The Canterbury Tales Book Summary, by Geoffrey Chaucer

by Allen Cheng


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1-Page Summary of The Canterbury Tales

Overall Summary

Chaucer introduces the pilgrims with a description of spring, and uses that as an introduction to each of the characters.

The story of the Canterbury Tales is a religious pilgrimage. The characters are all people who have come together to travel to Canterbury Cathedral. Chaucer describes each character in great detail, and this description often provides insight into their personalities. After explaining how the tale-telling contest begins, Chaucer apologizes for any harshness or rudeness that might appear in his writing; he simply wants to be as honest a narrator and use as clear, simple language as possible. He then describes how the pilgrim's journey starts with drawing straws to see who will tell the first tale—the most noble of them all happens to draw it by chance.

The knight is a storyteller. He knows all the tricks of classical rhetoric and uses many flourishes in his style. Theseus brings his wife, Hippolyta, and her sister, Emelye, back to Athens. On the way they meet weeping noblewomen who are avenged by Theseus when he conquers Creon after battle with him. Scavengers find Arcite and Palamon injured but alive after the fight. They are brought back to Athens where they're imprisoned for life due to their vows as knights.

One day, Palamon looks out the window and sees Emelye. He falls in love with her at first sight. Arcite also falls for her beauty, but they have made a pact to never let love come between them. However, this is
exactly what happens when both men fall in love with Emelye; their friendship becomes strained as well. Arcite is sent away by Theseus on the condition that he will not return to Athens under any circumstances, while Palamon escapes from prison and goes into hiding until he can amass an army of supporters so he can fight against Arcite for Emelye's hand in marriage.

Theseus builds a huge arena for the battle between Palamon and Arcite. Each knight prays to his god that he will win the hand of Emelye. Meanwhile, Emelye prays to Diana that she be chaste or find love with someone who truly desires her. The gods take each person's prayers into account, but they also understand that people interpret their messages differently. During the battle, Palamon is captured and Arcite is victorious; however, just as Arcite begins celebrating his victory lap around the arena, a fury from hell appears and scares his horse so much that it throws him off its back. He lands on his head and dies instantly. On his deathbed moments later, he forgives Palamon for capturing him during battle and says if he cannot have Emelye himself then at least allow Palamon to marry her because he loves her too much not to let her go free after all this time in prison.

Arcite dies, and the kingdom mourns. The Knight describes how Arcite's funeral took place, and then Theseus gives a speech about submitting to the will of the gods. Several years later, Palamon and Emelye wed.

The Miller interrupts the Host's order to tell a dirty joke, which is called a fabliau. The Knight's tale was interrupted for this reason because it was too long and complicated. Chaucer tells you that if you don't like dirty jokes, turn over the page.

A foolish carpenter is in love with his young wife, Alison. She has an affair with a dashing scholar from Oxford named Nicholas. They trick the carpenter into thinking that there will be a flood twice as big as Noah's flood and convince him to sleep in tubs to survive it. Meanwhile, the vain parish clerk Absolon tries to seduce Alison but she rejects his advances. Nicholas and Alison make love under the carpenter's nose while he sleeps. The tale ends with everyone laughing at the cuckolded carpenter after he crashes out of his tub during this elaborate ruse.

A carpenter is angry at the way millers treat carpenters, so he wants to tell a story about a miller. The miller in this story is fat and ugly. Two young scholars try to get back their horse that the miller stole, but they fail miserably because the carpenter planned it that way. They end up spending the night with him anyway, and one of them has sex with his daughter while another switches places on them so that they have sex with each other instead.

The Wife of Bath begins her prologue by telling the audience that she's an expert on marriage and relationships between men and women. She also provides her own interpretations of literary allusions, which makes the Pardoner get nervous about his upcoming wedding. The Wife of Bath describes how she was able to control her first three husbands because they were rich old men who were putty in her hands. Her fourth husband had affairs, but she fought back by making his life a living hell for him. Jankyn, however, is good-looking but poor and reads a book about wicked wives; he hits the wife when she tears pages out of it and punches him in return. This causes the wife to lose hearing in one ear from Jankyn's blow. While pretending to be dead for awhile after being hit by Jankyn, he becomes pliable to whatever whim comes into mind for her - so much so that he even agrees with everything that she says! The Friar interrupts their conversation as well as the Summoner's (who tries to tell a dirty joke), but the Host shoos
them away so that they can finish listening to what happens next."

The Wife of Bath tells a story about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. There was once a young knight who raped a maiden, but he was pardoned by the queen as long as he could find out what women want most from their husbands. He went to every woman in town asking them this question, but they all gave him different answers. Finally, he met an old woman who said that she would help him if he promised her his life in return. He agreed and returned to court with the old woman where all of the ladies were assembled together. The knight told them that women wanted sovereignty over their husbands, which is exactly what they wanted to hear because it's true! The old woman married him right there on the spot and transformed into a beautiful wife for him too.

The Pardoner's prologue is a literary confession. His sermons are about greed, and he himself lives in an extremely greedy way. He goes to Rome to get pardons that people will buy from him, and the gullible parishioners make offerings to these trinkets instead of saving their souls. The only thing the Pardoner cares about is getting rich.

A man tells a story about three young men who spend their days drinking and carousing. One day, they hear that one of their friends has been stabbed by a thief named Death. They pledge to kill Death and become brothers for life.

There are three rioters who meet an old man begging to die. They point him to an oak tree where Death is sitting. When they arrive, there are eight bushels of gold in the spot. One rioter says that they should wait until nightfall before transporting the gold, but another suggests that one of them go into town for provisions while they wait all day. The youngest goes into town and plots with a pharmacist for poison so he can kill his two friends when they return from getting food and treasure. He spikes their wine with the poison, but then drinks it himself and dies on the same spot as his friends.

The Pardoner tells the pilgrims that greed is evil. The Pardoner tries to sell a fake relic but gets into an argument with the Host, who calls him out on it and starts a fight.

The Host asks Chaucer for a merry tale and he replies that he can give a piece of rhyming doggerel from his childhood. The Tale of Sir Thopas is about a young knight who loves birdsong, lives in the silly-sounding “Poperyng” and dreams of an elf-queen whom he resolves to make his lady-love. However, Sir Olifaunt guards the elf-queen and they must duel. Chaucer describes Sir Thopas' clothes in great detail.

The host interrupts Chaucer and says that his poetry is terrible. He begs Chaucer to write a story with a moral, so he tells the long-winded tale of Melibee.

The Nun's Priest Tale is a beast fable that contains a moral. However, it is more complex than most beast fables because it has elements of courtly romance and mock epic as well as political satire.

A widow and her two daughters live on a small farm, and their prized possession is Chaunticleer, a fine rooster. One night, he has a nightmare about someone trying to kill him. His wife Pertelote tells him that it's just his imagination and that he shouldn't worry about it because dreams don't mean anything anyway. She also gives him some medicine for the bad dream. He doesn't listen to her advice but instead takes the medicine she gave him because he trusts her more than his own instincts. Later in the story, you find out
that this was all part of an elaborate plan to get rid of Chaunticleer so another rooster can take over as king of the barnyard and impregnate all seven of his wives with chicks who will grow up to be excellent fighters who will help protect England from invading enemies like France or Spain.

A fox comes into a chicken yard, and the cock is wary of him. The fox flirts with the rooster by complementing his singing abilities, but when Chaunticleer closes his eyes to sing for the fox, he gets attacked by it. When all of the animals in the barnyard see this happen they chase after the fox as though they are part of Jack Straw's rebellion while Chaunticleer flies up to a high tree and refuses to come down until he has learned his lesson about not trusting flatterers.

Full Summary of The Canterbury Tales

Overview

The Canterbury Tales begins with a description of the pilgrims and their reasons for traveling to Canterbury. These include the Knight, his son the Squire, a Prioress, a Second Nun, a Monk, a Friar, an unnamed Merchant (later identified as Chaucer), one of three Clerks who speak in rhyme (Chaucer), two Franklin's (a Man of Law and another named Absolon), Weaver John (John O'Nolan) and his wife Alisoun (Alice Healy-O'Nolan), Dyer Thomas (Thomas Jefferson), Carpenter Hugh (Hugh Jackman), Tapestry-Maker Nicholas (Nicholas Cage), Haberdasher Alan (Alan Rickman), Cook Robin Hood (Rob Schneider), Shipman Noah (Noah Wyle), Physician Galen (Dr. Evil from Austin Powers series, Parson William Wallace from Braveheart movie franchise, Miller Indiana Jones / Han Solo from Star Wars movies series / Batman character Bruce Wayne / Dave Chappelle's Tyrone Biggums character. The Hosts asks each pilgrim to tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two on their return trip. The Host decides which story is best by giving it points for meaningfulness and fun.

A tale about two knights who are prisoners of war in Athens. They both fall in love with Emelye, the sister of a queen. The queen is Hippolyta and the king is Theseus. Both knights escape from prison separately: Arcite escapes thanks to a friend while Palamon escapes on his own. When they meet again, they fight over Emelye but their battle is stopped by King Theseus. He sets up rules for them to duel each other for Emelye's affection one year later at an appointed time and place; meanwhile he raises armies for them both so that they can prepare themselves better before fighting each other again. Before the battle, Arcite prays to Mars (the god of war), asking him for victory in battle while Emelye prays to Diana (the goddess of hunting) that she may marry happily as well as Palamon who prays to Venus (goddess of love) so that he may have her hand in marriage instead; all three gods hear their prayers and argue amongst themselves whose prayer should be answered first—but Saturn decides which prayer will get precedence when it comes down to it during the final day of fighting between Arcite and Palamon. On this day, however, Arcite dies just after being crowned victor over Palamon—before dying though he reconciles with his rival telling him that he deserves happiness more than anyone else does including himself because even though there were many times where he was jealous or angry towards others throughout his life...he realized how lucky he really was compared with most people out there today who would kill just for something as simple as water or food if given half a chance! After hearing these words from him, Palamon marries Princess Emelie and lives happily ever after...

After the Knight finishes his story, everyone is happy with its honorable qualities. However, the Miller
insists that he will tell another tale. The Miller's Tale tells of a student named Nicholas who lives with John the carpenter and his much younger wife Alison. He falls in love with her, but so does another man named Absolon who also wants to sleep with her. Nicholas tricks John into staying in a tub on top of their house during an impending flood by telling him that they would be safer up there than below ground because Noah's Flood was coming soon and they wouldn't survive it if they were underground. While John remained in this tub on top of their house, Nicholas and Alison left to have sex while Absolon sang outside her bedroom window for a kiss from Alison before she went inside for the night; however, she pulled down her pants instead so he could kiss her arse (which he did). This humiliated Absolon even more when he returned later that night with hot iron from a blacksmith and asked for forgiveness after which Nicholas tried to do the same thing as before only this time it backfired on him since Absolon branded his backside instead (after which both men ran around town yelling "water" since water was what people thought you needed during floods at this time). When all three men ended up crashing through the floor together due to flooding caused by heavy rains outside (caused by God), everyone realized that there wasn't really any danger of Noah's Flood happening anytime soon after all!

The pilgrims laughed at the story of a dishonest miller, but Oswald the Reeve was offended, thinking that it made carpenters look bad. The Reeve's Tale tells the story of two students from Cambridge who went to a dishonest miller and were cheated. They stayed with him for the night and seduced his daughter and wife respectively. In the dark they got confused about whose bed is whose, so one student told all their secrets to another student by mistake. The wife hit her husband on head with a staff when she woke up in shock after having sex with someone else than her own husband. Both students escaped in confusion while everyone was unconscious due to being hit over head or something like that...

The Cook's Tale was intended to follow the Reeve's Tale, but this tale only exists as a fragment. Following this tale is the Man of Law's Tale, which tells the story of Constance, daughter of a Roman emperor who becomes engaged to the Sultan of Syria on the condition that he converts to Christianity. Angered by his order to convert his country from Islam, her mother assassinates her son and Constance barely escapes. She is sent on a ship that lands in Britain where she is taken in by the warden of a nearby castle and his wife, Dame Hermengild. Both soon convert to Christianity upon meeting her. A young knight fell in love with Constance but when she refused him he murdered Dame Hermengild and attempted to frame Constance. However King Alla made him swear on Bible that Constance murdered Hermengild; after swearing he had burst eyes because it was against God’s will for anyone else besides God or Jesus Christ himself break an oath sworn upon Bible (in those days people believed that swearing on Bible carried more weight than just saying something).

The Wife of Bath begins by talking about how she has been married five times. Three of her husbands were old men who let her take control while the last two were younger men, more difficult to handle. The final husband was a twenty-year-old man who refused to be dominated by his wife and read literature that said women should be submissive. When he struck her for tearing out pages from one of his books, he felt so guilty that he became completely submissive to his wife and they remained happy together. The Wife of Bath's Tale is a story about marriage dynamics in which a knight is sentenced to death for raping a young woman but spared when the queen asks him what women want most in life. He cannot answer until an old crone promises him freedom if he marries her; she tells him that women want sovereignty over their husbands, but the knight feels unsatisfied with this arrangement because it means marrying an ugly hag instead of someone young and beautiful like himself. So she tells him that either way—young or old—she will be totally obedient or dominant respectively; whichever choice makes both partners happy is
acceptable as long as there is love between them (which comes through submission).

The Friar asks to tell the next tale, and he apologizes to the Summoner because his story will expose the fraud of that profession. He tells a story about a summoner who is summoned by an old woman. The summoner offers her a bribe in order to prevent her from being excommunicated, but she believes herself to be sinless and curses him for it. As punishment for his actions, he gets thrown into hell by Satan himself.

The Summoner was angry at the Friar's Tale. He tells a short story before he begins his own tale, about a friar who went to hell and saw that there were no other friars in it. The angel with him then lifts up Satan's tail, and thousands of friars swarm out from his arsehole. This is similar to the Summoner's Tale because both are attacks on friars (one by an innkeeper). The Summoner tells us about how an innkeeper stayed with a monk for some time but didn't give him any money because he was ill and recently had lost his baby daughter. When the monk asked for donations again, the innkeeper promised him something "special" but gave him a loud fart instead.

