

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-63626-2 - The Testament of Cresseid
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 Excerpt
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THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID

ANE doolie sessoun to ane cairfull dyte
 Suld correspond, and be equivalent;
 Richt sa it wes quhen I began to wryte
 This tragedie, the wedder richt fervent,
 Quhen Aries in middis of the Lent,
 Schouris of haill can fra the North discend,
 That scantlie fra the cauld I nicht defend.

Yit nevertheles within myne oratur
 I stude, quhen Titan had his bemis bricht
 Withdrawin doun, and sylit under cure,
 And fair Venus, the bewtie of the nicht,
 Uprais, and set unto the west full richt
 Hir goldin face, in oppositioun
 Of god Phebus direct descending doun.

Throwout the glas hir bemis brast sa fair,
 That I nicht se on everie syde me by,
 The northin wind had purifyit the air,
 And sched the mistie cloudis fra the sky;
 The froist freisit, the blastis bitterly
 Fra Pole Artick come quhisling loud and schill,
 And causit me remufe aganis my will.

fervent, stormy. *can*, caused. *sylit*, concealed.

For I traistit that Venus, luifis quene,
 To quhome sum tyme I hecht obedience,
 My saidit hart of lufe scho wald mak grene;
 And therupon, with humbill reverence,
 I thoct to pray hir hie magnificence;
 Bot for greit cald as than I lattit was,
 And in my chalmer to the fyre can pas.

Thocht lufe be hait, yit in ane man of age
 It kendillis nocht sa sone as in youtheid,
 Of quhome the blude is flowing in ane rage,
 And in the auld the curage doif and deid;
 Of quhilk the fire outward is best remeid,
 To help be phisike quhair that nature faillit
 I am expert, for baith I have assailit.

I mend the fyre, and beikit me about,
 Than tuik ane drink my spreitis to comfort,
 And armit me weill fra the cauld thairout;
 To cut the winter nicht, and mak it schort,
 I tuik ane Quair, and left all uther sport,
 Writtin be worthie Chaucer glorious,
 Of fair Cresseid and lustie Troylus.

can, did. *oif*, dull. *beikit*, warmed.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID 3

And thair I fand, efter that Diomeid
 Ressavit had that Lady bricht of hew,
 How Troylus neir out of wit abraid,
 And weipit soir, with visage paill of hew;
 For quhilk wanhope his teiris can renew,
 Quhill Esperus rejoisit him agane:
 Thus quhyle in joy he levit, quhile in pane.

Of hir behest he had greit comforting,
 Traisting to Troy that scho suld mak retour,
 Quhilk he desyrit maist of eirdly thing;
 For quhy? scho was his only paramour:
 Bot quhen he saw passit baith day and hour
 Of hir ganecome, than sorrow can oppres
 His wofull hart, in cair and hevines.

Of his distres me neidis nocht reheirs,
 For worthie Chauceir, in the samin buik,
 In gudelic termis, and in joly veirs,
 Compylit hes his cairis, quha will luik.
 To brek my sleip ane uther quair I tuik,
 In quhilk I fand the fatall destenie
 Of fair Cresseid, that endit wretchitlie.

wanhope, despair.

4

HENRYSON

Quha wait, gif all that Chauceir wrait was trew?
 Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun
 Be authoreist, or fenyeit of the new,
 Be sum Poeit, throw his inventioun
 Maid to report the Lamentatioun
 And wofull end of this lustie Cresseid;
 And quhat distres scho thoillit, and quhat deid!

Quhen Diomed had all his appetyte,
 And mair, fulfillit of this fair Ladie,
 Upon ane uther he set his hail delyte,
 And send to hir ane lybell of repudie
 And hir excludit fra his companie.
 Than desolait scho walkit up and doun,
 And, sum men sayis, in to the Court commoun.

O, fair Cresseid! the floure and *A per se*
 Of Troy and Grece, how was thow fortunait!
 To change in filth all thy feminitie,
 And be with fleschelic lust sa maculait,
 And go amang the Greikis air and lait,
 Sa giglotlike, takand thy foull plesance;
 I have pietie thow suld fall sic mischance!

wait, knows. *thoillit*, suffered. *deid*, death.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID 5

Yit nevertheles, quhat ever men deme or say
 In scornfull langage of thy brukkilnes,
 I sall excuse, als far furth as may,
 Thy womanheid, thy wisdome, and fairnes;
 The quhilk Fortoun hes put to sic distres
 As hir pleisit, and na thing throw the gilt
 Of thee, throw wickit langage to be spilt.

This fair Lady, in this wyse destitute
 Of all comfort and consolatioun,
 Richt privelie but fellowschip, on fute
 Disagysit passit far out of the toun
 Ane myle or twa, unto ane mansioun,
 Beildit full gay, quhair hir father Calchas
 Quhilk than amang the Greikis dwelland was.

Quhan he hir saw, the caus he can inquire
 Of hir cuming? Scho said, siching full soir,
 'Fra Diomeid had gottin his desyre
 He wox werie, and wald of me no moir.'
 Quod Calchas, 'Douchter, weip thow not thairfoir,
 Peraventure all cummis for the best,
 Welcum to me, thow art full deir ane gest.'

brukkilnes, changeableness. *but*, without.

