

# Troilus and Cressida

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## SCENE I. The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.

*Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

### ACHILLES

I'll heat his blood with Greekish wine to-night,  
Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow.  
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

### PATROCLUS

Here comes Thersites.

*Enter THERSITES*

### ACHILLES

How now, thou core of envy!  
Thou crusty batch of nature, what's the news?

### THERSITES

Why, thou picture of what thou seemest, and idol  
of idiot worshippers, here's a letter for thee.

### ACHILLES

From whence, fragment?

### THERSITES

Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

### PATROCLUS

Who keeps the tent now?

### THERSITES

The surgeon's box, or the patient's wound.

### PATROCLUS

Well said, adversity! and what need these tricks?

### THERSITES

Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk:  
thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.

### **PATROCLUS**

Male varlet, you rogue! what's that?

### **THERSITES**

Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases  
of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs,  
loads o' gravel i' the back, lethargies, cold  
palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing  
lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas,  
limekilns i' the palm, incurable bone-ache, and the  
rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take  
again such preposterous discoveries!

### **PATROCLUS**

Why thou damnable box of envy, thou, what meanest  
thou to curse thus?

### **THERSITES**

Do I curse thee?

### **PATROCLUS**

Why no, you ruinous butt, you whoreson  
indistinguishable cur, no.

### **THERSITES**

No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle  
immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green sarcenet  
flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's  
purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered  
with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!

### **PATROCLUS**

Out, gall!

### **THERSITES**

Finch-egg!

### **ACHILLES**

My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite  
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.  
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,

A token from her daughter, my fair love,  
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep  
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:  
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;  
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.  
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent:  
This night in banqueting must all be spent.  
Away, Patroclus!

*Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

## **THERSITES**

With too much blood and too little brain, these two  
may run mad; but, if with too much brain and too  
little blood they do, I'll be a curer of madmen.  
Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one  
that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as  
earwax: and the goodly transformation of Jupiter  
there, his brother, the bull,--the primitive statue,  
and oblique memorial of cuckolds; a thrifty  
shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's  
leg,--to what form but that he is, should wit larded  
with malice and malice forced with wit turn him to?  
To an ass, were nothing; he is both ass and ox: to  
an ox, were nothing; he is both ox and ass. To be a  
dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an  
owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would  
not care; but to be Menelaus, I would conspire  
against destiny. Ask me not, what I would be, if I  
were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse  
of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus! Hey-day!  
spirits and fires!

*Enter HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, MENELAUS, and DIOMEDES,  
with lights*

## **AGAMEMNON**

We go wrong, we go wrong.

## **AJAX**

No, yonder 'tis;  
There, where we see the lights.

## **HECTOR**

I trouble you.

## **AJAX**

No, not a whit.

## **ULYSSES**

Here comes himself to guide you.

*Re-enter ACHILLES*

## **ACHILLES**

Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, princes all.

## **AGAMEMNON**

So now, fair prince of Troy, I bid good night.  
Ajax commands the guard to tend on you.

## **HECTOR**

Thanks and good night to the Greeks' general.

## **MENELAUS**

Good night, my lord.

## **HECTOR**

Good night, sweet lord Menelaus.

## **THERSITES**

Sweet draught: 'sweet' quoth 'a! sweet sink,  
sweet sewer.

## **ACHILLES**

Good night and welcome, both at once, to those  
That go or tarry.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Good night.

*Exeunt AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS*

## **ACHILLES**

Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomed,  
Keep Hector company an hour or two.

## **DIOMEDES**

I cannot, lord; I have important business,  
The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector.

## HECTOR

Give me your hand.

## ULYSSES

[Aside to TROILUS] Follow his torch; he goes to Calchas' tent:  
I'll keep you company.

## TROILUS

Sweet sir, you honour me.

## HECTOR

And so, good night.

*Exit DIOMEDES; ULYSSES and TROILUS following*

## ACHILLES

Come, come, enter my tent.

*Exeunt ACHILLES, HECTOR, AJAX, and NESTOR*

## THERSITES

That same Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he leers than I will a serpent when he hisses: he will spend his mouth, and promise, like Brabblers the hound: but when he performs, astronomers foretell it; it is prodigious, there will come some change; the sun borrows of the moon, when Diomed keeps his word. I will rather leave to see Hector, than not to dog him: they say he keeps a Trojan drab, and uses the traitor Calchas' tent: I'll after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets!

*Exit*