A student who has been quiet the entire time tells a story about Walter, an Italian marquis. The people in his province object to him being single, so he decides to marry. He marries Griselde and she is very popular with everyone. However, one day when their first child was born, Walter told her that the people wanted it dead because they were unhappy with him marrying someone of lower status than them. So he took away the child and sent it to his sister's house for safe keeping. They had another baby which was also taken away in a similar manner by Walter telling Griselde that the pope demanded that he divorce her or be excommunicated from the church. She went along with this as well without any protestation or anger towards her husband even though each incident made her more miserable than before until finally she returned home only to find out that Walter had remarried and introduced his new wife as their daughter whom they thought was dead all along!

The Merchant tells a story of an unfaithful wife. The tale is about January, who's blind and elderly, but still wants to marry. He marries May despite his brother's objections. She becomes dissatisfied with their relationship and has an affair with his squire, Damian. When they're in the garden together one day, she sneaks away to have sex with him behind her husband's back because he can't see them anyway (he's blind). Pluto (god of the underworld) and Proserpina are watching them when they're having sex, so Pluto restores January's sight so that he can actually see what is going on; however, even though he sees it happening right in front of him, he doesn't believe it until May admits that she was cheating on him all along.

The Squire continues the story, but it is incomplete. The Squire's Tale begins with a mysterious knight arriving at the court of Tartary. This knight gives King Cambyuskan a mechanical horse that can transport him anywhere around the globe and return him within a day. Further, he gives Canacee, the daughter of Cambyuskan, a mirror that can discern honesty and a ring that allows her to know about herbs—how to use them for healing purposes as well as how they help animals communicate with each other. Canacee uses this ring to aid an animal who has been rejected in love by another bird; however, there are no more details on what happens next because this part of the tale ends abruptly.

A man named Arviragus has a wife named Dorigen. When he goes on an expedition, she worries that his ship will crash upon the rocks off the shore and fears for his safety. Aurelius falls in love with her but she
refuses to have an affair with him unless he can remove the rocks from the shore. She believes it's impossible so she makes this promise to Aurelius, who pays a scholar to create an illusion that removes them. Arviragus returns home and is told by Dorigen about her promise to Aurelius; however, he tells her not to fulfill it because of how much pain it would cause her. The student forgives Aurelius for any debt owed him.

A physician tells the story of Virginius, a knight in Rome who was very respected and had a beautiful daughter named Virginia. Appius, who ruled over Virginius' town, wanted to have sex with Virginia. He tried to trick her father into handing her over by saying she was his slave. However, Virginius knew that Appius only wanted to rape his daughter and gave Virginia the choice between death or dishonor (being raped). She chose death and he killed her before bringing her head back to Appius as proof that he had done so. The people were shocked at this injustice and realized they'd been tricked by Appius and Claudus (Appius' brother). They arrested them both for their crimes but then committed suicide when they realized they couldn't escape justice.

The Pardoner begins his story by revealing the secrets of his trade. He tells how he presents fake relics as real ones, and then proceeds to tell a story about three men who are searching for Death. They find an old man who says that they can find Death under a tree, but when they go there they only find money instead of death. The two men decide to kill their companion so that they can keep the money for themselves, but their plan backfires because while one is killing him the other kills himself too with poison wine. Thus all three men die because of greediness. The Pardoner finishes his tale by telling people to seek pardons from him if they want absolution, but then gets scolded into silence by the Host.

A merchant and his wife are having problems in their marriage. The wife tells a monk, who is the husband's friend, that she wants to borrow 100 francs from him. In exchange for the loan, she'll sleep with him. The monk then goes to the merchant and asks if he can borrow 100 francs from him. He promises that he will pay back the money within two weeks or else give up sleeping with his wife forever. After getting the money from both of them, they have sex together and then pay each other back their own money as promised.

The Prioress' Tale is about a young boy who was singing the Alma redemptoris, which is a song sung to praise the Virgin Mary. The Jews were angry at him for doing this and slit his throat, leaving him to die in a cesspit. His mother searched desperately for her son and found him still alive because of a grain that had been placed on his tongue by the Virgin Mary so he could speak until it was removed. After it was removed, he died and went to heaven. The story ends with lamentation over the death of such an innocent child as well as condemnation of those responsible for killing him.

Chaucer tells a few stories. The first one is about Sir Thopas, which annoys the other pilgrims. Then Chaucer tells another story called Melibee's Tale in prose (Melibee's wife, Prudence, has a longer speech than her husband). This tale is about Melibee who decides whether to go to war with his enemies or not. His wife gives him good advice and they argue for a long time over what he should do. Finally Melibee makes up his mind and chooses mercy over revenge but then he changes his mind because of his wife's pleas for forgiveness and mercy.

The Monk's Tale is not really a narrative tale, but rather an account of historical figures who have fallen from grace. These include Adam, Samson, Hercules, King Pedro of Spain and Bernabo Visconti.
Knight interrupts the Monk's Tale after he finds it boring and depressing because all the stories focus on how these people fell from grace.

The Nun's Priest's Tale is about a rooster named Chaunticleer and his wife Pertelote. One night, Chaunticleer had a dream that he was being chased by a fox. He feared that this dream would come true, but Pertelote assured him that the dream was just caused by an imbalance of his humours. However, it turned out to be prophetic when Chaunticleer really was chased down and captured by the fox – but he tricked the fox into opening its mouth so he could fly away.

Chaucer follows this with The Second Nun's Tale, which is about Saint Cecilia. She was a Christian who converted her husband and brother to Christianity during the time of the Roman empire, when Christians were persecuted. Her brother and husband are executed for their beliefs, but she survives three sword cuts during her execution before finally dying. Pope Urban declared her a saint after he heard what happened to her.

After the second nun finishes her story, a canon and his yeoman join them. The canon had heard that they were telling stories, so he wanted to listen in on their conversation. However, the yeoman keeps talking about how great his master is and then retracts it, annoying the canon. As a result of this behavior from his servant, the canon leaves. Therefore, as an act of revenge for embarrassing him in front of everyone else at dinner with all these people who are important to him socially or professionally (the pilgrims), the yeoman decides to tell a story about another person named Canon who is also not his master but was just like him: someone who makes money by deceiving people into thinking that they can duplicate gold coins using alchemy because gold is very valuable and rare; however, making duplicates of gold coins doesn't work out well for anyone involved in such transactions because there's always some kind of trickery involved which eventually gets discovered leading to disappointment among those duped by such fraudsters (Canons).

The Host tells the Cook to tell another story, but he's too drunk to do so. The Manciple therefore tells a tale about Phoebus, who was jealous of his wife and afraid that she would cheat on him. He had a crow that could speak human language and sing beautifully, which is why crows can only sing in an unpleasant tone.

The Parson tells the final tale. It is not a narrative story at all, but rather an extended sermon on sin and how to redeem oneself from it. The seven deadly sins are explained in detail with examples, as well as what is necessary for redemption. Chaucer ends the tales with a retraction asking those who were offended by the tales to blame his rough manner and lack of education while asking those who found something redeemable in the tales to give credit to Christ.

**General Prologue**

When the spring arrives, it brings with it a lot of rain. The ground is dry and barren but then the rain comes and turns everything green again. This is when people go on pilgrimages because they want to see new things and be outside in nature after being cooped up all winter long.

The narrator begins the story with a description of every pilgrim who's going on the journey. He describes
each one, starting with those who are higher in status than others.

The Knight is described first, as he's a high-ranking man. He fought in the Crusades in many countries and was always honored for his worthiness and courtesy. Everywhere he went, people talked about him because of his reputation for being outstanding or having a price on his head from all the fighting he did. The Knight wears a coarse tunic made of rough cloth that has stains from rust on his chainmail coat.

The Knight brings with him his son, The Squire. The Squire is a young man and he's in love with life. He sings and plays the flute all the time, and he has literary ambitions.

The Yeoman is also part of the Knight's entourage, and he travels with him. He has a green coat, hood and bracer (arm guard). The Yeoman can take care of arrows very well, and he carries a lot of weapons: an arrow case that holds his arrows; a sword; a buckler to protect himself from enemy attacks; and a dagger as sharp as spear. On his breastplate he wears an image of St. Christopher carrying Jesus Christ across the river on his back.

The narrator introduces the Knight now, who is the highest ranking pilgrim in social status. The narrator also mentions that he has already introduced the Prioress as well. She can sing religious songs and she speaks French fluently. She's very charitable and compassionate towards others too, especially mice caught in traps. She wears a brooch with a Latin inscription which means "Love conquers all." Her secretary is Second Nun, who accompanies her on this pilgrimage.

The Monk is a man who loves to hunt and has modern customs. He's not the bookish type, but someone who uses greyhounds to hunt hares. The monk is fat and his eyes are bright like a furnace in his head. The Friar follows him and he's also wanton and merry, though he travels around different districts begging for money from landowners. He hears confessions and gives absolution, which makes him an excellent beggar that can earn himself a farthing wherever he goes. His name is Huberd.

The Merchant is dressed in a strange outfit and sits high on his horse. He gives his opinion very seriously, but he's also good at business as a merchant. The narrator points out that the Merchant has no debt, which makes him sound suspicious. The Clerk follows the Merchant. A student of Oxford University, he prefers to have twenty books by Aristotle than rich clothes or musical instruments because he loves learning so much that he spends most of his time reading and studying. He never speaks more than necessary, and when he does speak it's short and concise with a lot of meaning packed into every word.

The man of law is a wise and dignified judge. He has been appointed by the king to be in charge of legal documents, and he can write them flawlessly. However, despite all his social standing and wealth, the Man of Law only wears a simple multi-colored coat.

A man with a beard as white as daisy travels with the Man of Law. He is sanguine (dominated by his blood) and eats a lot, especially if it's dipped in wine. His house is always full of meat pie, fish and meat, so much so that it 'snewed' in his house. He changes what he eats according to what foods are in season.

A man who works with hats, a carpenter, a weaver of tapestries and an embroiderer are described next. All of them wear the same distinctive clothing. None of these characters tell stories in the end.
A cook had been hired to boil the chicken, but he was also very good at brewing ale. The cook could roast and simmer and boil and fry, make stews and hashes, bake a pie well. He has an ulcer on his shin that causes him pain when he walks. A shipman from Dartmouth is next - tanned brown from the hot summer sun, riding upon a carthorse, wearing coarse woolen cloth that reaches to his knees. The shipman can steal wine while merchants are sleeping on board ships during trips in rough seas; he knows all the harbors between Gotland (an island off Sweden) and Cape Finistere (a peninsula in France). His shape is called 'the Maudelayne'.

A doctor of medicine is the next pilgrim described, and he's dressed in red and blue. He knows how to cure any illness by knowing what humor causes it. The doctor has apothecaries ready to send him drugs and mixtures, but he hasn't studied the Bible.

The Wife of Bath is deaf in one ear, and that's a shame. She makes the best cloth in town and wears coverchiefs worth 10 pounds each. She has been to Jerusalem, Rome and Boulogne on pilgrimage. She also has an insatiable sexual appetite, as evidenced by her 'gapped' teeth, which are traditionally associated with promiscuity. In addition to all these things she knows everything about love because she's done it so many times before!

A good religious man is described. He's poor in goods, but rich in holy thought and work. He teaches his parishioners the gospel of Christ, and he travels across his big parish to visit them all on foot with a staff in hand. The narrator believes that there is no better priest to be found anywhere because he acts first, then preaches later (or 'first he wroghte').

The Parson is accompanied by a Plowman, who doesn't tell a tale. He has been hauling dung for many years and treats his neighbors kindly. The plowman rides on a mare and wears an outfit that's loose at the waist, like what workmen wear.

A miller is a person who runs a mill. Miller's are strong, and can lift heavy things like doors off their hinges or break them by running into them with his head. He has big nostrils, carries a sword and shield at all times, and he's good at stealing corn from people to sell it back to them for three times the price.

A business agent is the next pilgrim to be described. He's a shrewd, cunning man who knows how to make money and get ahead in life. Although he's not very educated, he can outsmart even the most learned people. His description ends ominously with "he set them all at nought." The Reeve (a bailiff) is a thin man who looks like an arrow ("like a staff"). He keeps track of everything that happens on his estate and has informants everywhere. No one dares cross him because they're afraid of what he might know about them or their secrets; thus, everyone fears him as much as death itself.

The Summoner is next, his face red and pimpled. He has narrow eyes with a skin disease across his black brows. His beard (that has falling hair) and he's extremely lecherous. There is no ointment or cure for him, nor can anyone help him remove his pimples. He loves drinking wine that is as 'reed as blood', and eating leeks, onions and garlic. He knows how to trick someone into doing what he wants them to do without their knowing it was him who tricked them in the first place.

The Summoner is a noble Pardoner, his friend and companion. They are the last pilgrims described by Chaucer. He sings loudly Come hither, love to me' and has hair as yellow as wax that hangs like flaxen
from his head. He carries a wallet full of pardons in his lap which come from Rome. The Pardoner is sexually ambiguous - he has a thin, boyish voice and the narrator wonders whether he's a 'gelding or mare' (a eunuch or homosexual).

The author has described the estate (class), array (clothing) and number of pilgrims in this company. He then states that he will repeat what was told to him as closely as possible, so if the tellers use obscene language, it's not his fault.

The Host is the last member of the company described. He's an extremely fair man with bright, large eyes and a large presence. The Host welcomes everyone to his Inn and announces that they will be on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. On the way there, he decides that they should tell stories and entertain each other as much as possible until their arrival in Canterbury. Everyone consents to this plan for entertainment, so he goes on to explain how they'll proceed with it once they leave his inn behind them.

The host of the party suggests that everyone tell two stories on their way to Canterbury and two more on their return. Whoever tells the best story will be rewarded by having dinner paid for by all of the other guests. The pilgrims agree, and they also agree that the master of ceremonies (the host) will decide which story is best.

The next day, the host wakes everyone up and leads them to a stream. He tells them that they will draw straws to see who will tell the first story. The knight draws the shortest straw, so he begins telling his tale.

The Analysis

The General Prologue was probably written early in the composition of the Canterbury Tales. The Nun's Priest and the Second Nun are not described, nor does it reflect the Host's plan. For starters, only one pilgrim tells two tales on their way to Canterbury (for the Parson's Tale), while others tell only a single tale.

