDARUS. Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus'  
chin.  
CRESSIDA. An't had been a green hair I should have laugh'd too.  
PANDARUS. They laugh'd not so much at the hair as at his pretty  
answer.  
CRESSIDA. What was his answer?  
PANDARUS. Quoth she 'Here's but two and fifty hairs on your  
chin,  
and one of them is white.'  
CRESSIDA. This is her question.  
PANDARUS. That's true; make no question of that. 'Two and fifty  
hairs,' quoth he 'and one white. That white hair is my  
father,  
and all the rest are his sons.' 'Jupiter!' quoth she 'which

of  
these hairs is Paris my husband?' 'The forked one,' quoth he,  
'pluck't out and give it him.' But there was such laughing!  
and  
Helen so blush'd, and Paris so chaf'd; and all the rest so  
laugh'd that it pass'd.

CRESSIDA. So let it now; for it has been a great while going  
by.

PANDARUS. Well, cousin, I told you a thing yesterday; think  
on't.

CRESSIDA. So I do.

PANDARUS. I'll be sworn 'tis true; he will weep you, and 'twere  
a  
man born in April.

CRESSIDA. And I'll spring up in his tears, an 'twere a nettle  
against May. [Sound a  
retreat]

PANDARUS. Hark! they are coming from the field. Shall we stand  
up

here and see them as they pass toward Ilium? Good niece, do,  
sweet niece Cressida.

CRESSIDA. At your pleasure.

PANDARUS. Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may  
see

most bravely. I'll tell you them all by their names as they  
pass

by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

AENEAS passes

CRESSIDA. Speak not so loud.

PANDARUS. That's Aeneas. Is not that a brave man? He's one of  
the  
flowers of Troy, I can tell you. But mark Troilus; you shall  
see  
anon.

ANTENOR passes

CRESSIDA. Who's that?

PANDARUS. That's Antenor. He has a shrewd wit, I can tell you;  
and  
he's a man good enough; he's one o' th' soundest judgments in  
Troy, whosoever, and a proper man of person. When comes  
Troilus?

I'll show you Troilus anon. If he see me, you shall see him  
nod  
at me.

CRESSIDA. Will he give you the nod?

PANDARUS. You shall see.

CRESSIDA. If he do, the rich shall have more.

HECTOR passes

PANDARUS. That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man, niece. O brave

Hector! Look how he looks. There's a countenance! Is't not a brave man?

CRESSIDA. O, a brave man!

PANDARUS. Is 'a not? It does a man's heart good. Look you what hacks are on his helmet! Look you yonder, do you see? Look you

there. There's no jesting; there's laying on; take't off who will, as they say. There be hacks.

CRESSIDA. Be those with swords?

PANDARUS. Swords! anything, he cares not; an the devil come to him,

it's all one. By God's lid, it does one's heart good. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

PARIS passes

Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too, is't not?

Why,

this is brave now. Who said he came hurt home to-day? He's not

hurt. Why, this will do Helen's heart good now, ha! Would I could

see Troilus now! You shall see Troilus anon.

HELENUS passes

CRESSIDA. Who's that?

PANDARUS. That's Helenus. I marvel where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day. That's Helenus.

CRESSIDA. Can Helenus fight, uncle?

PANDARUS. Helenus! no. Yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel

where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry 'Troilus'?

Helenus is a priest.

CRESSIDA. What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

TROILUS passes

PANDARUS. Where? yonder? That's Deiphobus. 'Tis Troilus. There's a

man, niece. Hem! Brave Troilus, the prince of chivalry!

CRESSIDA. Peace, for shame, peace!

PANDARUS. Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him,

niece; look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hack'd than Hector's; and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he never saw three and twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way. Had I a sister were a grace or a daughter a

goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris

is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot.

CRESSIDA. Here comes more.

Common soldiers pass

PANDARUS. Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran! porridge after meat! I could live and die in the eyes of Troilus.

