



## *Troilus and Cressida*

*Troilus and Cressida* begins with the Trojan War going on its seventh year. Troilus is King Priam's youngest son; Cressida is the daughter of Calchas, a priest of Troy. Cressida's uncle, Pandarus, encourages a romance that blossoms between the two. Meanwhile, the Greeks besieging Troy are bickering amongst themselves. The apathy in particular of Achilles toward the war is seen as damaging to the army's overall morale. When Hector issues a challenge to duel any Greek in one-on-one combat, Ulysses puts the fix in on a lottery so that Ajax is chosen; Ulysses hopes to spur the pride of Achilles by slighting him in the matter.

In the midst of this, Calchas deserts Troy for the Greek encampment. He proposes a simple barter; in exchange for telling what he knows of the Trojan forces, the Greeks will exchange a Trojan prisoner for his daughter, Cressida. Agamemnon, commander of the Greek army, agrees to this, and Cressida is soon parted from Troilus. However, Cressida seems less concerned about their separation when she meets—and flirts—with all the Greek generals. Trumpets blare, and Hector arrives to duel with Ajax. The two men battle each other to a standstill and eventually call a truce. The Trojan and Greek generals will dine together that evening at a feast.

Diomedes has been courting Cressida since her arrival in the Greek camp. While escorted by Ulysses, a heartbroken Troilus sees Cressida give Diomedes the sleeve that Troilus had given to her when she left Troy. He vows to kill Diomedes in battle, though their personal fight during the battle seems anticlimactic. During the battle, Hector slays Patroclus, which arouses the wrath of Achilles at last. Achilles encounters Hector, and—in all contempt of honor—has his men slay the warrior as he is unarmed and resting. Troy has suffered a grave defeat by the end of the day, and an enraged Troilus hurls curses at Achilles and Pandarus alike.

### *Dramatis Personae*

*Priam*, King of Troy  
*Hector*, son of Priam  
*Troilus*, son of Priam  
*Paris*, son of Priam  
*Deiphobus*, son of Priam  
*Helenus*, son of Priam  
*Margarelon*, bastard son of Priam  
*Aeneas*, Trojan commander  
*Antenor*, Trojan commander  
*Calchas*, Trojan priest  
*Pandarus*, uncle of Cressida  
*Agamemnon*, Greek general  
*Menelaus*, brother of Agamemnon  
*Achilles*, Greek commander  
*Ajax*, Greek commander  
*Ulysses*, Greek commander  
*Nestor*, Greek commander  
*Diomedes*, Greek commander  
*Patroclus*, Greek commander  
*Thersites*  
*Alexander*, servant to Cressida  
*Helen*, wife of Menelaus  
*Andromache*, wife of Hector  
*Cassandra*, daughter of Priam  
*Cressida*, daughter of Calchas  
*Servants to Troilus, Paris, and Diomedes*  
*Trojan and Greek Soldiers*