

Troilus and Cressida

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SCENE I. Troy. A street.

Enter, from one side, AENEAS, and Servant with a torch; from the other, PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES, and others, with torches

PARIS

See, ho! who is that there?

DEIPHOBUS

It is the Lord Aeneas.

AENEAS

Is the prince there in person?
Had I so good occasion to lie long
As you, prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business
Should rob my bed-mate of my company.

DIOMEDES

That's my mind too. Good morrow, Lord Aeneas.

PARIS

A valiant Greek, Aeneas,--take his hand,--
Witness the process of your speech, wherein
You told how Diomed, a whole week by days,
Did haunt you in the field.

AENEAS

Health to you, valiant sir,
During all question of the gentle truce;
But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance
As heart can think or courage execute.

DIOMEDES

The one and other Diomed embraces.
Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health!
But when contention and occasion meet,
By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life
With all my force, pursuit and policy.

AENEAS

And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly
With his face backward. In humane gentleness,
Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,
Welcome, indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,
No man alive can love in such a sort
The thing he means to kill more excellently.

DIOMEDES

We sympathize: Jove, let Aeneas live,
If to my sword his fate be not the glory,
A thousand complete courses of the sun!
But, in mine emulous honour, let him die,
With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow!

AENEAS

We know each other well.

DIOMEDES

We do; and long to know each other worse.

PARIS

This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,
The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.
What business, lord, so early?

AENEAS

I was sent for to the king; but why, I know not.

PARIS

His purpose meets you: 'twas to bring this Greek
To Calchas' house, and there to render him,
For the enfreed Antenor, the fair Cressid:
Let's have your company, or, if you please,
Haste there before us: I constantly do think--
Or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge--
My brother Troilus lodges there to-night:
Rouse him and give him note of our approach.
With the whole quality wherefore: I fear
We shall be much unwelcome.

AENEAS

That I assure you:
Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece
Than Cressid borne from Troy.

PARIS

There is no help;
The bitter disposition of the time
Will have it so. On, lord; we'll follow you.

AENEAS

Good morrow, all.

Exit with Servant

PARIS

And tell me, noble Diomed, faith, tell me true,
Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship,
Who, in your thoughts, merits fair Helen best,
Myself or Menelaus?

DIOMEDES

Both alike:
He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,
Not making any scruple of her soilure,
With such a hell of pain and world of charge,
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,
Not palating the taste of her dishonour,
With such a costly loss of wealth and friends:
He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up
The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;
You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins
Are pleased to breed out your inheritors:
Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more;
But he as he, the heavier for a whore.

PARIS

You are too bitter to your countrywoman.

DIOMEDES

She's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris:
For every false drop in her bawdy veins
A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple
Of her contaminated carrion weight,
A Trojan hath been slain: since she could speak,
She hath not given so many good words breath
As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.

PARIS

Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,
Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy:
But we in silence hold this virtue well,

We'll but commend what we intend to sell.
Here lies our way.

Exeunt

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