Ne'er look, ne'er look; the eagles are gone. Crows and daws, crows and daws! I had rather be such a man as Troilus than Agamemnon and all Greece.

CRESSIDA. There is amongst the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus.

PANDARUS. Achilles? A drayman, a porter, a very camel!

CRESSIDA. Well, well.

PANDARUS. Well, well! Why, have you any discretion? Have you any eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth,

liberality, and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

CRESSIDA. Ay, a minc'd man; and then to be bak'd with no date in the pie, for then the man's date is out.

PANDARUS. You are such a woman! A man knows not at what ward you lie.

CRESSIDA. Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend

my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to

defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these; and at all these

wards I lie at, at a thousand watches.

PANDARUS. Say one of your watches.

CRESSIDA. Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the chiefest of them too. If I cannot ward what I would not have hit,

I can watch you for telling how I took the blow; unless it swell

past hiding, and then it's past watching

PANDARUS. You are such another!

Enter TROILUS' BOY

BOY. Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

PANDARUS. Where?

BOY. At your own house; there he unarms him.

PANDARUS. Good boy, tell him I come. Exit

Boy

I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

CRESSIDA. Adieu, uncle.

PANDARUS. I will be with you, niece, by and by.

CRESSIDA. To bring, uncle.

PANDARUS. Ay, a token from Troilus.

CRESSIDA. By the same token, you are a bawd.

### Exit

PANDARUS

Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,

He offers in another's enterprise;

But more in Troilus thousand-fold I see

Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be,

Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:

Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.

That she belov'd knows nought that knows not this:

Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is.

That she was never yet that ever knew

Love got so sweet as when desire did sue;

Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:

Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech.

Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,

Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

Exit

### **ACT I. SCENE 3. The Grecian camp. Before AGAMEMNON'S tent**

Sennet. Enter AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, MENELAUS, and others

AGAMEMNON. Princes,  
What grief hath set these jaundies o'er your cheeks?  
The ample proposition that hope makes  
In all designs begun on earth below  
Fails in the promis'd largeness; checks and disasters  
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,  
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,  
Infects the sound pine, and diverts his grain  
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.  
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us  
That we come short of our suppose so far  
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;  
Sith every action that hath gone before,  
Whereof we have record, trial did draw  
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,  
And that unbodied figure of the thought  
That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,  
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works  
And call them shames, which are, indeed, nought else  
But the protractive trials of great Jove  
To find persistive constancy in men;  
The fineness of which metal is not found  
In fortune's love? For then the bold and coward,  
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,  
The hard and soft, seem all affin'd and kin.  
But in the wind and tempest of her frown  
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,  
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;  
And what hath mass or matter by itself  
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

NESTOR. With due observance of thy godlike seat,  
Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply  
Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance  
Lies the true proof of men. The sea being smooth,  
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
Upon her patient breast, making their way  
With those of nobler bulk!  
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage  
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold  
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,  
Bounding between the two moist elements  
Like Perseus' horse. Where's then the saucy boat,

Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now  
Co-rivall'd greatness? Either to harbour fled  
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so  
Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide  
In storms of fortune; for in her ray and brightness  
The herd hath more annoyance by the breeze  
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade-why, then the thing of courage  
As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathise,  
And with an accent tun'd in self-same key  
Retorts to chiding fortune.

ULYSSES. Agamemnon,

Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,  
Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit  
In whom the tempers and the minds of all  
Should be shut up-hear what Ulysses speaks.

Besides the applause and approbation

The which, [To AGAMEMNON] most mighty, for thy place and  
sway,

[To NESTOR] And, thou most reverend, for thy stretch'd-out  
life,

I give to both your speeches- which were such  
As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece  
Should hold up high in brass; and such again  
As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,  
Should with a bond of air, strong as the axle-tree  
On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears  
To his experienc'd tongue-yet let it please both,  
Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.