However, we can't rely on the General Prologue to give us a complete picture of the tales or what they mean. It gives useful suggestions, but it's not reliable and is no substitute for reading the tales themselves. The General Prologue focuses on describing each pilgrim, with details about their background as well as key details about their physical features and food preferences. This is similar to medieval portraits in words (or ekphrasis), which Chaucer may have been inspired by when writing his work.

Right away, our narrator asks the reader to look at the characters in terms of their social status. We know that this is an important factor by the fact that a knight is put first in line for storytelling duty. This gives us insight into how people were ranked back then. Still, we see all types of people: men and women from different backgrounds such as knights, parsons or wives who have been divorced multiple times.

The prologue of "The Canterbury Tales" is full of archetypes. Some characters are hypocritical, some are greedy and others are just plain funny. For example, the monk loves food too much and the Miller is always trying to get more money than he deserves. The author uses a lot of words such as 'very good' and 'perfect.'

Yet, the General Prologue gives us a lot of information about these characters. They are archetypes in
some ways because we see them again and again throughout history, but they're also real people. We can relate to their stories because we've experienced similar things. The tales themselves are told by the pilgrims, so this information is objective; it doesn't come from our narrator's voice or opinion. However, this makes it hard to distinguish between Chaucer and his characters since he doesn't use much writing license.

Geoffrey Chaucer is a poet who wrote The Canterbury Tales. He has many characters in his stories, such as the Prioress and the Pardoner. We can interpret these characters in different ways because of their descriptions. For example, we might think that he's comparing them to other people or literary works. Another interpretation would be that this narrator is providing commentary on those characters later in the book without intending for it to be so obvious.

Chaucer's voice is almost entirely absent in the Canterbury Tales. It is as if he disappears into his characters and allows them to tell their stories. That may be because Chaucer was a great writer who understood how to disappear behind his work, or it could be that this self-vanishing quality is key to understanding the Canterbury Tales and why there are pilgrims who haven't been described yet but will certainly appear later on - one of whom is Geoffrey Chaucer himself.

The Knight's Tale

In the Knight's Tale, a knight begins his tale by telling about Theseus. He married Hippolyta, queen of Amazons, and brought her to Athens after conquering her kingdom. When he returned home victorious from that battle, he saw women kneeling on the side of the road who were shrieking for pity because their husbands had been killed in battle at Thebes. Creon simply tossed all of them into one pile and refused to bury or burn them.

Theseus swore revenge against Creon, and he attacked Thebes. He defeated Creon and found two young knights, Arcite and Palamon, who were not quite dead. Theseus imprisoned them in Athens for life. They spent their time locked up in a tower until they saw Emelye in a nearby garden. Both fell immediately in love with her; each claimed that he would rather be dead than not have Emelye. They fought over her because they both called each other traitors to their countrymen.

On a day in which Pirithous, a prince and childhood friend of Theseus, had come to Athens. They knew Arcite at Thebes, and at his request set him free on the promise that he would never again be seen in Theseus' kingdom. He now had his freedom but not the ability to pursue Emelye; he lamented this cruel fate. Palamon envied Arcite since he did have access to Emelye but remained a prisoner.

(II) Two years passed and after spending two years in Thebes, one night Arcite dreamt that he saw the god Mercury standing before him, bidding him to be free of hope and care. He was supposed to go to Athens to relieve his grief.

Arcite and Palamon, both in love with Emelye, were at odds. Arcite offered his services to the court of Theseus and became a page for Emelye. He was so well liked that Theseus appointed him as his own squire. Meanwhile, Palamon had been locked up in a tower for seven years before he escaped one day and fled Athens. He wanted to hide from Arcite but accidentally revealed himself while speaking out loud.
about how much he missed Emelye's company. Arcite heard him and they made an agreement to meet again tomorrow in the same area outside of town where they would fight each other to the death over her hand in marriage.

The next day, they returned to the area and were ready for battle. At the same time, Theseus, Hippolyta (Queen of the Amazons) and Emelye went hunting in that area. They arrived just as Palamon was fighting with Arcite. Theseus stopped them from fighting because he wanted to know what happened between them. When Palamon told him that Arcite is the man who was banished (and that he has returned disguised as Philostratus), while he himself is escaped prisoner, Theseus decided to have both men killed but Queen Hippolyta begged for mercy on their behalf since they had risked death by not escaping to Thebes where she ruled before marrying Theseus; instead they remained in Athens where Emelye lived. She said it showed how much they loved her if risking death could be avoided by leaving Athens or returning home without her; therefore she asked for mercy on their behalf also because no one else would love either of them like she did after hearing their stories about why each loves Emelye so dearly despite being enemies now; finally these two are willing to fight a war against each other with one hundred knights apiece over whom will marry Emelye which should prove once and for all who deserves her hand in marriage more than anyone else ever could!

(III) Theseus used his influence to commission a stadium that was one mile in circumference for the duel between Arcite and Palamon. This stadium featured carvings and portraits of Mars, Diana and Venus. On the day of the duel, Palamon brought Lycurgus, king of Thrace, while Arcite brought Emetreus from India.

The night before the duel, Palamon prayed to Venus for solace from his pain of love. He asked her to let Arcite kill him if Arcite will marry Emelye. The statue of Venus shook, an omen that she was listening. Emelye prayed at the shrine to Diana, the goddess of chastity and virginity. She prayed that she could remain a virgin all her life and not be a man's lover or wife. She also prayed for peace between Arcite and Palamon so they can live in harmony together without fighting over her hand in marriage against their wishes. If it is destined that she should marry one of them against her will, then she wished for the one who loves her most (Arcite). The statue shed tears of blood as another omen appeared indicating it would happen soon enough as well as Diana herself appearing before Emelye telling her that either way she would eventually wed someone because it is meant to be but if forced upon by destiny then let it be Arcite whom loves more than Palamon does since he had three omens whereas only two were given to Palamon thus making him more deserving than his opponent based on sheer numbers alone; Mars waged war with Venus due to this incident but Saturn settled things down by saying both men shall get what they want yet Mars must help out his servant which is why even though he lost he still got what he wanted just like how Mars helped out his servant despite losing; so now we know why the title says "The Two Noble Kinsmen" instead of "The True Tale Of Two Noble Kinsman".

(IV) Theseus set the rules for battle. He told them that nobody would die during the fight, and if someone was wounded they could leave the battlefield. The people were happy with this decision, and both of the armies fought each other equally well. Arcite pursued Palamon viciously, while Palamon returned in kind. But Emetreus killed Palamon by stabbing him through his side with a sword. King Lycurgus tried to save Palamon but got stabbed instead, so he died as well. Then Emetreus himself was injured from an attack by one of Lycurgus' soldiers before Theseus declared that Arcite won because he had managed to kill two enemies without getting hurt himself (though it's not clear how). Venus was disappointed at this
outcome because she wanted her son to win, but then Saturn told her that Mars is now appeased and she will receive something similar later on (presumably referring to Emelye). Suddenly there was an earthquake sent by Pluto which frightened Arcite's horse enough for it to throw off Arcite and cause him to fall onto his back where he subsequently dies from being impaled on a spear or lance-like object sticking out of the ground nearby after falling off his horse when it reared up in response to said earthquake due primarily to its fear over said event occurring though also likely compounded by any number of additional factors such as whether or not said object may have been previously embedded into said ground beforehand already or otherwise situated close enough thereto such as within several feet thereof thus requiring little effort needed beyond merely having fallen backwards upon landing directly atop same following being thrown off balance/off-guard via being knocked down onto same either directly immediately following initially falling off his horse or else shortly thereafter once again either immediately following initial falling off his horse itself followed closely thereafter almost simultaneously thereupon very quickly thereafter almost instantaneously soon afterwards right after then moments later next afterward soon after eventually finally at some point even though potentially delayed slightly perhaps until possibly much later depending upon various factors including how long between first starting trying fighting against each other vs when death happened etc plus whatever time elapsed between those 2 events themselves till moment passing away occurs etc...etc..etc.) “The Knight’s Tale” ends happily ever after with Emelye marrying Palamon

Analysis: It is likely that the Knight’s Tale was written before Chaucer planned to write The Canterbury Tales as a whole. Therefore, it has the unusual status of being both a part of the tales and an independent work. However, some parts were adapted from another Italian writer whom Chaucer admired. He compressed (shortened) this story and added material heavily influenced by his philosophical hero Boethius.

The Canterbury Tales is a romance, yet Chaucer pokes fun at the traditional elements of the genre. The narrator claims to be an authoritative figure with hundreds of years worth of knowledge in his memory, but he's just another character in the story and not as reliable as he seems.

For example, the question of rank and status is immediately raised by the progression of this tale. The Knight begins not with the main characters of this tale but instead he starts at the top of society, describing Theseus's exploits in Athens, working downward until he reaches ordinary people like soldiers from Thebes.

The story also poses some very relevant questions about fate. The characters are blamed for their actions and can't control what happens to them, which is ironic considering they're praying to the gods. They're not in charge of their own fates; it's all up to Venus, Juno and Saturn.

The characters of Arcite and Palamon are virtually identical. They speak in formal, elegant laments and have no real autonomy. Emelye is also a cardboard cutout rather than a fully rounded character (compare her to the Wife of Bath). The Knight describes her as a typical fairy-tale maiden though there is an interesting twist that the suitors are imprisoned in a tower instead of her. She even first appears in a garden, which balances both purity and fertility.

Emelye is an important character in the story. Arcite and Palamon are prepared to die for her love, even though they have never met her. Theseus accepts this code of conduct and offers Emelye as a prize for the
two men, whom he previously had imprisoned and threatened with death.

The Knight's Tale follows the codes of chivalry, which are strict rules that knights must follow. Chaucer points out how ridiculous these rules can be. For example, Theseus' decision to attack Thebes because they killed his soldiers is perfectly acceptable as a form of punishment for breaking the code of chivalry; it seems quite harsh and unnecessary to modern readers.

One way of looking at the tale is that it's a parody. It shows how ridiculous masculine, chivalric codes can be. Chaucer might also be parodying the genre (romance) in which such actions are endorsed. The dramatic nature of the tales makes it difficult to pin them down to a single, univocal interpretation.

Emelye is also one of the first female characters in The Canterbury Tales. She's a stereotype, but she has her own will and doesn't want to marry either of the knights who visit her. However, since both gods and men have already decided that she'll marry a king, Emelye accepts it as that's what she was meant to do.

Like the romance genre, which is characterized by its ornate language and elaborate phrases, the Knight's story has a tendency to be over-the-top. For example, when Arcite and Palamon fight for Emily's hand in marriage, they construct an enormous coliseum where two armies battle each other. It even brings in kings from foreign countries. Other interpretations of this story are more "playn" (1464), but we can believe them because they're so extravagant that it makes it difficult to understand what exactly the author was trying to say about life through his tale.

The Miller's Tale

The Miller interrupts the Knight in order to tell a story that will top the Knights. However, he's drunk and has trouble getting his words out.

The Host tries to stop the Miller from telling his story by saying he is drunk. The Miller agrees, but says that it doesn't matter because he's going to tell his tale anyway. He starts to tell a story about how a clerk made fun of a carpenter and his wife, but the Reeve interrupts him and tells him not to talk about adulterous wives because they're sinful. However, the Miller refuses to be stopped by this argument and says that

A husband shouldn't be too curious about his wife's privacy, or her past. But before the Miller's Tale begins, our narrator interrupts it to say that he is just repeating what someone else said, who was telling a story about a miller and his wife. The narrator has no evil intentions in saying this; he must repeat everything told him by others so as not to falsify anything. So if readers find the tale offensive they can turn over the leaf and choose another one. Men should not take things seriously just for fun; find serious lessons in trivial matters.

A rich carpenter lived in Oxford, with his wife and a clerk. The clerk was an impoverished student of astrology and constellations. He was called “hende” (crafty, or cunning) Nicholas. The carpenter had recently wedded a young wife who he protected fiercely – because she was young and he old, he knew that she might be cuckolded. One day the carpenter went to Osney while Nicholas played with this young wife Alison and caught her by the queynte (genitals), telling her that he would die for love of her and
holding her hard by the hip-bones (hips). She sprang away from him, refusing to kiss him but eventually agreed to sleep with him if she could avoid being found out by their master.

Another man, Absolon, was also in love with Alison. He used to sing at her window every night and try to woo her. However, there was no point in his wooing because she loved Nicholas so much that she wouldn't even look at anyone else.

Meanwhile, Nicholas had come up with a plan. He told Alison to tell John (the carpenter) that he was ill and would be in bed all weekend until Sunday night when the carpenter sent his slave to check on him. The slave looked through the keyhole and saw Nicholas’ eyes open as if possessed, so he called for the carpenter who thought that Nicholas had seen God's secrets and gone mad. The master ordered his slave to break down the door while telling Nicholas that he was going crazy because of an interest in astrology. When they began talking, it turned out that Nicholas wasn't crazy but was actually awake during this time period due to sleep paralysis which led them both into a discussion about astrology where they discovered their shared interest in it.

Nicholas swore John to secrecy and promised to tell him about the plan. The next Monday, a flood would hit the world in less than an hour, just like Noah's flood. Nicholas told John that he was going to take refuge with his wife and clerk inside wooden barrels in the attic full of supplies (in case of floods). He said that when water came, all John had to do was cut a hole in the roof so they could float away safely.

Nicholas also said that God had told him to fill the troughs with food and water on Monday, but no one was allowed to talk. The carpenter agreed without question and went off to prepare for it.

The next day, they climbed up to the roof and prayed. The carpenter fell asleep from exhaustion. Nicholas and Alison went to bed without saying anything more than that.

Meanwhile, Absolon had learned that John was away from the house and decided to go talk with Alison. He stood at a low window which was only up to his chest height and sang for her. After he finished one song, she appeared at the window and told him that she loved someone else and threatened to throw a stone unless he left. However, if he promised to leave after kissing her once, then she would kiss him.

Alison tells Nicholas to be quiet and watch her. She unlocks the window, puts her naked ass out of it, and Absolon leans in to kiss her. He feels something rough and long-haired on Alison's backside while kissing it, so he says “Tehee!” (a humorous exclamation). Then Alison slams the window shut. Nicholas laughs at this from behind the window with Alison.

Absolon, who had moved away from the window, says "allas!" and cries like a beaten child. He arrived at don Gerveys' blacksmith shop and persuaded his friend to lend him the hot poker in the chimney. Holding it by its cold steel, Absolon returned to Alison's house and knocked on her window again while promising her that he brought a ring which his mother gave him.

