

Troilus and Cressida

Prologue

Enter the Prologue armed

PROLOGUE

In Troy there lies the scene. From isles of Greece
The princes orgulous, their high blood chafed,
Have to the port of Athens sent their ships,
Fraught with the ministers and instruments
Of cruel war. Sixty and nine, that wore 5
Their crownets regal, from th'Athenian bay
Put forth toward Phrygia, and their vow is made
To ransack Troy, within whose strong immures
The ravished Helen, Menelaus' queen,
With wanton Paris sleeps±±and that's the quarrel. 10
To Tenedos they come,
And the deep-drawing barques do there disgorge
Their warlike freightage; now on Dardan plains
The fresh and yet unbruiseÁd Greeks do pitch
Their brave pavilions. Priam's six-gated city±± 15
Dardan and Timbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien,
And Antenorides±±with massy staples
And corresponsive and full-filling bolts
Spar up the sons of Troy.
Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits 20
On one and other side, Trojan and Greek,
Sets all on hazard. And hither am I come,
A Prologue armed±±but not in confidence
Of author's pen or actor's voice, but suited
In like conditions as our argument±± 25
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; 30
Now, good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war.
Exit