AGAMEMNON. Speak, Prince of Ithaca; and be't of less expect

That matter needless, of importless burden,  
Divide thy lips than we are confident,  
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,  
We shall hear music, wit, and oracle.

ULYSSES. Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,  
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,  
But for these instances:

The specialty of rule hath been neglected;  
And look how many Grecian tents do stand  
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions.  
When that the general is not like the hive,  
To whom the foragers shall all repair,  
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,  
Th' unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,  
Observe degree, priority, and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office, and custom, in all line of order;

And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd  
Amidst the other, whose med'cinable eye  
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
And posts, like the commandment of a king,  
Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets  
In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,  
What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,  
Commotion in the winds! Frights, changes, horrors,  
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate,  
The unity and married calm of states  
Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,  
Which is the ladder of all high designs,  
The enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,  
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
The primogenity and due of birth,  
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And hark what discord follows! Each thing melts  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,  
And make a sop of all this solid globe;  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead;  
Force should be right; or, rather, right and wrong-  
Between whose endless jar justice resides-  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.  
Then everything includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,  
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,  
Follows the choking.  
And this neglect of degree it is  
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose  
It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd  
By him one step below, he by the next,  
That next by him beneath; so ever step,  
Exempl'd by the first pace that is sick  
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever  
Of pale and bloodless emulation.  
And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,  
Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,  
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

NESTOR. Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd  
The fever whereof all our power is sick.

AGAMEMNON. The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,  
What is the remedy?

ULYSSES. The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs; with him Patroclus  
Upon a lazy bed the livelong day  
Breaks scurril jests;

And with ridiculous and awkward action-  
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls-  
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,  
Thy topless deputation he puts on;  
And like a strutting player whose conceit  
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich  
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound  
'Twi't his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage-  
Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming  
He acts thy greatness in; and when he speaks  
'Tis like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquar'd,  
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd,  
Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff  
The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,  
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;  
Cries 'Excellent! 'tis Agamemnon just.

Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,  
As he being drest to some oration.'

That's done-as near as the extremest ends  
Of parallels, as like Vulcan and his wife;  
Yet god Achilles still cries 'Excellent!

'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,  
Arming to answer in a night alarm.'

And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age  
Must be the scene of mirth: to cough and spit  
And, with a palsy-fumbling on his gorget,  
Shake in and out the rivet. And at this sport  
Sir Valour dies; cries 'O, enough, Patroclus;  
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all  
In pleasure of my spleen.' And in this fashion  
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,  
Severals and generals of grace exact,  
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,  
Excitements to the field or speech for truce,  
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves  
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

NESTOR. And in the imitation of these twain-  
Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns

With an imperial voice-many are infect.  
Ajax is grown self-will'd and bears his head  
In such a rein, in full as proud a place  
As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him;  
Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war  
Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,  
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,  
To match us in comparisons with dirt,  
To weaken and discredit our exposure,  
How rank soever rounded in with danger.

ULYSSES. They tax our policy and call it cowardice,  
Count wisdom as no member of the war,  
ForeSTALL prescience, and esteem no act  
But that of hand. The still and mental parts  
That do contrive how many hands shall strike  
When fitness calls them on, and know, by measure  
Of their observant toil, the enemies' weight-  
Why, this hath not a finger's dignity:  
They call this bed-work, mapp'ry, closet-war;  
So that the ram that batters down the wall,  
For the great swinge and rudeness of his poise,  
They place before his hand that made the engine,  
Or those that with the fineness of their souls  
By reason guide his execution.

NESTOR. Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse  
Makes many Thetis' sons.

[Tucket]

AGAMEMNON. What trumpet? Look, Menelaus.

MENELAUS. From Troy.

Enter AENEAS

AGAMEMNON. What would you fore our tent?

AENEAS. Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?

AGAMEMNON. Even this.

AENEAS. May one that is a herald and a prince

Do a fair message to his kingly eyes?

