

УИЛЬЯМ ШЕКСПИР

THE HISTORY
OF TROILUS
AND CRESSIDA

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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 Trojan that is master of his heart,

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

PANDARUS. Will this gear ne'er be mended?

TROILUS. The Greeks are strong, and skilful to their strength,

Fierce to their skill, and to their fierceness valiant;

But I am weaker than a woman's tear,

Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,

Less valiant than the virgin in the night,

And 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;
Ourself 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 Troyan 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 attaint but he carries some stain
of

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

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

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

Argus, all eyes and no sight.

CRESSIDA. 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 neglection 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'x 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, Troyan, 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 forfend 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 Troyans 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 loathsome 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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