

Troilus and Cressida

5.3

Enter Hector armed, and Andromache

ANDROMACHE

When was my lord so much ungently tempered
To stop his ears against admonishment?
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight today.

HECTOR

You train me to offend you. Get you in.
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go.

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ANDROMACHE

My dreams will sure prove ominous to the day.

HECTOR

No more, I say.

Enter Cassandra

CASSANDRA Where is my brother Hector?

ANDROMACHE

Here, sister, armed and bloody in intent.
Consort with me in loud and dear petition,
Pursue we him on knees±±for I have dreamed 10
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

CASSANDRA

O 'tis true.

HECTOR Ho! Bid my trumpet sound.

CASSANDRA

No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother.

HECTOR

Begone, I say. The gods have heard me swear.

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CASSANDRA

The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows.
They are polluted off'rings, more abhorred
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

ANDROMACHE *(to Hector)*

O, be persuaded. Do not count it holy
To hurt by being just. It is as lawful,
For we would give much, to use violent thefts,
And rob in the behalf of charity.

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CASSANDRA

It is the purpose that makes strong the vow,
But vows to every purpose must not hold.
Unarm, sweet Hector.

HECTOR Hold you still, I say. 25

Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate.
Life every man holds dear, but the dear man
Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

Enter Troilus, armed

How now, young man, mean'st thou to fight today?

ANDROMACHE *[aside]*

Cassandra, call my father to persuade. 30

Exit Cassandra

HECTOR

No, faith, young Troilus. Doff thy harness, youth.
I am today i'th' vein of chivalry.

Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,
And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.

Unarm thee, go±±and doubt thou not, brave boy, 35
I'll stand today for thee and me and Troy.

TROILUS

Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,
Which better fits a lion than a man.

HECTOR

What vice is that? Good Troilus, chide me for it.

TROILUS

When many times the captive Grecian falls 40
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
You bid them rise and live.

HECTOR O 'tis fair play.

TROILUS Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

HECTOR How now! How now! 45

TROILUS For th' love of all the gods,

Let's leave the hermit pity with our mother
And, when we have our armours buckled on,
The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,
Spur them to ruthless work, rein them from ruth. 50

HECTOR

Fie, savage, fie!

TROILUS Hector, then 'tis wars.

HECTOR

Troilus, I would not have you fight today.

TROILUS Who should withhold me?
Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars
Beck'ning with fiery truncheon my retire, 55
Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,
Their eyes o'er-gall'd with recourse of tears,
Nor you, my brother, with your true sword drawn
Opposed to hinder me, should stop my way
But by my ruin. 60

Enter Priam and Cassandra

CASSANDRA
Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast.
He is thy crutch: now if thou loose thy stay,
Thou on him leaning and all Troy on thee,
Fall all together.

PRIAM Come, Hector, come. Go back.
Thy wife hath dreamt, thy mother hath had visions, 65
Cassandra doth foresee, and I myself
Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt
To tell thee that this day is ominous.
Therefore come back.

HECTOR Aeneas is afield,
And I do stand engaged to many Greeks, 70
Even in the faith of valour, to appear
This morning to them.

PRIAM Ay, but thou shalt not go.

HECTOR *[kneeling]* I must not break my faith.
You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sire, 75
Let me not shame respect, but give me leave
To take that course, by your consent and voice,
Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.

CASSANDRA
O Priam, yield not to him.

ANDROMACHE Do not, dear father.

HECTOR
Andromache, I am offended with you. 80
Upon the love you bear me, get you in.

Exit Andromache

TROILUS
This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl
Makes all these bodements.

CASSANDRA O farewell, dear Hector.
Look how thou diest; look how thy eye turns pale;
Look how thy wounds do bleed at many vents. 85
Hark how Troy roars, how Hecuba cries out,
How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth.
Behold: distraction, frenzy, and amazement
Like witless antics one another meet,
And all cry `Hector, Hector's dead, O Hector!' 90

TROILUS Away, away!

CASSANDRA
Farewell. Yet soft: Hector, I take my leave.
Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive.
Exit

HECTOR *(to Priam)*
You are amazed, my liege, at her exclaim.
Go in and cheer the town. We'll forth and fight, 95
Do deeds of praise, and tell you them at night.

PRIAM
Farewell. The gods with safety stand about thee.
Exeunt Priam and Hector severally. Alarum

TROILUS
They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe
I come to lose my arm or win my sleeve.
Enter Pandarus

PANDARUS Do you hear, my lord, do you hear? 100

TROILUS What now?

PANDARUS Here's a letter come from yon poor girl.

TROILUS Let me read.

Troilus reads the letter

PANDARUS A whoreson phthisic, a whoreson rascally
phthisic so troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this 105
girl, and what one thing, what another, that I shall
leave you one o' these days. And I have a rheum in
mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones that
unless a man were cursed I cannot tell what to think
on't.±±What says she there? 110

TROILUS *(tearing the letter)*
Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart.
Th'effect doth operate another way.
Go, wind, to wind: there turn and change together.

My love with words and errors still she feeds,
But edifies another with her deeds.

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PANDARUS Why, but hear you±±

TROILUS

Hence, broker-lackey! Ignomy and shame
Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name.

Exeunt severally