AGAMEMNON. With surety stronger than Achilles' an

Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice

Call Agamemnon head and general.

AENEAS. Fair leave and large security. How may

A stranger to those most imperial looks

Know them from eyes of other mortals?

AGAMEMNON. How?

AENEAS. Ay;

I ask, that I might waken reverence,

And bid the cheek be ready with a blush

Modest as Morning when she coldly eyes

The youthful Phoebus.

Which is that god in office, guiding men?  
Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

AGAMEMNON. This Trojan scorns us, or the men of Troy  
Are ceremonious courtiers.

AENEAS. Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,  
As bending angels; that's their fame in peace.  
But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,  
Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and, Jove's accord,  
Nothing so full of heart. But peace, Aeneas,  
Peace, Trojan; lay thy finger on thy lips.  
The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
If that the prais'd himself bring the praise forth;  
But what the repining enemy commends,  
That breath fame blows; that praise, sole pure, transcends.

AGAMEMNON. Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Aeneas?

AENEAS. Ay, Greek, that is my name.

AGAMEMNON. What's your affair, I pray you?

AENEAS. Sir, pardon; 'tis for Agamemnon's ears.

AGAMEMNON. He hears nought privately that comes from Troy.

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

AGAMEMNON. Speak frankly as the wind;  
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour.  
That thou shalt know, Trojan, he is awake,  
He tells thee so himself.

AENEAS. Trumpet, blow loud,  
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;  
And every Greek of mettle, let him know  
What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.

[Sound

trumpet]

We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy  
A prince called Hector-Priam is his father-  
Who in this dull and long-continued truce  
Is resty grown; he bade me take a trumpet  
And to this purpose speak: Kings, princes, lords!  
If there be one among the fair'st of Greece  
That holds his honour higher than his ease,  
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,  
That knows his valour and knows not his fear,  
That loves his mistress more than in confession  
With truant vows to her own lips he loves,  
And dare avow her beauty and her worth  
In other arms than hers-to him this challenge.  
Hector, in view of Troyans and of Greeks,  
Shall make it good or do his best to do it:  
He hath a lady wiser, fairer, truer,

Than ever Greek did couple in his arms;  
And will to-morrow with his trumpet call  
Mid-way between your tents and walls of Troy  
To rouse a Grecian that is true in love.  
If any come, Hector shall honour him;  
If none, he'll say in Troy, when he retires,  
The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth  
The splinter of a lance. Even so much.

AGAMEMNON. This shall be told our lovers, Lord Aeneas.

If none of them have soul in such a kind,  
We left them all at home. But we are soldiers;  
And may that soldier a mere recreant prove  
That means not, hath not, or is not in love.  
If then one is, or hath, or means to be,  
That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he.

NESTOR. Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man

When Hector's grandsire suck'd. He is old now;  
But if there be not in our Grecian mould  
One noble man that hath one spark of fire  
To answer for his love, tell him from me  
I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver,  
And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,  
And, meeting him, will tell him that my lady  
Was fairer than his grandame, and as chaste  
As may be in the world. His youth in flood,  
I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.

AENEAS. Now heavens forbend such scarcity of youth!

ULYSSES. Amen.

AGAMEMNON. Fair Lord Aeneas, let me touch your hand;

To our pavilion shall I lead you, first.  
Achilles shall have word of this intent;  
So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent.  
Yourself shall feast with us before you go,  
And find the welcome of a noble foe.

### **Exeunt all but ULYSSES and NESTOR**

ULYSSES. Nestor!

NESTOR. What says Ulysses?

ULYSSES. I have a young conception in my brain;

Be you my time to bring it to some shape.

NESTOR. What is't?

ULYSSES. This 'tis:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots. The seeded pride  
That hath to this maturity blown up  
In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd  
Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil

To overbulk us all.

NESTOR. Well, and how?