6

HENRYSON

This auld Calchas, efter the law was tho,
 Wes keeper of the tempill as ane preist
 In quhilk Venus and hir sone Cupido
 War honourit, and his chalmer was thame neist,
 To quhilk Cresseid, with baill aneuch in breist,
 Usit to pas, hir prayeris for to say;
 Quhill at the last, upon ane solempne day,

As custome was, the pepill far and neir,
 Befoir the none, unto the tempill went
 With sacrifice devoit in thair maneir:
 But still Cresseid, hevie in hir intent,
 In to the kirk wald not hir self present,
 For givin of the pepill ony deming,
 Of hir expuls fra Diomeid the king;

Bot past into ane secreit orature,
 Quhair scho nicht weip hir wofull desteny:
 Behind hir bak scho cloisit fast the dure,
 And on hir kneis bair fell down in hy,
 Upon Venus and Cupide angerly
 Scho cryit out, and said on this same wyse,
 ‘Allace! that ever I maid yow sacrifice.

neist, next. *in hy*, in haste.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID 7

'Ye gave me anis ane devine responsaill,
 That I suld be the flour of luif in Troy,
 Now am I maid an unworthie outwaill,
 And all in cair translatit is my joy,
 Quha sall me gyde? quha sall me now convoy,
 Sen I fra Diomeid, and nobill Troylus,
 Am clene excludit, as abject odious?

'O fals Cupide, is nane to wyte bot thow,
 And thy mother, of lufe the blind Goddes!
 Ye causit me always understand and trow
 The seid of lufe was sawin in my face,
 And ay grew grene throw your supplie and grace.
 Bot now, allace! that seid with froist is slane,
 And I fra luifferis left, and all forlane.'

Quhen this was said, doun in ane extasie
 Ravischit in spreit, intill ane dreame scho fell,
 And be apperance hard quhair scho did ly
 Cupide the king ringand ane silver bell,
 Quhilk men nicht heir fra hevin unto hell;
 At quhais sound befoir Cupide appeiris
 The sevin Planetis discending fra thair spheiris,

outwaill, outcast. *wyte*, blame.

8

HENRYSON

Quhilk hes power of all thing generabill
 To reull and steir be thair greit influence,
 Wedder and wind, and coursis variabill:
 And first of all Saturne gave his sentence,
 Quhilk gave to Cupide litill reverence,
 Bot as ane busteous churle on his maneir,
 Come crabitlie with auster luik and cheir.

His face frosnit, his lyre was lyke the leid,
 His teith chatterit, and cheverit with the chin,
 His ene drowpit, how, sonkin in his heid,
 Out of his nois the meldrop fast can rin,
 With lippis bla, and cheikis leine and thin,
 The iceschoklis that fra his hair down hang,
 Was wonder greit, and as ane speir als lang.

Atouir his belt his lyart lokkis lay
 Felterit unfair, ovirfret with froistis hoir,
 His garmound and his gyis full gay of gray,
 His widderit weid fra him the wind out woir,
 Ane busteous bow within his hand he boir,
 Under his girdill ane flasche of felloun flanis,
 Fedderit with ice, and heidit with hailstanis.

busteous, boisterous. *lyre*, complexion. *meldrop*, moisture.
lyart, grey. *Felterit*, entangled. *flasche*, sheaf.
felloun, sharp. *flanis*, arrows.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESSEID 9

Than Juppiter richt fair and amiabill,
 God of the starnis in the firmament,
 And nureis to all thing generabill,
 Fra his father Saturne far different,
 With burelie face, and browis bricht and brent,
 Upon his heid ane garland wonder gay
 Of flouris fair, as it had bene in May.

His voice was cleir, as cristall wer his ene,
 As goldin wyre sa glitterand was his hair,
 His garmound and his gyis full gay of grene,
 With golden listis gilt on everie gair,
 Ane burelie brand about his middill bair,
 In his right hand he had ane groundin speir,
 Of his father the wraith fra us to weir.

Nixt efter him come Mars the god of ire,
 Of strife, debait, and all dissensioun,
 To chide and fecht, als feirs as ony fyre,
 In hard harnes, hewmound, and habirgeoun,
 And on his hanche ane roustie fell fachioun,
 And in his hand he had ane roustie sword,
 Wrything his face, with mony angrie word.

listis, borders. *hewmound*, helmet.

10 HENRYSON

Schaikand his sword, befoir Cupide he come
 With reid visage, and grislie glowrand ene,
 And at his mouth ane bullar stude of fome,
 Lyke to ane bair quhetting his tuskis kene,
 Richt tuilyeour lyke, but temperance in tene,
 Ane horne he blew with mony bosteous brag,
 Quhilk all this warld with weir hes maid to wag.

Than fair Phebus, lanterne and lamp of licht
 Of man and beist, baith frute and flourisching,
 Tender nureis, and banischer of nicht,
 And of the warld causing be his moving
 And influence lyfe in all eirdlie thing,
 Without comfort of quhome, of force to nocht
 Must all ga die that in this warld is wrocht.

As king royall he raid upon his chair,
 The quhilk Phaeton gydit sum tyme unricht,
 The brichtness of his face, quhen it was bair,
 Nane nicht behald for peirsing of his sicht;
 This goldin cart with fyrie bemis bricht
 Four yokkit steidis, full different of hew,
 But bait or tiring throw the spheiris drew.

tuilyeour, quarreller. *tene*, wrath.