Nicholas had to urinate, so he decided to make a joke about it. He pulled up the window and stuck his ass out of it for Absolon to kiss. Then, Absolon asked Alison for directions because he was blind in one eye. Nicholas then let off a huge fart that almost blinded Absolon with its smell, but he managed to brand the hot iron on Nicholas' buttock anyway.
Nicholas cried out for water, but John the carpenter thought he was referring to Noah's flood. Therefore, John cut the cord without saying a word and everything fell through the floors until it landed on the cellar floor and knocked him out.

Nicholas and Alison ran out into the street, crying for attention, while the neighbors came to see what was going on. John lay unconscious on the floor with a broken arm from his fall. He tried to explain himself but no one listened; they just laughed at him because he claimed there would be another flood like Noah's. Everyone thought he was crazy and ignored everything else that he had to say about preserving dignity or anything else.

The Miller's tale is a story that combines humor and seriousness. The tale of John the carpenter juxtaposes reality with fantasy, making it difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins. It appears to be set in an authentic Oxford, but its roots are firmly planted in fabliau tradition.

The same problem is bequeathed to the reader at the end of the tale. After John falls through his roof, we realize that Nicholas has tricked him and caused a lot of pain. He's an old man, lying unconscious on his floor with a broken arm after having destroyed his home and lost his wife because of Nicholas' trickery. Is Chaucer making fun of this serious subject or being serious? The tales as a whole are balanced between seriousness and comedy in order to entertain its readers.

The tone of the story is ambiguous. It seems to be a Christian tale, but in fact it's not. The main character John the carpenter wants to rise up into heaven when the flood comes, but instead he falls through his house and ends up in hell. This downward movement symbolizes a fall from grace – like going from being a knight to being a miller.

The Miller's Tale is a medieval story that has been told for many years. It is about two people who are in love with each other and how they both fall into sin at the end of the story. However, it can be read as an anti-type of Adam and Eve because Alison and Nicholas were also tempted by sin like Adam and Eve were before them.

The Miller's Tale is a fabliau, and it follows the rules of that genre. It's also fun to read because there are so many clever plot twists and turns within the tale. There is even religious imagery used throughout the story. The main characters could have had sex if they wanted, but instead they went through all these elaborate steps to trick each other into having sex with them. Nicholas ends up getting hurt in the end when he gets hit on his butt by an arrow from Absolon (Miller). In general, you're only as good as your last trick in a fabliau story.

In the Miller's Tale, language is used sparsely. The plot of this tale relies more on actions than words. Unlike the Knight's Tale with its long speeches, the Miller uses bodily noises and one-word exclamations to tell his story. Absolon knocks at Alison's window twice before she closes it; he then calls out "Tehee" (meaning shut up) when he realizes what has happened. Finally, Nicholas yells "Water!" as a way to indicate that something has gone terribly wrong. In general, there are many moments in which action takes precedence over words—the courtly language of the Knight becomes furtive in this tale.

Throughout the Miller's Tale, there are many examples of language being degraded. This degradation draws attention to the narrator's warning that he is only repeating what the Miller told him. The narrator
The Reeve's Tale

The Reeve's Prologue: The company laughs at the foolish story of Nicholas and Absolon. But, the narrator notes that Oswald alone is angry because he was a carpenter like John, the butt of the joke in the Miller’s Tale. The Reeve then speaks and claims that despite his age he still has cunning, which comes with age. He also says that boasting, lying anger and greed are characteristics of old men specifically. The Host interrupts this rather bitter monologue by pushing him to tell his tale if he is going to speak at all. After some hesitation on behalf of the Reeve who promises to “answere” (answer) for himself later on and make fun of someone else as well – namely the Miller -he continues saying how a carpenter was tricked by another man telling a story about it making fun out of him (the Carpenter). Therefore, he resolves to “quit” (make fun out) of this guy called Miller too!

There was a miller who lived near Cambridge. He wore ostentatious clothing and could play the bagpipes, wrestle and fish. He also carried several weapons: a cutlass in his belt, a small dagger in his pouch, and another knife in his trousers. His name was Symkyn (pronounced Simkin) and he cheated money out of King's Hall College by stealing meal and corn.

This woman was the wife of a noble man and she came from an aristocratic family. She was very proud, as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes her to be. They had a daughter who was twenty years old and a baby son named Timmy that lay in his cradle. The daughter's name is Rosemary, but she has large breasts and round buttocks, which are described as "nice" by the narrator.

Two students, John and Aleyn, went to a mill with permission from the master of their college to grind some corn. They also made sure the miller wouldn't cheat them out of any corn while they were there. While grinding their corn, the miller snuck outside and let loose one of the student's horses that was tied up nearby.

The clerks ground the corn, but their horse ran away. They were frustrated because they forgot about the corn. The miller's wife said that the horse went to a swamp with wild horses, and they followed it there. Meanwhile, the miller took half of their flour and made bread out of it without them knowing. The two clerks spent hours looking for their horse until they found him in a ditch at nightfall.

The two men returned to the mill, where they were welcomed by a warm fire and food. They told the miller that his house was small but he joked that it would seem bigger because clerks can "make a place / A mile broad of twenty foot of space." The two men stayed in the miller's home for the night and ate dinner with him.

The clerk was then given a bed in the same room as the miller. The clerk's daughter also had her own bed in that chamber. They went to sleep at midnight, after having eaten and drank alcohol. The miller snored loudly while his wife and daughter joined him shortly thereafter.

Aleyn was kept awake by John's snoring. Aleyn wanted to have sex with the miller's daughter in
retribution for corn that he felt sure the miller had stolen from them. However, John warned him not to wake up the miller. Nevertheless, Aleyne went ahead and did it anyway and achieved his goal all night long.

John was jealous that Aleyne was having sex with the miller's daughter and decided to get some of that action for himself. He took the baby's cradle from the foot of Miller's bed and placed it at his own. Shortly after this, Miller woke up to go "for a piss" (4215) and when he came back into the bedroom, he felt around in the dark for his cradle but it wasn't there. When he climbed into bed, John jumped on him and gave him a good time like never before until they heard three crows.

Aleyne left the miller's daughter in bed and went to find the stolen corn. She told him that it was under a loaf of bread, so he returned to bed with her, but couldn't find it. He then decided to try another bed as he thought there might be more than one loaf of bread on the table. When he couldn't find any loaves of bread at all, Aleyne assumed that this must have been John's (the miller) bed. So Aleyne crept into his own bed and pretended to sleep while waiting for John to wake up and leave with him.

"You liar!" the miller shouted, grabbing Aleyne by his Adam's apple and punching him in the face. Blood spilled from Aleyne's chest as he fell to the ground. The two men rolled around on the floor like fighting pigs until they landed next to a sleeping woman.

The miller's wife was afraid when she saw the clerks fighting, so she tried to wake up her husband. She thought that he could help them fight. However, her husband woke up first and tried to find a stick to help his wife. His wife found it first and hit him on his head with it. He cried out in pain because of the beating and fell down dead right there on the ground. The clerks took their horse, corn, bread and escaped from the room without anyone noticing them.

The Reeve ends his tale with a proverb that states, "One who does evil should not expect good", which is followed by God's blessing on the company.

The Reeve's Tale begins with the subject of quitting, and it plays a major role in this new story. It's different from the Knight's Tale because it takes place on a lower social status level. Also, The Miller's Tale is similar to The Reeve's Tale, but instead of being about two men and one woman like the Knight’s tale, they're both about two women who are cheating on their husbands (the knight/Miller). Finally, The Reeve's tale focuses more on realism than romance like the Knight’s tale did.

It is clear from the moment that Reeve angrily fumes among all the jollity after the Miller's Tale that he has a serious personality and does not like to be around people. There is no warmth or good humor in his tale, compared to the Miller's Tale: there are no elaborate tricks like Nicholas' elaborate (and unnecessary) plan. The Reeve narrates a brutal animal act of copulation:

After a while, the clerk jumped up. He slapped this good woman hard.

So much had she not laughed for a long time; he pricked hard and deep as if he were mad.

(4228-37)
The Reeve's Tale has a more vengeful quality than the Miller's, and we can tell that by looking at how much anger is in the story. Also, Chaucer repeats this tale twice to us, which means he must have liked it because he repeated it for us. Larry Benson thinks that The Reeve's Tale was based on two French fabliaux since there are some parallels between them and The Reeve's Tale.

The Reeve's Tale is a tale about Symkyn and his wife. The wife is not persuaded into bed, but rather just jumps on top of him. They don't speak at all during the sex scene, but are instead involved in physical actions like moving cradles around and eventually getting into a brawl with each other. It seems as if language has been replaced by action and bodily noises since the Knight's Tale where language was used to seduce a woman. Language for these characters doesn't seem to be important anymore because they're so caught up in their own lustful desires that they don't even care what words they're saying or whether or not it makes any sense; all that matters is satisfying themselves sexually.

Note that in The Reeve's Tale, the characters don't actually use words to communicate. Instead of verbal communication, they rely on objects with certain meanings. For example, the bed is used as a signpost for which bed belongs to whom. In this way, language and speaking are central to the Tales as a whole.

The two clerks speak in a Northern dialect of Middle English. Chaucer, who claims to repeat exactly the words in which someone told the tale, meticulously transcribes their dialog into the direct speech of his characters.

The miller's wife cries out, "The feend is on me falle," when the miller trips and falls onto her. This phrase highlights how ideas of falling are important in each of the tales told so far. In a more metaphorical sense, too, we can see that man's fall from paradise is replayed to some extent in the move from the romantic Knight's Tale to bawdy stories like those told by the Miller and Reeve. It is a post-lapsarian world we're presented with after this switch.

One last question is the issue of justice. Is it deserved, funny, necessary or too far? The narrator says that Symkyn is beaten even when he's unconscious at the end of the story. Do we laugh at this or are we disgusted by it? Whose side are you on: deceivers will be deceived and bad people shouldn't expect good things? But there's some complication to this because justice isn't so simple in the story; and these ideas won't just continue through Chaucer's tales but throughout his work as a whole.

The Cook's Tale

The Chef's Introduction

Roger of Ware, the Cook, is delighted with the way Symkyn was punished in the tale. He promises to tell a tale himself despite being poor. The Host gives him permission and tells Roger that his story has to be good or else he will not get paid for it.

A short man with a dark complexion and black hair, who was an excellent dancer, used to live in our city. He loved dancing so much that he would often forget about work. Whenever there was a procession in Cheapside (in London), where he lived, he would run out of his shop and dance. One day, when the man had finished his apprenticeship (was done learning how to be a merchant), his master called him and told
him that it's better to get rid of bad apples than let them spoil all the other apples.

The apprentice had his leave to go out, and he went to a friend of his who loved gambling. This man had a wife who pretended that she was selling something when she was actually having sex for money.

Thus ends the first story of The Canterbury Tales, which is intentionally left unfinished. We don't know whether Chaucer intended to finish it, or if we've lost some pages from the original manuscript. Critics argue for both possibilities.

The story of the Knight’s Tale is interesting in that it seems to have been based on a real person. This adds another layer to the Canterbury Tales, as if Chaucer populated his fictional pilgrimage with real people whom his audience would recognize. The question of whether or not something is real takes on a deeper level when we consider that other characters in the stories are also based on actual people and events. It's possible that this tale could be making fun of someone named Roger from Ware, but there's nothing concrete to prove it one way or another.

Seth Lerer has persuasively argued that Chaucer's Cook's Tale is not a complete work. There are many reasons why this could be so, but one in particular is because the story breaks off just before it gets to its climax and key point: an animal copulation scene between a prostitute and a drunken apprentice. The style of language used in the first part of the tale follows on from "The Knight's Tale", which was told with formal language; however, when we get to this section, there is no more formal language. Instead we see bodily noises (the sounds made by animals) instead of words being spoken. This makes us think that something bad will happen soon because there are no longer any words being used at all! It seems like the whole project of telling stories comes to an end with Chaucer’s Cook’s Tale.

The Man of Law's Tale

The Host realizes that the day is passing and wants to continue with the tales. He asks a lawyer, called The Man of Law, to tell his story because he's in charge.

"Host" says that he does not break agreements, and he agrees to tell a story. However, he cannot think of any great stories right now because Chaucer – who is good at meter (rhyming) – has already told all the good ones in his other works. In fact, there are only two left: Ceyx and Alcione (in The Book of the Duchess), and the Legend of Good Women. He won't tell one about wicked Canacee either because she had an incestuous relationship with her own brother.

The Man of Law speaks in prose, contrasting himself with the poet Chaucer and then tells his tale.

The prologue starts off by saying that being poor makes you do things like steal, beg or borrow for money. It also makes people jealous of their neighbors. If you're rich, on the other hand, your friends will always be around and love you. The prologue then goes on to say that he heard a story from a merchant many years ago about how he became rich and happy because he was always wealthy.

In Syria, there lived a group of wealthy merchants who traveled to Rome. After some time in Rome, they heard about the beauty and virtue of Constance, the emperor's daughter. They were amazed by her beauty
and returned to Syria to tell their king about it.

The sultan discussed with his advisors the idea of marrying Constance, but they could not find a way for it to be possible. The sultan insisted on marrying her anyway and said that he would convert to Christianity so that this would be possible. He also made sure that all of his barons were converted at the same time as well.

The sultan wanted to marry Constance, but she was already married. The emperor agreed to let them get married anyway, so they prepared for the wedding. However, Constance knew that it would be wrong and decided not to go through with the wedding.

The narrator comments that it is no wonder Constance wept on the day she was to leave her father and go live in a foreign country with a man she had never met. She must have felt sad about leaving him, as well as worried that she would not be able to fulfill Christ's commandment of being fruitful and multiplying.

She then said goodbye to her father, hoping that she could fulfill Christ’s commandment of being fruitful and multiplying by having many children.

I am just a poor woman, and I don't care if I die.

Women are born to be in slavery and suffering, and men govern them. Constance was brought to the ship against her will, but she tried to put on a brave face as she sailed away. Meanwhile, Sultan's mother knew that he would force her into this situation, so she called her advisors together and told them that they should die with her rather than renounce Islam (Mohammed’s law). Each person swore an oath of allegiance to her, and then they were baptized by the captain of the boat.

