

Troilus and Cressida

4.6

Enter Ajax armed, Achilles, Patroclus, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Ulysses, Nestor, a trumpeter, and others

AGAMEMNON

Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,
Anticipating time with starting courage.
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,
Thou dreadful Ajax, that the appall'd air
May pierce the head of the great combatant 5
And hale him hither.

AJAX Thou trumpet, there's my purse.

He gives him money

Now crack thy lungs and split thy brazen pipe.
Blow, villain, till thy sphere's bias cheek
Outswell the colic of puffed Aquilon.
Come, stretch thy chest and let thy eyes spout blood; 10
Thou blow'st for Hector.

[The trumpet sounds]

ULYSSES No trumpet answers.

ACHILLES 'Tis but early days.

AGAMEMNON

Is not yond Diomed with Calchas' daughter?

ULYSSES

'Tis he. I ken the manner of his gait. 15
He rises on the toe: that spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

Enter Diomedes and Cressida

AGAMEMNON (to Diomedes)

Is this the Lady Cressid?

DIOMEDES Even she.

AGAMEMNON

Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.
He kisses her

NESTOR (to Cressida)

Our General doth salute you with a kiss. 20

ULYSSES

Yet is the kindness but particular;

'Twere better she were kissed in general.

NESTOR

And very courtly counsel. I'll begin.

He kisses her

So much for Nestor.

ACHILLES

I'll take that winter from your lips, fair lady. 25

He kisses her

Achilles bids you welcome.

MENELAUS *(to Cressida)*

I had good argument for kissing once.

PATROCLUS

But that's no argument for kissing now;

For thus *[stepping between them]* popped Paris in his
hardiment,

And parted thus you and your argument. 30

He kisses her

ULYSSES *[aside]*

O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!

For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.

PATROCLUS *(to Cressida)*

The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine.

Patroclus kisses you.

He kisses her again

MENELAUS O this is trim.

PATROCLUS *(to Cressida)*

Paris and I kiss evermore for him. 35

MENELAUS

I'll have my kiss, sir. \pm Lady, by your leave.

CRESSIDA

In kissing do you render or receive?

[MENELAUS]

Both take and give.

CRESSIDA I'll make my match to live,

The kiss you take is better than you give.

Therefore no kiss. 40

MENELAUS

I'll give you boot: I'll give you three for one.

CRESSIDA

You are an odd man: give even or give none.

MENELAUS

An odd man, lady? Every man is odd.

CRESSIDA
 No, Paris is not±±for you know 'tis true
 That you are odd, and he is even with you. 45

MENELAUS
 You fillip me o'th' head.

CRESSIDA No, I'll be sworn.

ULYSSES
 It were no match, your nail against his horn.
 May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

CRESSIDA
 You may.

ULYSSES I do desire it.

CRESSIDA Why, beg too.

ULYSSES
 Why then, for Venus' sake, give me a kiss, 50
 When Helen is a maid again, and his±±

CRESSIDA
 I am your debtor; claim it when 'tis due.

ULYSSES
 Never's my day, and then a kiss of you.

DIOMEDES
 Lady, a word. I'll bring you to your father.
[They talk apart]

NESTOR
 A woman of quick sense.

ULYSSES Fie, fie upon her! 55
 There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip;
 Nay, her foot speaks. Her wanton spirits look out
 At every joint and motive of her body.
 O these encounterers so glib of tongue,
 That give accosting welcome ere it comes, 60
 And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
 To every ticklish reader, set them down
 For sluttish spoils of opportunity
 And daughters of the game.
[Exeunt Diomedes and Cressida]
Flourish

ALL The Trojans' trumpet. 65
*Enter all of Troy: Hector [armed], Paris, Aeneas,
 Helenus, and attendants, among them Troilus*

AGAMEMNON Yonder comes the troop.

AENEAS *[coming forward]*

Hail, all you state of Greece! What shall be done
To him that victory commands? Or do you purpose
A victor shall be known? Will you the knights
Shall to the edge of all extremity 70
Pursue each other, or shall they be divided
By any voice or order of the field?
Hector bade ask.

AGAMEMNON Which way would Hector have it?

AENEAS

He cares not; he'll obey conditions.

[ACHILLES]

'Tis done like Hector±±but securely done, 75
A little proudly, and great deal disprising
The knight opposed.

AENEAS If not Achilles, sir,
What is your name?

ACHILLES If not Achilles, nothing.

AENEAS

Therefore Achilles. But whate'er, know this:
In the extremity of great and little, 80
Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector,
The one almost as infinite as all,
The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,
And that which looks like pride is courtesy.
This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood, 85
In love whereof half Hector stays at home.
Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek
This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.

ACHILLES

A maiden battle, then? O I perceive you.

Enter Diomedes

AGAMEMNON

Here is Sir Diomed.±±Go, gentle knight, 90
Stand by our Ajax. As you and Lord Aeneas
Consent upon the order of their fight,
So be it: either to the uttermost
Or else a breath.

[Exeunt Ajax, Diomedes, Hector, and Aeneas]

The combatants being kin

Half stints their strife before their strokes begin. 95

ULYSSES They are opposed already.

AGAMEMNON

What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?

ULYSSES

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight:

They call him Troilus.

Not yet mature, yet matchless-firm of word, 100

Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue;

Not soon provoked, nor being provoked soon calmed;

His heart and hand both open and both free.

For what he has he gives; what thinks, he shows;

Yet gives he not till judgement guide his bounty, 105

Nor dignifies an impare thought with breath.

Manly as Hector but more dangerous,

For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes

To tender objects, but he in heat of action

Is more vindicative than jealous love. 110

They call him Troilus, and on him erect

A second hope as fairly built as Hector.

Thus says Aeneas, one that knows the youth

Even to his inches, and with private soul

Did in great Ilium thus translate him to me. 115

Alarum

AGAMEMNON They are in action.

NESTOR Now, Ajax, hold thine own!

TROILUS Hector, thou sleep'st! Awake thee!

AGAMEMNON

His blows are well disposed. There, Ajax!

[Exeunt]