

Troilus and Cressida

3.2

Enter Pandarus [at one door] and Troilus' man [at another door]

PANDARUS How now, where's thy master? At my cousin Cressida's?

MAN No, sir, he stays for you to conduct him thither.

Enter Troilus

PANDARUS O here he comes.±±How now, how now?

TROILUS Sirrah, walk off. 5

Exit Man

PANDARUS Have you seen my cousin?

TROILUS

No, Pandarus, I stalk about her door
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks
Staying for waftage. O be thou my Charon,
And give me swift transportance to those fields 10
Where I may wallow in the lily beds
Proposed for the deserver. O gentle Pandar,
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings
And fly with me to Cressid.

PANDARUS Walk here i'th' orchard. I'll bring her straight. 15

Exit

TROILUS

I am giddy. Expectation whirls me round.
Th'imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense. What will it be
When that the wat'ry palates taste indeed
Love's thrice-repureÁd nectar? Death, I fear me, 20
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness
For the capacity of my ruder powers.
I fear it much, and I do fear besides
That I shall lose distinction in my joys, 25
As doth a battle when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

Enter Pandarus

PANDARUS She's making her ready. She'll come straight.

You must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches
her wind so short as if she were frayed with a spirit. 30
I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest villain! She fetches her
breath as short as a new-ta'en sparrow.

Exit

TROILUS

Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom.
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse,
And all my powers do their bestowing lose, 35
Like vassalage at unawares encount'ring
The eye of majesty.

Enter Pandarus, with Cressida [veiled]

PANDARUS (to Cressida) Come, come, what need you blush?
Shame's a baby. (To Troilus) Here she is now. Swear
the oaths now to her that you have sworn to me. (To 40
Cressida) What, are you gone again? You must be
watched ere you be made tame, must you? Come your
ways, come your ways. An you draw backward, we'll
put you i'th' thills. (To Troilus) Why do you not speak
to her? (To Cressida) Come, draw this curtain, and let's 45
see your picture. [He unveils her] Alas the day! How
loath you are to offend daylight! An't were dark, you'd
close sooner. So, so. (To Troilus) Rub on, and kiss the
mistress. (They kiss) How now, a kiss in fee farm! Build
there, carpenter, the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight 50
your hearts out ere I part you. The falcon as the tercel,
for all the ducks i'th' river. Go to, go to.

TROILUS You have bereft me of all words, lady.

PANDARUS Words pay no debts; give her deeds. But she'll
bereave you o'th' deeds too, if she call your activity in 55
question. (They kiss) What, billing again? Here's `in
witness whereof the parties interchangeably'. Come in,
come in. I'll go get a fire.

Exit

CRESSIDA Will you walk in, my lord?

TROILUS O Cressida, how often have I wished me thus. 60

CRESSIDA Wished, my lord? The gods grant±±O, my lord!

TROILUS What should they grant? What makes this pretty
abruption? What too-curious dreg espies my sweet lady
in the fountain of our love?

CRESSIDA More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes. 65

TROILUS Fears make devils of cherubims; they never see truly.

CRESSIDA Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer footing than blind reason, stumbling without fear. To fear the worst oft cures the worse. 70

TROILUS O let my lady apprehend no fear. In all Cupid's pageant there is presented no monster.

CRESSIDA Nor nothing monstrous neither?

TROILUS Nothing but our undertakings, when we vow to weep seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers, thinking 75 it harder for our mistress to devise imposition enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed. This is the monstrosity in love, lady±±that the will is infinite and the execution confined; that the desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit. 80

CRESSIDA They say all lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform: vowing more than the perfection of ten, and discharging less than the tenth part of one. They that have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are 85 they not monsters?

TROILUS Are there such? Such are not we. Praise us as we are tasted; allow us as we prove. Our head shall go bare till merit crown it. No perfection in reversion shall have a praise in present. We will not name desert 90 before his birth, and being born his addition shall be humble. Few words to fair faith. Troilus shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst shall be a mock for his truth; and what truth can speak truest, not truer than Troilus. 95

CRESSIDA Will you walk in, my lord?