The first part of the story ends with a damning of Sultanesse, who is the root of all evil. This is because she insists on having Christians at her table.

The Christians arrived in Syria with a great and solemn crowd for the feast of the Sultan’s daughter. After many celebrations, every Christian was killed at the table while they feasted. The only survivor was Constance who had converted to Islam before her marriage to the Sultan.

The Sultan's men took Constance and put her in a ship without a rudder, telling her to sail out of Syria and back to Italy. They had given her food and clothes for the trip, so she set off on the sea. She blessed herself with Christ's cross as she prayed. The story then goes back into narrative mode again, asking why Constance was not also killed at the feast; it answers that question by saying that God saved Daniel from the lion's den because he is Christian.

The ship crashed on the shores of Northumberland. A warden from a nearby castle found Constance and gave her shelter, but she refused to reveal her identity. The couple was pagan, but soon after they secretly converted to Christianity in this heathen land where Christians had to practice their faith in secret. While walking on the beach one day, Constance came across a blind Christian who could identify her without his eyesight. This miracle converted Hermengild's husband as well to Christianity.

The warden was not the lord of the castle. Instead, it was Alla, the king of Northumberland. A young
knight influenced by Satan fell in love with Constance but she would not return his affections. He then killed her friend and placed the knife next to her so that he could frame her for a crime she didn't commit. The false knight told King Alla what happened and made him believe that Constance had done it.

The people pleaded on her behalf, unable to believe that she had committed the crime. This made the king question further into what happened. Constance fell to her knees and prayed for help, looking around for someone who could save her. The king commanded a book be brought so that Sir Gawain would swear on it that he believed she was guilty of the crime, which he did - at this point, his neck was struck by an invisible hand and both of his eyes popped out of his head like marbles from a slingshot.

A king was converted to Christianity after witnessing a miracle. He decided to marry Constance, who gave birth to Mauricius while he was away in Scotland fighting. Donegild, the knight's mother, did not approve of this wedding and plotted against them. She wrote forged letters that claimed Mauricius was foul and wicked; she even replaced Alla's letter with one ordering her banishment from the kingdom on the boat from which they came.

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When Alla returned home, he found out what had happened and killed his mother for her cruelty. But Constance was already on a ship to another land where the warden's steward tried to force himself upon her. She cried for help, but Mary came to her rescue and in the struggle that ensued, the steward fell overboard and drowned in the sea.

The senator in charge of the army that was returning from Syria met Constance, who had been on a ship. He brought her home to Rome and she stayed there for some time.

King Alla had killed his mother and was coming to Rome to repent. A senator went to pay him respect, and Constance’s son accompanied the senator on the trip.

A child stood at the feast, looking into the king's face. The senator then asked whose child he was. "He has a mother," replied the senator, but no father." He told Alla about how the child had been found and that it looked like Constance. Remembering Constance's face and seeing his son's resemblance to her, Alla left as soon as he could because he thought he was hallucinating. But later, when Alla saw Constance again, they both cried because their reunion had come true after all. They kissed many times and were blissfully happy together once more.

The Emperor allowed King Alla to dine with him, and Constance saw her father in the street. She told him who she was, and they were all very happy together.

After Constance's husband died, her son Maurice was made Emperor by the Pope. However, since this is a tale of Constance and Alla, I will focus on their story. They came to England to live in peace after being separated for many years. Sadly though, only one year later Alla passed away and Constance found herself widowed again. She then traveled to Rome at the end of the tale to praise God with her father who had raised her as his own daughter after she lost both parents early in life.

The Man of Law's Tale was a good tale, but it had some problems. The Parson then tells the Host that he...
shouldn't swear because it is blasphemy. After being mocked by the Host, he decides to tell his story and teach everyone about God's word. He promises to preach like a priest and wake up all of the people in the room with his sermon-like story. However, there will be no philosophy or law talk in this one - just preaching from him (the Parson).

The Man of Law's Prologue is a very strange beginning to the Canterbury Tales. The narrator, Chaucer, seems to be writing about himself in third person as if he were a character on the pilgrimage. He also references books that we know are real and not fictional by the same name. This blurs the line between reality and fiction for us readers because it makes us think that what we're reading is true when it isn't entirely so.

The Man of Law, then, is a lawyer who knows the law by heart and has an understanding of how it works in real life. The General Prologue tells us that he understands the common law. Carolyn Dinshaw argues that the Man of Law's head is filled with laws because he's so knowledgeable about them. She also says that this tale asserts what was accepted at the time Chaucer wrote his tales.

In the middle ages, women were a business commodity and their value was determined by how suitable they would be in marriage. In this case, Constance is sold to two different men in order to seal an important alliance between two merchants or families. The tale of Constance begins with her being traded as if she's a good that can be exchanged for goods or services. This idea of trading women like commodities is apparent when we realize that one of the storytellers heard it from another merchant who had told him about his travels across Europe and Asia Minor.

Constance serves as "goods" because she has monetary value and she remains constant throughout her travels around Europe and Asia Minor.

Dinshaw then relates the entire story to Chaucer's bibliography. He says that in the end, when the Man of Law tells a tale about incest, it is full of contradictions and Dinshaw explains why.

He promises to tell a tale in prose, but he ends up telling it in rime royal. The "po verte" Prologue seems to have only the barest and most expedient relation to the Tale itself. Most puzzling of all is that he says he won't tell a story about incest, yet his narrative has strong similarities with stories that are known for their incestuous relations...

(Carolyn Dinshaw, Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics, p.88) Margaret Schlauch suggests that in all the sources to the Man of Law's tale, Constance's father makes sexual demands upon his daughter. Dinshaw wonders whether Constance might be escaping from a father with incestuous desires. This is relevant to the idea of Constance as a mercantile pawn because...

Levi-Strauss says that, if marriage is a merchant's transaction and the social order is maintained through trading women, then forbidding incest will keep the system working. If a daughter becomes her father's sexual property rather than an asset to be traded, it breaks down the idea of woman as something to be traded on in society.

Dinshaw's interpretation is a fascinating one, and one which ties together the prologue and the tale, as well as some of the key notions explored about female identity in "The Canterbury Tales" (i.e., women
are treated like objects to be traded). It also shows how Constance was able to maintain her faith despite being abandoned by her husband. However, it fails to take into account that this story has a religious theme; therefore, it misses out on an important aspect of the story.

Yet Constance is not simply a commodity. Chaucer's tale about her also keeps her in circulation, using her story as potential profit for the tellers of tales. There's an interesting moment when she is described as "pale," like a blank piece of paper that hasn't been written on yet. The tale dresses up Constance and makes her palatable to listeners so they can exchange stories about her for profit. Remember that "text" comes from the same word as "textile" and "cloth", which were major items traded in the Middle Ages.

Perhaps the reason that Chaucer's The Man of Law's Tale is not about a lawyer, but about a man of law, is to emphasize the fact that Constance was exchanged by men for profit within the tale. Writing her story contributes to how she is represented as a feminine symbol in it. It emphasizes writing women before the next tale—the Wife of Bath’s Tale—which takes this idea several stages further.

**The Wife of Bath's Tale**

The Wife of Bath begins her tale by saying that she has had plenty of experience and doesn't need any written authorities to tell her what's right. She is going to justify her experience, even if there was no Bible in the world. She says that Christ never said not to marry more than once, and the Bible says "go forth and multiply." Solomon also had many wives, so it must be okay. The Wife continues on about how all five of her husbands have been good men, and she's excited about number six.

She then points out that Jesus never said anything about virginity being a virtue, essentially stating that we were made for sex: "they were not made for nothing."

The Wife of Bath's Prologue is a reinterpretation of the Bible. She argues that genitals are meant for urination, and nothing else. However, she says that she will use her husband to fulfill her sexual needs whenever he decides to pay his debt (to sleep with her). He is both her debtor and slave, and she would mark it on his flesh.

At this point, the Pardoner interrupts claiming that he was about to marry a wife. He says that the Wife has put him off and she should tell her tale before passing judgement on him. She starts telling a story but changes direction and stops it abruptly, silencing the Pardoner altogether.

There are three good husbands in the Wife of Bath’s tale, and two bad ones. The good ones were rich and old (and impotent), so they gave her all their land. As a result, she withheld sex from them to get what she wanted. Women can lie better than men, according to the Wife of Bath's Tale; women also steal well too. To manipulate her husbands into getting what she wants, the wife attacks them with a whole fistful of complaints about how they don't take care of her or give her enough money for clothes and other things that ladies need to live comfortably; then she throws in some Bible verses for justification as well as calling Jankin and his maid into false witness against him just for more proof that he is wrong.

The Wife also made money by claiming that if she were to sell her sexual favors, she would make more than the amount of money that her husbands spent on her. The Wife treated these three wealthy men as
though they were a source of income for her. She did this because all three men were good and old, and rich too. The fourth husband was different from the previous ones, however; he was not only a reveler but had a mistress as well as a wife. He matched some qualities with the Wife of Bath but soon died after marrying her.

The fifth husband was the cruelest to her. He would beat her viciously, but he could flatter her extremely well when he wanted sex. She loved him most because of his ability to play hard to get with her. He had been a student at Oxford and became a boarder in the home of one of the Wife's best friends, Alison. Soon after that fourth husband died, she married Jankin who was half her age.

A man named Jankin read a book called "wikked wyves" (evil wives) every night. The woman interrupted her story to say that books by men are bad and she wishes women had written them so they could have been balanced. She then continued her story: Jankin was reading the book aloud, but he never finished it because his wife would interrupt him all the time. So, one day when he was reading, she tore out three pages of the book and hit him in the face with it until he fell into the fire. He got up quickly and punched her on top of her head, knocking her to floor as if dead. When she woke up from being knocked unconscious, she said “Have you killed me? And for my land thus have you murdered me?"

After gaining control over her husband, the Wife then asked him to keep all of her land. They never argued again, and she was generous with him. At this point, the Wife says that she will tell her story.

The Summoner and the Friar are making fun of the Wife's long-windedness. The Summoner thinks friars talk too much, while the Friar is going to tell a story about a summoner who talks too much. The Host tells them both to be quiet and lets the Wife continue her tale.

The Wife of Bath's Tale is a story about King Arthur and his knights. It takes place in a time when the world was ruled by elves, who impregnate women. The Wife immediately starts to talk about friars instead of elves; she says that they are like evil spirits because they have taken over where the elves left off.

King Arthur had a knight who raped a woman and usually got the death penalty for that. However, his wife intervened and asked her husband to spare his life if he could answer the question "What do women most desire?" The knight was given one year to find out.

A knight once went on a journey to look for the answer. Some people said it was wealth, others jollity, and some status or good lovers in bed. He couldn't find an answer anywhere until he came upon twenty-four ladies dancing in a forest. As he approached them, they disappeared and were replaced by an old woman with hideous features who asked him his question. She agreed to give him the correct answer if he would do whatever she told him to do next. The knight agreed so that she could tell him what his true desire was, which turned out to be love.

When the knight and queen arrived at court, they faced each other again. The knight told her that women want to be in charge of their husbands. Then, a lady spoke up before the court and asked him to marry her. Although he was unhappy about it, there was no way for him to get out of marrying such an old woman.
The knight married the old lady secretly. The next day, they spent the night together in bed. She noticed that he wasn't happy and asked him what was wrong. He criticized her for being ugly and poor, which made her angry because she felt those things didn't matter to God. Then she gave him a choice: either have an old woman who would be faithful or a young one who might cheat on you.

A knight and his wife were arguing over who was more powerful. The wife said, "If you can't satisfy me sexually, I'll have mastery over you." The husband agreed that she had the power. She asked him to kiss her and lift up her curtain (a medieval term for a woman's dress) so he could see her face. When he did this, she transformed into a beautiful young woman with whom he lived happily ever after. A good man should be submissive to his wife in bed and give her great satisfaction or else Christ will kill him!

The Wife of Bath is one of Chaucer's most famous characters. Her voice is distinctive, loud, and aggressive. She silences the Pardoner and Friar when they interrupt her in the prologue to Canterbury Tales. Critics have argued that the Wife's story is a matter of "maistrie" (mastery) or control, but it also seems like she has no choice but to please her husband if he desires sex with someone else.

The Wife of Bath's Tale and Prologue can be treated as one monologue, even though it has two parts. The voice that the tale uses is hard to define because it inherits the issue of women being used like paper in literature (Constance was pale, like paper waiting to be written on) and develops it further.

The Wife of Bath's Tale is about the importance of text and how we interpret it. Text is important because cloth was woven from it, and there are many references to that in the story. The wife also spins a good tale, which makes her an excellent spinner of stories. However, at the end she asks him to "cast up" (pull) her veil or cover so he can see what she looks like underneath all those layers. It's hard for us to know whether this is just part of a story or something real.

The Wife represents women in her tale, and she tells the story of a woman representing another woman. The raped maiden is represented by the queen who is then represented by the lothly lady who becomes a beautiful lady: this image precedes her appearance. The Wife speaks on behalf of all women everywhere against male clerks who have written antifeminist literature that Jankin reads about wicked wives.

It is odd that the Wife, who claims to be based on experience, spends much of her prologue dealing with written sources. She criticizes clerks for doing this but she does it herself. The Wife hates text and is against anti-feminist literature but she uses both in her own speech. When the Wife burns Jankin's book, she is burning her own sources which constitutes a bizarre act of literary self-orphanage or burning one’s birth certificate.

When you notice that the Wife (whose name is Alison) has another woman as her confidant, who happens to be named Alison, there's a sense that she might be talking only to herself. Add to this the fact that she delivers almost uninterrupted monologues and you realize that in actuality, it's the voice of the wife which dominates this tale. It completely takes over.

The Wife of Bath's Tale is far more complicated than a simple feminist tale. In fact, she asks the same question herself: Who painted the lion? She refers to an old myth that a lion asked who had painted him as losing to a man in battle. Although it was painted by a man, if her story depicts women triumphing over men (and even that isn't clear), can it be dismissed just like the painting?
Perhaps. But the Wife of Bath is a woman who represents anti-feminism, and she herself is an example of how women can be manipulative and deceptive. She falls into that stereotype by being another lecherous, lying woman in a clerical tradition. And this is before you even mention that she's written by Geoffrey Chaucer, who was also a man and a clerk. So what does it mean if Chaucer wrote her? Is he disavowing feminism or endorsing the anti-feminist tradition? Or did he write about it to show us all the stereotypical arguments against feminism as fact?

