*Cut it out—and write! Troilus & Cressida, 1.1*

Enter Pandarus and Troilus.

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 skilless as unpracticed 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 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 the oven, and the baking. Nay, you must stay the cooling too, or you may chance 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! “When she comes”? When is she thence?

PANDARUS

Well, she looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw her look, or any woman else.

TROILUS

I was about to tell thee: when my heart,

As wedgèd with a sigh, would rive in twain,

Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,

I have, as when the sun doth light a-scorn,

Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile;

But sorrow that is couched 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 drowned,

Reply not in how many fathoms deep

They lie indrenched. 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;

Handiest 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 plowman. 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 labor for my travail, ill thought on of her, and ill thought on of you; gone between and between, but small thanks for my labor.

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 o’ 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.

He exits