

## **Section 7 - Stanzas 66 - 76**

### **Cresseid, the Lepers and Troilus**

Throughout this section there are short questions and activities. Make sure that your answers are written in such a way that you will be able to understand these at a later date when you come to use the notes for either a critical essay or as part of your revision for the exam.

There are two things to notice about these sections; firstly, the rhyme pattern of stanza 66 reverts to the seven-line, rhyme royal and secondly, this is a narrative episode. In many ways, this can be considered the main dramatic action of the poem.

❖ Answer the following questions:

#### ***Look at Stanzas 66 and 67***

1. In stanza 66, Henryson describes Cresseid's '*drerie destenye*'.
  - i) Give three phrases from the stanza which describe Cresseid's condition.
  - ii) What is the effect of the language used by Henryson in describing Cresseid's condition?
2. The '*lipper lady*' approaches Cresseid. She appears to give Cresseid good counsel. In your own words, write down what she tells Cresseid to do.

#### ***Look at Stanzas 68 to 76***

3. Stanza 68 signals a change in focus to Troilus.
  - i) Look closely at the language used to describe Troilus in this section of the poem. In what way do the words/phrases used to describe Troilus present us with an indication of his moral standing?
  - ii) What might that moral standing be?
  - iii) Stanza 71 describes the way 'memory' works. Notice how in the previous stanzas the events are presented from Troilus' viewpoint. Why do you think Henryson includes this one-off stanza at this point in the section?

- iv) Look carefully at Stanza 72.  
What is Troilus' reaction to seeing Cresseid?
  
- v) Stanza 73 sees Troilus' leaving Cresseid.  
How does the line '*For knightlie pietie and memoriall*' fit in with your earlier ideas of Troilus' moral standards?
  
- vi) Troilus' actions are steered by powerful emotion.
  - a) What is the effect of the word '*swak*'?
  
  - b) In what way do his actions here seem contradictory with his emotion in the rest of this section?
  
- vii) When Cresseid finds out that the generous lord is Troilus, she is beside herself with grief.  
Henryson again uses alliteration to describe Cresseid's reaction.  
Give three examples and explain the effect of each.

### **Our Reading of the Character of Troilus**

The actions of Troilus can be read on three levels:

1. Troilus' generosity is an indication of his loyalty to the memory of his love for Cresseid.
  2. He is a good man and is compassionate. He embodies the 'pietie' of stanza 73.
  3. He is used symbolically by Henryson as an illustration of the morals of the poem, that is, 'duty' and 'chivalric virtue'.
- ❖ Which of the above do you find the most convincing? Or can the character of Troilus be all of these?

## **Section 7 - Stanzas 77 - 86**

### **Testament and Death of Cresseid**

In this section, Cresseid now laments her lover, Troilus and how worthy he was of her faithful love. She realises her own unworthiness and warns other lovers of how rare true love actually is.

Henryson uses alliteration once again to open Cresseid's repentance and Testament, beginning in stanza 76. This is continued throughout this section and is used to intensify Cresseid's emotional last 'scene'. In stanzas 76, 77 and 78, Henryson also uses a refrain as a lament with the repetition of:

### **'O fals Cresseid and trew knicht Troylus!'**

This increases the power of Cresseid's lament. Therefore, rather than changing the stanza form, Henryson cleverly uses another device to indicate a shift in tone.

- ❖ What other literary device does Henryson use here and what is its effect?
- ❖ Look back at Cresseid's Complaint (Stanzas 59 – 66) and your notes on the section.
  - 1) What are the similarities between the first Complaint and Cresseid's Testament (Stanzas 77 – 86)?
  - 2) What are the differences between the two?

In stanzas 81, 82 and 83, Cresseid dictates her Will, disposing of her few belongings.

- ❖ Look at these stanzas now and make a note of:
  - 1) the number of lines in her brief Testament,
  - 2) the bequests that she makes,
  - 3) the stage she has reached by the end of her life.
- ❖ Cresseid wants to leave her '*spreit...to Diane*' (stanza 82)
  - 1) As Diana is the goddess of chastity, what is the importance of this action?
  - 2) What is the symbolic statement that Henryson is making at this point?
- ❖ Note that Cresseid wants Troilus to have her ring (stanza 83)
  - 1) Why is this important to the story?
  - 2) This makes the conclusion ambiguous in respect of Troilus' part in the events. (Look at stanzas 84 and 85)  
Why? Give a reason for your answer.

## **Section 7 - Stanzas 77 - 86**

### **Testament and Death of Cresseid**

#### **Questions**

Throughout this section there are short questions. Make sure that your answers are written in such a way that you will be able to understand these at a later date when you come to use the notes for either a critical essay or as part of your revision for the exam.

#### ***Look at Stanza 77***

1. In this stanza, Cresseid speaks directly. Why do you think Henryson uses direct speech at this point in the poem?
2. a) How does Cresseid describe herself?  
b) Write down three word or phrases as examples.
3. *'O fals Cresseid and trew knicht Troylus!'*

What is the effect of the refrain in Stanza 76,77 and 78?

#### ***Look at Stanzas 78 – 80***

4. According to Cresseid, what is the difference between Troilus' conduct and her own?
5. In stanza 79 - 80, there is a change of focus in Cresseid's speech.
  - a) What is the change of focus and how is it signalled?
  - b) What is the tone of stanzas 79 – 80?
  - c) In your own words, give a brief summary of her account.
6. The last line of her Complaint in stanza 80 is important.
  - a) Who does Cresseid now accuse?
  - b) How does this differ from her previous accusations?
  - c) What is the brief '*moralitas*' (the moral conclusion) here?