The Wife of Bath is a complex character, and it's hard to figure out who she really is. Is she Chaucer himself? If so, does that mean he's a feminist? She could also be an independent woman with her own voice. The question of how we should interpret the tale is up for debate.

**The Friar's Tale**

The Friar's Prologue

The Friar compliments the Wife of Bath for her story, and then says that he will tell a story about a summoner. He does not want to offend the Summoner who travels with them, but he thinks summoners are known for their sexual exploits. The Summoner is offended by this accusation, but does not show it outwardly. A summoner's job is to issue summons from church against sinners who pay indulgences (money) in order to be forgiven for their sins; however, illicit summoners often take that money instead of giving it to the church. The Host quiets down any argument between both men and asks the Friar to begin his tale.

The Tale of a Friar

The Friar's Tale tells about an archdeacon who did what the church asked of him. He punished fornicators, witches and lechers. The punishment was most severe for those who were immoral, as they had to pay large amounts of money to the church. A summoner helped the archdeacon find these people, but he himself wasn't a good person. Friars are out of his jurisdiction; therefore they don't have to listen to him or anyone else like him. At this point in the story, a Summoner interrupts and disagrees with everything that has been said so far by the Friar. The Host allows this interruption because it is not against any rules at all (except perhaps one). The Friar continues his tale by attacking summoners even more harshly than before.

The Friar in the Summoner's Tale would only summon people who had enough money to pay for an indulgence. He would then charge them half of that amount, which was a lot of money at the time. The friar also hired prostitutes to help him out by telling him about their customers' vices and sins so he could report them to the church as well.

One day, a man was traveling to give a summons (a court order) when he met someone who claimed to be an officer of the court. The officer asked for hospitality from the traveler and they traveled together. The traveler then asked where this person lived, so that he could rob him later because he knew that his job as an officer was hated by many people. Then the officer admitted that it was common for him to extort money from others and steal their property, just like how the traveler did.
The two reveal their evil intentions to each other until the yeoman (devil) finally declares that his home is in hell. The summoner asks the yeoman how he has a human shape and why he's on earth, receiving the reply that devils are sometimes God's instruments. The devil claims that they'll meet again someday and have better evidence of hell than Dante or Virgil. The summoner suggests they continue on their way and go about their business, each taking what belongs to them.

A summoner and a priest were traveling together when they came upon a man whose cart was stuck in the mud. The carter was cursing his luck, but the summoner thought that he meant to curse God (the devil). In response, the summoner asked Satan to take all of the carter's possessions. When Satan pointed out that this is not what the carter had said, he encouraged him to pray instead for help from God. As soon as he did so, his wagon pulled itself free of its muddy prison.

A summoner (a person who summons people to appear before the archdeacon) is visiting a widow. He gives her notice to appear before the archdeacon, but she says that she's sick and can't travel there. She asks if he will represent her in front of the archdeacon, and he demands twelve pence for his services. The widow thinks this is too much money because she doesn't think she has sinned, so they argue about it until he finally takes all of her new pans away from her as payment for having cuckolded her husband (which she denies). She curses him by saying that Satan will take him tonight because hell is where summoners belong.

Analysis: The pattern of reciprocity and "quitting" is reintroduced in the Friar's and Summoner's tale. These two characters are recognizable to Chaucer's readers, as they were stock figures for Middle English audiences.

The Friar's Tale is similar to the Reeve's Tale in that it attacks a certain profession, but it goes beyond just attacking them and destroys the entire profession. The tale begins by exposing how summoners extort money from their victims. However, instead of criticizing the church system that allows this to happen, it criticizes those who represent the system and exploit its flaws for their own benefit. The main character of this story is an impersonal representation of all summoners while his fate is what all summoners deserve.

The priest's story is a funny one. When he meets the devil, he's not surprised or scared. Rather, he feels like they're colleagues and even seems to admire the devil. The narrator too looks up to the devil more than the priest does. After all, before visiting the old woman, the devil tells him that they'll be together until he leaves him alone. That may be an opportunity for redemption that the devil offers him right before visiting his last victim—but it doesn't happen in this case.

The Friar's Tale is a satire about hypocrisy. The summoner is an example of the hypocrite, and he calls for us to be humble in our religious beliefs. However, he himself was not humble at all; he was very prideful and arrogant. He got what was coming to him when Satan took him away with him. It seems like Chaucer wanted his readers to think twice before judging someone as being hypocritical or prideful because they could easily end up just like the summoner if they are not careful.

In his essay, Penn R. Szittya suggests that the Friar's Tale might be a parody of the Wife of Bath's tale. He notes such components as "the appearance of the friar riding 'under a forest syde' - in precisely the same phrase that the wife uses in her tale" and argues that these two stories are similar to each other in some way. However, I disagree with this argument and think they're not related at all.
The Friar's Tale is about the devil, who takes things that are said literally. The widow in this tale wished her husband dead, and she was punished for it by God with a demon. This shows you should think before you speak because anything can happen if you say something bad.

The Summoner's Tale

The Friar's tale is a lie. The Summoner claims that friars and devils are one in the same. He tells an anecdote to prove his point: One day, a friar was brought to hell by an angel and he asked why there weren't any other friars around. The angel told him that many millions of friars have been sent to hell, so they led him directly to Satan who had a tail as big as a ship. When the devil lifted up his tail twenty thousand friars came out from under it like bees from their hive.

A friar went to preach in a part of Yorkshire called Holderness. He begged for donations and charity from the local residents. The Friar interrupted him by calling him a liar, but was silenced by the Host.

A friar went from house to house, usually getting a meal as he did so. One day, he came upon the home of Thomas and found him ill. The friar told Thomas about the sermon that he had given at church that day (mentioning how good his interpretation was), essentially ordering a meal for himself.

A woman told a friar that her son had died two weeks before. The friar claimed he had a revelation from God about the boy's death, and said his fellow friars also had visions of this. He claimed that it was because they were poor and closest to God in spirit; then he tried to convince Thomas to give more money to the church so he could be healed of his illness.

Thomas claimed that he had indeed given “ful many a pound” to various friars, but never fared the better for it. The friar was upset that Thomas wasn't giving all of his money solely to him and pointed out to him that if you split a penny into twelve parts, each part is worthless. Continuing with his lecture, the friar told Thomas about an angry king who sentenced a knight because he thought the knight killed his partner when in fact they were just separated on their journey home. When another knight took the condemned man back to be executed, they found the knight who supposedly died alive and well along with his supposed murderer. The king then ordered both knights killed and also sentenced the third one since he didn't listen to what he said earlier.

Another king who was angry at his people was Cambyses. He had a knight killed because the knight said that drunkenness made people lose control of their reflexes. The friar then told about Cyrus, the Persian king who had a river destroyed because one of his horses drowned in it.

A friar asked for money to build a cloister. The man who was being asked this question had been annoyed by the hypocrisy of the man asking him, so he told the latter that he would give him some money but only if he agreed to split it up among his brothers and other friars.

A friar became angry when he realized that a lord couldn't divide a fart into twelve. The squire suggested using a cartwheel to solve the problem, by having each of 12 friars sit at the end of one spoke and have their nose pointed toward the center where the original farer would sit. When he farts, all of them will get some smell from it and they'll be able to share equally among themselves.
The Summoner is angry after hearing the Friar's Tale. The pious readers, who might have thought that the Friar's Tale was blasphemous, would likely be offended by the Summoner's tale. It is a bilious attack on the Friar and does not pull any punches at all in its criticism of him.

The story is about anal sex, which may be a reference to the homosexual relationship between the friar and summoner. The tale begins with a journey into Satan's anus and ends with the division of farts from Thomas' anus and that of the friar.

The Summoner's Tale is a circular story that begins and ends with the same action. The friar in the story lectures about anger management, but he then becomes angry himself. He looks like a wild boor (a type of pig). It's ironic because his lecture was supposed to help him control his anger, which it doesn't do at all.

This circularity also features in individual words. The Summoner's Tale operates on a series of clever puns. At the end of the tale, the division of the fart is a challenge, as it's an issue that involves measurement. Moreover, Jankin's vision of friars gathered at spokes is actually a parody of Pentecost where Christ ascends to heaven and apostles receive Holy Spirit. It is reworking religion entirely appropriate to friar (and Summoner) piety in question.

The most interesting pun, however, is the farting friar. He tells a tale to Thomas that's worth nothing split into twelve farthings and then gets paid for telling stories with his farting which he must split into twelve parts. The two words were likely homonyms in Middle English and the pun extends down to the fabric of the story itself.

Yet, there is an issue with the Friar's story. Is it really worth paying for? The Summoner and the Friar are telling stories that could be offensive to some people. Chaucer might have been aware of this, since he asks a question about whether or not these stories should be taken too seriously.

The Clerk's Tale

The Host tells the Clerk of Oxford to tell a story. He argues that when someone is entered into a game, they have to play by the rules of that game and not be too serious about it. The Host also says he doesn't want a high-brow story; just one told plainly.

The Clerk tells the Host that he is in charge of the company and says that he will tell a tale which was told to him by another clerk, Francis Petrarch. He praises Petrarch's poetry and rhetoric skills because they are sweet. However, before he begins his story, the Clerk warns everyone about what type of poem Petrarch wrote: it was written in a high style and exalts Italian landscape.

The Clerk's Tale

The story starts with the description of Saluzzo, a region at the base of Mount Viso in Italy. The marquis of this area was named Walter. He was noble and wise but always sought immediate pleasures rather than more worthy pastimes.
People insisted that he get married, so his lineage could continue and his son could inherit the throne. They offered to choose a noble wife for him. He agreed to marry someone, but only if they respected her as though she were an emperor's daughter no matter who she was or where she came from.

He had a wedding date set; people thanked him on their knees and went home.

A marquis, who lived in a palace not far from the poor people, saw Griselda while he was hunting. He immediately fell in love with her and decided to marry her. On their wedding day, no one knew that they would get married because Walter had not told anyone beforehand. The marquis prepared rich clothes and jewelery for Griselda so she could wear them at the wedding ceremony. Janicula was surprised when he heard that his daughter was going to be married to a marquis and therefore turned red but eventually agreed on the marriage of his daughter with the nobleman.

However, Walter wanted Griselde to agree to the marriage before he married her. So, Walter asked for a meeting with Griselde and her father. At the meeting, Walter proposed that she marry him and promised never to be cruel or unfair towards her as long as she obeyed his every order without question. She agreed and they were wed in front of everyone at court.

The marquis's servants dressed Griselde in new, expensive clothes for the wedding. She appeared as if she had been born into nobility rather than her humble origins. Her virtue and excellence became renowned throughout Saluzzo, and many other regions too. She was essentially a perfect wife – she looked like “from hevene sent” (from heaven).

(IV)

The marquis' daughter was born soon after his wife had given birth. He decided to test her, but the narrator expresses doubt about why he would do this.

The marquis told Griselde that although she was dear to him, the rest of the nobility did not like her and wanted her daughter dead. He sent Griselde's child away with a sergeant who would raise her in Bologna. Walter felt bad for his wife but did not tell her what happened to their child. Griselde silently accepted this fate and never mentioned the subject again.

(IV) Four years passed, and Griselde had another child. Walter wanted to test the boy's blood again, but he was two years old at the time. When Griselde was alone with her son for a moment, she asked him if his father treated him well. The boy replied that he did not know what it meant to be treated well or badly because he had no experience of either treatment. He said that all he knew was that when his father left home in the morning and returned at night, dinner would be served then. Griselde told her son that she loved him very much and would miss him terribly when they took him away from her.

People were starting to dislike Walter because they thought he murdered his children. However, Walter was not bothered by their disapproval and devised another test for Griselde: He ordered the Roman court to send a fake papal bull that said she had to divorce him and marry someone else. Despite this, Griselde remained steadfast in her love for Walter.

However, the marquis had secretly written a letter to Bologna ordering his brother-in-law to return with
Griselde was taken away by the count to a different location, so in order to be closer to her children she traveled miles and miles begging for permission from their father. While she was there, Walter wanted Griselde's help with planning his wedding. Her acceptance of the conditions resulted in three days after exhaustive preparation before they were married. The people finally realized how wise it was for Walter to have changed his bride because they saw all of the rich things that would accrue to him through becoming related with this wife.

Walter called Griselde into the hall to introduce her to his new wife. When he introduced them, she told him not to treat the new wife as badly as he treated her.

Walter then told Griselde that she was his wife, not the one he had just married. It turned out that Walter's new wife was actually Griselde's daughter. On hearing this, Griselde fainted and came to after a while. She hugged her children tightly and called them by name as if they were alive again. The ladies took her into another room where they dressed her in beautiful clothes fit for a queen and placed a crown on her head. They lived happily ever after until the son became king when Walter died of old age, at which point he treated his new (real) wife well like his father had done before him.

This story is not meant to be a model for wives, who would never be able to live up to Griselde's example. It does, however, teach people that they should remain faithful and patient in the face of adversity and God. This is why Petrarch wrote this story.

However, the Clerk says that it's difficult to find even one person like Griselda nowadays. If you test them, their "gold" has been mixed with so much "brass" that the coin will snap rather than withstand any pressure. That's why I'll now sing a song to help cheer everyone up, for Griselda is my role model and I want her sect (of women) to maintain its high status in society.

The story of Griselde, who was patient in the face of adversity and died in Italy, is over. Her patience is dead too. The Envoy addresses "noble wives" to be careful not to let their tongues get tied up by humility so that Chichevache (the devil) can swallow them whole. They should follow Echo's example and speak out for themselves instead of being silent like her. They should take charge and use eloquence to pierce their husband's armor with words—pretty women should show off their good looks while ugly ones spend all their husbands' money!

Notes from the Author

After the clerk had finished his story, the host swore that he'd rather lose a barrel of ale than have his wife...
hear this tale. The story is amazing and noble, but don't ask why he doesn't want her to know about it.

The story of the clerk in Chaucer's tale is actually borrowed from a book. However, the clerk fails to mention that Petrarch got it from Bocaccio's Decameron. The problem with reading this passage is that you have to figure out what it means and how it applies to your life.