ULYSSES. This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,  
However it is spread in general name,  
Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

NESTOR. True. The purpose is perspicuous even as substance  
Whose grossness little characters sum up;  
And, in the publication, make no strain  
But that Achilles, were his brain as barren  
As banks of Libya-though, Apollo knows,  
'Tis dry enough-will with great speed of judgment,  
Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose  
Pointing on him.

ULYSSES. And wake him to the answer, think you?

NESTOR. Why, 'tis most meet. Who may you else oppose  
That can from Hector bring those honours off,  
If not Achilles? Though 't be a sportful combat,  
Yet in this trial much opinion dwells;  
For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute  
With their fin'st palate; and trust to me, Ulysses,  
Our imputation shall be oddly pois'd  
In this vile action; for the success,  
Although particular, shall give a scantling  
Of good or bad unto the general;  
And in such indexes, although small pricks  
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen  
The baby figure of the giant mas  
Of things to come at large. It is suppos'd  
He that meets Hector issues from our choice;  
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,  
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,  
As 'twere from forth us all, a man distill'd  
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,  
What heart receives from hence a conquering part,  
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?  
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,  
In no less working than are swords and bows  
Directive by the limbs.

ULYSSES. Give pardon to my speech.

Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector.  
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares  
And think perchance they'll sell; if not, the lustre  
Of the better yet to show shall show the better,  
By showing the worst first. Do not consent  
That ever Hector and Achilles meet;  
For both our honour and our shame in this  
Are dogg'd with two strange followers.

NESTOR. I see them not with my old eyes. What are they?

ULYSSES. What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,

Were he not proud, we all should wear with him;  
But he already is too insolent;  
And it were better parch in Afric sun  
Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
Should he scape Hector fair. If he were foil'd,  
Why, then we do our main opinion crush  
In taint of our best man. No, make a lott'ry;  
And, by device, let blockish Ajax draw  
The sort to fight with Hector. Among ourselves  
Give him allowance for the better man;  
For that will physic the great Myrmidon,  
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
His crest, that prouder than blue Iris bends.  
If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,  
We'll dress him up in voices; if he fail,  
Yet go we under our opinion still  
That we have better men. But, hit or miss,  
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes-  
Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.  
NESTOR. Now, Ulysses, I begin to relish thy advice;  
And I will give a taste thereof forthwith  
To Agamemnon. Go we to him straight.  
Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone  
Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 'twere their bone.

Exeunt

## ACT II. SCENE 1. The Grecian camp

Enter Ajax and THERSITES

AJAX. Thersites!

THERSITES. Agamemnon-how if he had boils full, an over, generally?

AJAX. Thersites!

THERSITES. And those boils did run-say so. Did not the general run

then? Were not that a botchy core?

AJAX. Dog!

THERSITES. Then there would come some matter from him; I see none now.

AJAX. Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear? Feel, then.  
[Strikes

him]

THERSITES. The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel beef-witted

lord!

AJAX. Speak, then, thou whinid'st leaven, speak. I will beat thee

into handsomeness.

THERSITES. I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness; but I

think thy horse will sooner con an oration than thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike, canst thou? A red murrain

o' thy jade's tricks!

AJAX. Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

THERSITES. Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

AJAX. The proclamation!

THERSITES. Thou art proclaim'd, a fool, I think.

AJAX. Do not, porpentine, do not; my fingers itch.

THERSITES. I would thou didst itch from head to foot and I had the

scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as

slow as another.

AJAX. I say, the proclamation.

THERSITES. Thou grumblest and railest every hour on Achilles; and

thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpina's beauty-ay, that thou bark'st at him.

AJAX. Mistress Thersites!

THERSITES. Thou shouldst strike him.

AJAX. Cobloaf!

THERSITES. He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

AJAX. You whoreson cur! [Strikes him]

THERSITES. Do, do.

AJAX. Thou stool for a witch!

THERSITES. Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! Thou hast no more

brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinico may tutor thee.

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