Enter Pandarus

PANDARUS What, blushing still? Have you not done talking yet?

CRESSIDA Well, uncle, what folly I commit I dedicate to you. 100

PANDARUS I thank you for that. If my lord get a boy of you, you'll give him me. Be true to my lord. If he flinch, chide me for it.

TROILUS (*to Cressida*) You know now your hostages: your
uncle's word and my firm faith. 105

PANDARUS Nay, I'll give my word for her too. Our kindred,
though they be long ere they are wooed, they are
constant being won. They are burrs, I can tell you:
they'll stick where they are thrown.

CRESSIDA

Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart. 110
Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day
For many weary months.

TROILUS

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

CRESSIDA

Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,
With the first glance that ever±±pardon me: 115
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.
I love you now, but till now not so much
But I might master it. In faith, I lie:
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools! 120
Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us,
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
But though I loved you well, I wooed you not±±
And yet, good faith, I wished myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege 125
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,
For in this rapture I shall surely speak
The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,
Cunning in dumbness, in my weakness draws
My soul of counsel from me. Stop my mouth. 130

TROILUS

And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.
He kisses her

PANDARUS Pretty, i' faith.

CRESSIDA (*to Troilus*)

My lord, I do beseech you pardon me.
'Twas not my purpose thus to beg a kiss.
I am ashamed. O heavens, what have I done? 135
For this time will I take my leave, my lord.

TROILUS Your leave, sweet Cressid?

PANDARUS Leave? An you take leave till tomorrow
morning±±

CRESSIDA

Pray you, content you.

TROILUS What offends you, lady? 140

CRESSIDA Sir, mine own company.

TROILUS You cannot shun yourself.

CRESSIDA Let me go and try.

I have a kind of self resides with you±±

But an unkind self, that itself will leave 145

To be another's fool. Where is my wit?

I would be gone. I speak I know not what.

TROILUS

Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

CRESSIDA

Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love,
And fell so roundly to a large confession 150

To angle for your thoughts. But you are wise,

Or else you love not±±for to be wise and love

Exceeds man's might: that dwells with gods above.

TROILUS

O that I thought it could be in a woman±±

As, if it can, I will presume in you±± 155

To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love,

To keep her constancy in plight and youth,

Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind

That doth renew swifter than blood decays;

Or that persuasion could but thus convince me 160

That my integrity and truth to you

Might be affronted with the match and weight

Of such a winnowed purity in love.

How were I then uplifted! But alas,

I am as true as truth's simplicity, 165

And simpler than the infancy of truth.

CRESSIDA

In that I'll war with you.

TROILUS

O virtuous fight,

When right with right wars who shall be most right.

True swains in love shall in the world to come

Approve their truth by Troilus. When their rhymes, 170

Full of protest, of oath and big compare,
Wants similes, truth tired with iteration±±
`As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,
As iron to adamant, as earth to th' centre'±± 175
Yet, after all comparisons of truth,
As truth's authentic author to be cited,
`As true as Troilus' shall crown up the verse
And sanctify the numbers.

CRESSIDA Prophet may you be!
If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth, 180
When time is old and hath forgot itself,
When water drops have worn the stones of Troy
And blind oblivion swallowed cities up,
And mighty states characterless are grated
To dusty nothing, yet let memory 185
From false to false among false maids in love
Upbraid my falsehood. When they've said, `as false
As air, as water, wind or sandy earth,
As fox to lamb, or wolf to heifer's calf,
Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son', 190
Yea, let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,
`As false as Cressid'.

PANDARUS Go to, a bargain made. Seal it, seal it. I'll be
the witness. Here I hold your hand; here, my cousin's.
If ever you prove false one to another, since I have 195
taken such pain to bring you together, let all pitiful
goers-between be called to the world's end after my
name: call them all panders. Let all constant men be
Troiluses, all false women Cressids, and all brokers-
between panders. Say `Amen'. 200

TROILUS Amen.

CRESSIDA Amen.

PANDARUS Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber
with a bed±±which bed, because it shall not speak of
your pretty encounters, press it to death. Away! 205

Exeunt Troilus and Cressida

And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here
Bed, chamber, pander to provide this gear.

Exit