The story is about a woman who was tested by her husband, but the lesson that the Clerk took from it was not what we might expect. The lesson he learned was to submit to his wife's will and grant her power over him. This sentiment contradicts the Wife of Bath's message in her tale, which also discusses female dominance.

The Clerk is not sure if the story he's telling will be well received, and he suspects that it won't. He doesn't think women should submit to their husbands like Griselde did, but rather they should try to follow her example of extreme patience. The story could be interpreted as either pro-feminist or anti-feminist depending on how you interpret it.

Petrarch's solution to the problem is that the tale isn't actually about men and women at all, but how men should relate to God. This is a perfectly reasonable interpretation, but as presented by Chaucer, Walter - cruel, testing for no obvious reason and extremely self-satisfied - does not make for a particularly attractive representative of God. Petrarch's interpretation of his own story is not an absolute one: nor is Chaucer's (it is important to note that the envoy at the very end of the tale attributes it "de Chaucer" instead of just "Clerk"). For he advises wives not to nail down their tongues, but be shrews – something which Griselde doesn't do in any way whatsoever when you consider her strength of character and humility which justifies her eventual reward.

Chaucer, Petrarch and the Wife of Bath each have their own way of interpreting the Clerk's Tale. They are all justified in their interpretations because there is enough evidence to support them. Furthermore, Chaucer does not present the story as an allegory; instead he presents it as a real life situation that has been exaggerated for effect. The details he provides make it seem more like a realistic story than an allegorical tale about man's relationship with God.

One might also note that Griselde is stripped and dressed in new clothes, as her status changes from low to high. She goes back to being a peasant after she's treated well by the lord. Her story reflects how women are seen differently depending on their situation, just like it can be interpreted in different ways based on context.

Petrarch is dead and buried. The Clerk emphasizes this at the beginning of his tale, and he also reminds us of it at the end. He makes Griselde sound like a simple-minded woman whose feelings are no longer relevant to our interpretation of this story. In fact, we have to approach this story with an open mind about gender roles in marriage because they're so complex.

The Merchant's Tale

The Prelude to the Tale of the Merchant
The merchant claims that he knows all about wailing and weeping because of his marriage. Many men have been in his position, so they know what it's like to be married. Even if a wife marries the devil himself, she will still be able to outmatch him in cruelty. The author says that there is a big difference between Griselde's patience and the cruelty of others' wives. He has only been married for two months, but he already hates every minute of it. He feels sorry for Griselde because her husband treats her so badly; however, he can't tell this story because it would make him cry too much (he cries even while telling the story). Instead, he will tell another tale about a cruel woman who was not as patient as Griselde was with her husband.

There was once a knight in Lombardy who lived nobly for sixty years before he decided to get married. He searched for prospects, but when he turned sixty, he became convinced that marriage is the best thing ever and sought out a young and beautiful wife.

The narrator then argues with Theophrastus, saying that a wife is God's gift and will last longer than any other gifts of Fortune. He goes on to say that marriage is good because many biblical figures were married.

January once decided to marry, but he was old and wanted a young wife. He sent for his friends and asked them about marriage. They discussed the pros and cons of marriage all day long. Placebo cited Solomon's advice that it is good to have a young wife, while Justinus cited Seneca's warning that an old man marrying a young woman would likely be cuckolded.

January agrees with Placebo, saying that only a cursed man would argue against marriage. He then gets ready for his wedding by choosing the woman he wants to marry. Many women pass through January's mind like images reflected in a mirror set up in the market place, but eventually he chooses one.

January called his friends to him again, and told them not to argue against his decision. He was worried about whether a man who finds perfect happiness on earth will find the same in heaven. Justinus, furious with January's foolishness, advised him that God sent married men more reason to repent than single ones, so he might get into heaven even faster if he were married.

The narrator then tells us that January married his intended, May. He had a lavish and joyous wedding ceremony. Venus, the goddess of love, laughed at all of the guests because January had become one of her knights: when tender youth has wed stooping age, there is such mirth that it cannot be written down.

At the end of the feast, men threw spices around and everyone was happy except for Damian, who was in love with Lady May. The men left and January went to bed. He drank wine and took medicine before having sex with his wife until dawn. January apologized for what he did but said that he could do whatever he wanted because she belonged to him legally. They had sex again until it got light outside, after which January ate bread and sang loudly while sitting up in bed. It is unknown how May reacted to all this since only God knows her thoughts—though she thought that sexual intercourse was useless.

 Damian was not at dinner, and the other squires told January that Damian was sick. May went to see him later, but then she found out that he had written her a letter. She decided to keep it hidden in case someone else saw it.
May was already not interested in Damian, so she replied to his letter telling him that. She took the letter to his bedroom and put it under his pillow. Damian woke up feeling much better, and he returned to serve January without complaining anymore. January had a garden with such beauty that no one could describe its art or even compare it with anything else in the world. The narrator then says that this is why only January possessed the key to this garden. He would go there during summer time with May and have sex there together – but they were both very possessive of each other which made them unhappy at times too; however, they still wrote letters back and forth as well as using secret signs between each other since they always wanted to be close despite their distance from each other due to their possessiveness over each other's love for them (January for May's love, May for January's love).

In January, May made a key to the garden in warm wax. Damian copied that key and gave it back to May on June 8th. On June 8th, January decided to go into his beautiful garden with his wife because he was persuaded by her after she sang him a song.

Damian had already entered the garden and May signaled to him to get up in a tree. At this point, Pluto and Proserpina enter into the scene; they are arguing about marriage, citing various classical sources. Pluto wants to restore January's sight so he can see what is going on behind his back; Proserpina doesn't want that because men are evil too. They both want May to have sex with Damian but only one of them wants it for different reasons.

Damian was in a tree, and May told her husband that she wanted to pick some pears. January bent over so that May could stand on his back to climb the tree, but Damian pulled up her dress and began having sex with her. Pluto saw this, restored January's sight, and he asked his wife what she was doing.

May says that she was told the best way to restore January's eyesight is by struggling with a man in a tree. January responds that she wasn't struggling, but having sex. If it's true, May argues, then her medicine isn't effective because January can't see clearly. When he claims he can see perfectly well, May rejoices and persuades him that he didn't witness her having sex with Damian. January is delighted and kisses her on the lips while hugging her tightly before stroking May's stomach as they head back to his house together.

The author then lists several things that a shrewish wife does, including lying and blabbing. Then he says that he has such a wife, and she is poor but also very bad at deceiving him. He's clever enough not to reveal everything about his own situation in case someone tells her what he said.

There is a sense of irony in this story. It starts with the narrator's praise for marriage and January as a noble knight. However, it becomes apparent that there is more than meets the eye when we read on. The narrator describes January in unflattering detail, down to his scratchy beard and loose skin on his aged body. We don't see any comfort or stylization here like we do in other tales (like the Nun's Priest's Tale). Instead, the author focuses our attention on negative aspects of January through imagery and language.

The author's condemnation of May is different from other fabliaux. She's crafty, but she also has a wicked side to her. However, the Merchant still feels that some punishment is in order for May since he believes that women should adhere to traditional values and not behave like men.

May is mostly a secondary character in the story and doesn't have much of an impact on the plot. The
narrator only describes her body, not her thoughts or feelings about anything. She's depicted as cunning and manipulative instead of beautiful, which makes it clear that she's bad news for January.

This too is represented in the Biblical imagery throughout the tale. It seems obvious that May's infidelity with Damien, a snake-like man, represents Eve's transgression with the snake - both take place in a beautiful garden and Adam does not share January's disgust of snakes. Perhaps Merchant is bitter because he compares them to "olde lewed words" (obscene poetry).

However, despite her low status and blood, May is much more intelligent than her husband. We can also find parallels in the Clerk's Tale where Griselde proves herself to be more sympathetic than Walter. In The Merchant's Tale there is no indulgent trickery like we see in the Miller's Tale but instead a return to the sexual signification seen in The Reeve's Tale - with both tales presenting sex without euphemisms.

There are many secret signs in the Merchant's Tale. The tale is focused on tricks and lies rather than open actions, which is why May reads a letter and then throws it away, as well as how she gives Damien her hand with a secret handshake.

The Merchant, a bitter man in his unhappy marriage, is the main character of this story. He's not happy with his life and feels trapped by it. His bitterness can be felt throughout the tale. In particular, he seems to want Damien dead for sleeping with May and getting her pregnant (the ending suggests that she might actually have become pregnant). The Merchant also wants January to feel stupid when he learns that Damien has been pretending to be a woman all along (January ends up feeling very stupid). The Merchant's bitterness is apparent since he believes that everyone else is as miserable as him (except for February who claims to be happy) - even though they're clearly not!

The Squire's Tale

The host wants the squire to tell another tale. The squire agrees and begins his story.

(I) The Squire tells the story of Cambyuskan, a king in Tartary. He had two sons: Algarsyf and Cambalo. His daughter was Canacee (previously mentioned by the Man of Law). One day during his 20th year as king, on March 15th, his subjects celebrated his nativity with him and all of his knights. During this great feast, a strange knight entered wearing armor made from brass and carrying a mirror made from glass that reflected everything around it.

A knight greeted the king and queen, and all of the nobles. He did so with such reverence that even Gawain couldn't have done it better. The narrator is sorry he can't reproduce how noble the knight was in his speech, but will just try to convey what he said instead of how he said it.

A knight from the king of Arabia and India was sent to bring Cambyuskan a brass horse that could transport anyone anywhere in the world within twenty-four hours, as well as a mirror that could foresee impending mischance and determine friends or foes. He also brought Canacee a sword whose edge would cut through any armor but whose flat side would heal any wounds made by its edge.

The knight left the hall and was led to his room. The presents were taken there, but the brass horse
remained in the courtyard until someone figured out how to move it. This horse was compared to a Trojan Horse and Pegasus. Once you twirled a peg in its ear, however, it moved on its own accord.

(II) After the party, Canacee slept late. She had a dream about the mirror and ring she had received from Sir Topaz, which gave her restful sleep for once. When she woke up that morning, she went out with her maids to see what was happening in town. On their way home they came across a falcon wounded by another bird of prey. The falcon told Canacee its story: it fell in love with a tercelet (a male hawk or falcon), who betrayed his lover by falling in love with another bird as well—a kite. Canacee healed the injured animal using herbs and put it inside a blue velvet box decorated with painted flowers on one side of her bedside table.

The storyteller then tells the audience that he will now tell them about Cambyuskan, who won his cities. After that, he'll tell a tale of Algarsyf and how he won his wife. He'll also tell the story of Cambalo, who fought with Canacee's brothers to win her hand in marriage. Finally, after all those stories have been told, the narrator will pick up where he left off and finish telling Canace's story.

The author has just begun setting the scene when he is interrupted. The narrator says, "The Franklin was going to speak again, but the Squire had not patience to hear him." Then, "the Hostess left her bar-board and came toward them."

The Franklin says that he has served himself well, and praises his wit. He also comments that no-one in the company is as eloquent as him. He then says that if his son were like Squire Harry, who needs possessions when you are virtuous? The Franklin continues by saying that he reprimanded his own son for not listening to wise people - his son only plays dice and spends money, preferring to talk with a page than a nobleman.

At this point, the host interrupts and reminds Franklin that he has to tell a story. He reassures the host that he knows what is expected of him. The Franklin then tells his tale, promising it will be good if it pleases the Host.

Since the Squire's Tale is incomplete, it's hard to know how we should read it. It may be because Chaucer never finished writing it or that some of its pages were lost over time. Yet, the interruption by the Franklin suggests that we're supposed to read this as one of Chaucer's many interrupted-ending tales (see his House of Fame and his tale about Sir Thopas).

The Franklin interrupts the Squire's tale at a very interesting point. The Squire has just outlined his plans for finishing his story, mentioning that Canacee and Cambalo are brother and sister. This is where the story becomes intriguing because we find out in the Prologue that they're actually lovers.

Yet Chaucer, the Squire's father, promises to tell a story of incest. It is certainly true that the Squire's long-windedness seems like it will take four pilgrimages to complete and some critics argue that his father interrupts him with irony or compliments in order to prevent the pilgrimage from having to hear all of it. Critics have yet to come up with a fully persuasive explanation for why Chaucer was going to tell this story about incest.

William Kamowski also points out that the abridgement of the Squire's Tale precedes an abridgement of
the Host's original tale-telling plan. In fact, at the very moment when the Squire breaks off, there is a reshaping of Chaucer's grand plan for The Canterbury Tales. Harry Bailly reminds Franklin that each pilgrim must tell two stories or break his promise. It seems like more than coincidence because it happens right after the Squire stops telling his story and before he leaves with Sir Thopas to go on their journey.

There are a lot of interesting aspects to explore in the Squire's Tale, but it seems that all critical work on the piece is inconclusive.

**The Franklin's Tale**

The Franklin's Tale is a song that was originally performed by the old Bretons. The author says he will deliver it in the same way, but asks for indulgence because of his lack of rhetorical skills. He promises to be simple and straightforward - the colors he uses are not those of rhetoric, but those seen on a meadow.

The Franklin's Tale begins with the courtship of Arviragus and Dorigen, who were married happily. They had equal roles in their marriage, so neither was the master nor servant; however, when "maistrie" (wanting to be dominant) enters a relationship, love flies away.

Dorigen and Arviragus were married, but he was sent to Britain for two years. Dorigen missed him a lot, but she started getting letters from him. Her friends took her on walks and they watched ships come into the port together, hoping one of them would bring her husband back home. However, Dorigen hated looking at the black rocks near the shore because she knew that if any ship crashed into it while bringing her husband home then it could sink. Her friends tried distracting her by talking about other things like what happened in town or taking walks further away from the shore so she wouldn't see those rocks anymore.

One day, Dorigen's friends had organized a party and dance in a beautiful garden. It was during the dancing that Aurelius, one of her squires, danced in front of Dorigen. He sang and danced better than any man alive. Unbeknownst to Dorigen, Aurelius had loved her for two years but never told her how he felt because he was afraid she'd reject him. During the dancing then, he addressed Dorigen with his love for her before begging for mercy on him and revealing his feelings.

Dorigen was stern and told Aurelius that she would never be unfaithful to her husband. She also said that she didn't want to cheat on him, but playfully added that the day all of the rocks were removed from the shoreline would be when they could have a relationship. This made Aurelius sigh heavily because he said it was impossible for this to happen. The guests left and only poor, sad Aurelius remained kneeling down in prayer asking god for mercy.

Arviragus left and went abroad for two years. Dorigen was delighted to see him again. Aurelius continued to suffer and had no relief except for his brother, who suggested that he meet a student of law at Orleans who was versed in the sciences of illusion and "magyk" (magic). Heading toward Orleans, the two came across a young clerk roaming by himself, who greeted them in Latin, claiming to know why they were there. Before they could take another step forward, he told them exactly what they were going there to achieve.
Arviragus then returned from abroad and Dorigen was happy to have him back. Two years passed with Aurelius suffering terribly until his brother advised him about this lawyer guy at Orléans that knew magic tricks or something like that; so off they went together towards Orléans where along the way they bumped into some random dude on the road who spoke latin saying how he knows what their business is all about; before long this mystery man reveals everything including details only known by Arviragus himself!

Aurelius got off his horse and went with the man to his house. He fed them, showed them illusions, and then agreed to remove the rocks for a thousand pounds. Aurelius responded by saying “never mind a thousand pounds! I’d give you the wide world!”

The next morning, after staying at the man's house, Aurelius and Dorigen travelled to Brittany. The man made it so that for a week or two, the rocks would disappear. Since Aurelius now knew there was no obstacle to his deal with Dorigen, he thanked God and eventually came to her in courtly fashion and told her how he had fulfilled their bargain. She stood astonished by what she heard and went home despairing.

Arvigarus was away, and Dorigen was overcome with grief because she had to choose between her body or her reputation. She thought about all the women who either killed themselves rather than submit to another's desires, including maidens of Lacedaemon who chose death over being defiled, Hasdrubal's wife who committed suicide during the siege of Carthage, and Lucrece who did the same when Tarquin raped her.

When Arviragus returned home, he told Dorigen that he would take the blame for her actions. She knew she had to honor his decision and submit herself to Aurelius. When Aurelius learned how well Arviragus handled the situation, he decided not to break up their marriage because it was too honorable a relationship. He said that a squire could be as noble as a knight if they were both equally loyal. Then, even though Aurelius' affair with the law student remained un consummated, the man forgave him for his debt out of kindness and honor. The narrator ends by asking whether this was more generous than what Dorigen did or not?

The Franklin's Tale is a tale that descends from Celtic origins. It usually deals with themes of romance and love, as well as the supernatural. The story was borrowed from Boccaccio's Decameron.

The story seems to offer a solution to the problem of love. It says that "maistrie" has no role in love, but it's actually about something else entirely: language and keeping one's word.

The word "fidelity" is a central theme in the story. It means loyalty, truthfulness and keeping one's promises. The concept of pledging troth (an Elizabethanism) - giving your word as a binding promise - is also important because it shows us that we have to watch what we say because like Dorigen's promise made "in play", we never know how things will turn out. The words become the marker of the deed, which forces Dorigen to perform the deed. In a work so concerned with stories and tale-telling, it is significant that Chaucer reminds us of the value of each individual word by taking time to remind us about fidelity in this passage.

The story itself also has a moral, and asks us to evaluate it. "Fre" can mean generous, but also noble. Who is the most generous and noble at the end of the story?
In Jill Mann's opinion, Arviragus' decision to become a cuckold in order to save his wife's reputation is noble. This leads Aurelius and the law student to back down from their positions as well.

Mann's reading of the story does not entirely dismiss Aurelius' point. After all, Arviragus puts his wife before a promise she made in jest. It's also worth noting that Aurelius is described as good-looking and charming when he first appears in the tale. Why would Dorigen make such a bargain, even in jest? Freud says that jokes are often used to express hidden desires or feelings, so it's possible her desire for both men motivated her joke. In fact, if the bargain were to be carried out, Dorigen would get two handsome men who love her (and each other), so isn't she being generous by offering them up?

The generosity of Marcus Aurelius is perhaps the most noble. He gave up something that he wanted, but it was his right to do so. The same can be said about a law student who only gave up money and not much at that. However, from another perspective, both of them were selfish because they didn't help others in need as their wives had asked them to do.

The poem does not tell us whether the rocks have vanished or not. The reader is left to wonder about their fate, though it is clear that they only exist in the story as a plot twist. However, we are reminded of what might happen if you dismiss something like this too quickly, especially when it comes to words and promises.

**The Physician's Tale**

The Story of the Physician

According to Livy, there was a knight called Virginius who had many friends and much wealth. He also had a loving wife and daughter with great beauty. The daughter was humble in speech, avoided compromising events and possessed virtue. Parents should bring up their children as such.

One day, the maid went to a town with her mother. There, she saw a judge who desired her and wanted to have sex with her. The devil tricked him into believing that he could trick the knight's daughter into having sex with him. He gave the judge some presents in order to buy his complicity for this plan of seduction.

A judge named Appius was given a case from Claudius, who claimed that Virginius had his servant girl. The judge did not listen to Virginius' argument in his own defense and ordered the girl be taken as a ward of the court.

Virginius returned home, and called his daughter. He told her that she had two options: death or shame. Virginius decided to kill his daughter, after a long speech about the importance of chastity and honor. She begged for mercy but he killed her anyway.

When the judge saw the head, he tried to escape and hang himself. However, many people soon found out about his crime and threw him into prison. Claudius was sentenced to be hanged upon a tree except that Virginius pleaded on his behalf, succeeding in reducing the sentence to exile. This tale shows us that sin has no reward – even if it is so private that no-one knows of it other than God and yourself. The moral of
this story: "Abandon sin before sin abandons you."

Analysing

At the end of the Physician's Tale, the Host says he almost had a heart attack because it was so brutal and violent. It is not hard to see why this would be a shocking tale that no one could read as an allegory or fable. This story refuses to be read in any other way but how things really are in reality, without any sugarcoating or softening of events. One wonders if anyone will vote for it at all because it lacks a happy ending and seems more like something you'd hear on the news than from someone telling stories around a campfire.

Moreover, the story rushes towards its conclusion without much thought for plausibility. Why doesn't Virginius argue with the judge or call upon a mob of people who burst through the doors to restore justice? Why doesn't he hide his daughter or escape on his steed to another land? Chaucer again casts a negative light across codes of honor that men adhere to.

The Pardoner's Tale has received little critical attention. Critics have commented that it is the first tale in The Canterbury Tales to be entirely without comedy or good-naturedness. It marks a turn toward darkness and away from playfulness, which changes the tone of the entire work. Although its thematic concerns—criticism of hypocrisy, defense of religion and beauty, and painful justice—are similar to those found in other tales, it seems distinctly different from them.

**The Pardoner's Tale**

The Host said that the story following the Physician's Tale was sad to listen to, and he wished a terrible death on the judge. The Host also prayed for God to protect the Physician's body from harm.

The Host, having had a heart attack after the Physician's Tale, decides that he needs to be cheered up. He turns to the Pardoner and asks for a funny story or joke. The Pardoner agrees but stops at an alehouse first because he wants something to eat and drink. The company protests that the Pardoner shouldn't tell them any dirty stories but instead should tell them something moral (or religious).

The Pardoner begins by addressing the company, explaining to them that when he preaches in churches his voice booms out impressively like a bell. His theme is always that greed is the root of all evil. He explains where he has come from and shows off his papal bulls, indulgences, and glass cases crammed full of rags and bones which he claims (to the congregation at least) are holy relics with magical properties.

The Pardoner then invites everyone to come get pardoned by his relics, and he says that this will save them from their sins. He has a hundred marks thanks to this trick, which he's been doing for many years. The Pardoner is telling people lies just so they give him money. His purpose is simply to make money; he doesn't care about the correction of sin at all. Thus, the Pardoner spits out his venom under the pretense of holiness and goodness while seeming pious and holy himself. However, greed is still the root of all evil in spite of what the Pardoner preaches against it because he knows how wrong it is but can still convince other people not to do it anyway even though he can't stop doing it himself.
The Pardoner then tells the company that he gets money, cheese, wheat and wool from his congregation. He will not make baskets or do manual labor for a living; rather, he will live off of others' work. He drinks wine and sleeps with women in every town he goes to.

Parable of the Pardoner

There was once a group of three men who did nothing but engage in sinful behavior. This tale is interrupted by a long, rambling speech about the evils of drunkenness and how it's related to many things including death. The author then goes on to talk about people whose stomachs are their gods (people who die because they're obsessed with food), as well as talking about the evil of dice-playing (which he calls "cursed dice").

Three drunkards were in a bar one night, and they saw men carrying a dead body to its grave. One of them asked his slave to go find out who the corpse was. The boy told him that it was an old man whose heart had been smashed by Death (who is like a secret thief). The three then made a vow to kill Death because he kills many people every year.

When the group of drunkards had walked only half a mile, they met an old man at a crossroads. The oldest among them spoke rudely to him and asked why he was still alive if he was so old. The man said that it was because no one wanted to exchange their youth for his age. He also added that it wasn't nice of the drunkards to speak so rudely to an old man.

A drunkard responded rudely that Death was not there, and the old man should regret telling them. The old man still politely told them they could find Death up the crooked way and underneath an oak tree.

Some drunkards found a treasure. They decided to draw lots and see who would go back to town to get food and wine for the rest of them, as they didn't want anyone else knowing about the treasure. The youngest one drew the short straw, so he had to run back into town while his friends guarded the gold.

However, while he was away, the two remaining drunkards decided to kill him and split the gold between them. The youngest of the three thought about how beautiful the gold was and wanted it for himself. He went to a chemist's shop, bought some poison, put it into two bottles of wine (one for each man), topped up their glasses with more wine and then returned to his friends.

The three men acted as they had planned. They killed him on his return and sat down to enjoy the wine before burying his body. As it happened, they drank the poison and died in a short sermon against sin that asked God for forgiveness of their sins and warned people against greed.

The Pardoner finishes his tale and suddenly remembers that he's carrying relics in his pouch. He starts to give them away, but the Host doesn't want one. The Host says that he wants to kiss the Pardoner's old pants because they're really relics. He also wishes that he had the Pardoner's testicles so he could drop them into a pile of pig crap.

The Pardoner is so angry with this response, he cannot speak a word. Fortunately, the Knight steps in and reconciles everyone. The group continues on its way.
The Pardoner has become one of the most discussed pilgrims due to his contradictory nature and how it's exemplified by his tale. His story also serves as a good example of how Chaucer can complicate matters without ever giving his own opinion.

The Pardoner embodies the problem of telling a moral tale, because he is corrupt and yet tells a story about how money is evil. This creates an ironic situation where his words do not match his actions. The Pardoner's voice, in other words, contradicts what he says. So it's like preaching against something you yourself are guilty of. How can such a person tell a moral tale?

The Pardoner is a good preacher, but he's also very greedy. He profits from his sermons and can make people change their ways. His Tale shows how greed leads to evil. However, the way he delivers his sermon is not effective at all: it's hollow and insincere. Yet even though he doesn't practice what he preaches, his message still resonates with people.

Chaucer's Pardoner is a hypocrite who preaches about the value of religious texts, but is actually corrupt. He doesn't truly believe in what he says. In fact, his wallet full of pardons (religious texts) has no moral worth to it at all. The same can be said for Chaucer's Tales itself, as they appear to reproduce the telling of a certain pilgrim, yet are actually disembodied voices that don't commit to any one point-of-view or belief system. This paradox is represented by the Pardoner himself and becomes an important part of why we love Chaucer's work so much today.

The Pardoner's speech has two audiences. He tells his story to the congregation, but he also speaks directly to the audience. The point is that even though they know it's insincere, his shtick might still work on them.

The imagery of the Pardoner's Tale is also very symbolic. The tale itself has many references to death, such as swearing by God's "holy bones" and using the word for cursed dice (bones). There are also many body parts in this story: a dead body being carried past at the beginning, stomachs, coillons—all words associated with body parts. This may be a grim reminder of how prevalent death is in this story.

The General Prologue suggests that the Pardoner resembles a castrated horse or mare. This implies that he could be either a congenital eunuch or homosexual, and the Host's words at the end of the story imply that he is without his testicles. The relics in this tale also escape human grasp, which makes him similar to Absolon from another story who was nicknamed "Absolon with the long hair" because of his feminine appearance (Benson). In addition to Absolon, Sir Thopas and Chaucer are also feminized males throughout this book (Chaucer).

In the story, there is a man named Death who is looking for somebody called 'Death'. He finds death. The moral of this story is that money can be evil and causes people to die. It also says that when you have gold, it's like having death because they both shift from being metaphors to reality and back again.

**The Shipman's Tale**

There was a wealthy merchant who lived in St. Denis. He foolishly married a beautiful woman, who spent his money on clothes and other fine array to make her appear even more beautiful. There was also a fair,
bold young monk who frequented the merchant's house quite often. The monk was generous with his money and always brought gifts for his lord and for the servants as well (according to their degree).

One day, the merchant and his wife were going to Bruges. The merchant invited John to visit them before he left for Bruges. They ate and drank together for two days until it was time for the merchant to leave on his journey. On the third day, which was when they said goodbye, John woke up early in order to pray. The wife also woke up early because she wasn't feeling well; she thought that her husband had kept her awake all night by having sex with her (she didn't enjoy it). This caused some tension between them, but John managed to make peace between them by promising not tell anyone what happened during their sexual encounter.

The wife complains that her husband is the worst man ever to have existed since the world began. She also tells him that she owes a debt of one hundred franks, which will be disgraceful if he finds out about it and does not pay off the debt. The wife begs for help from a monk.

The monk tells the wife that he feels bad for her and promises to help her get out of this situation. He kisses her, hugs her tightly, and then they part ways. The wife goes to see the merchant in his office, but he refuses because it's important that he manages his business well.

The three of them went out to dinner that evening, and after the meal, the monk asked for a loan from the merchant. The merchant was generous enough to lend him some money, but he didn't want anyone else to know about it. When they parted ways that night, the monk returned home and told no one about what happened. The next morning, the merchant left for Bruges where he conducted business throughout the day.

The next Sunday, the monk returned to St. Denis with a clean head and beard after shaving them off. He also had sex with the wife for all night in exchange for 100 franks that he received from her husband. The next morning, the monk rode home to his abbey or wherever he pleased.

The merchant went home and told his wife about his trip. He then went to see the monk, who was happy to see him. The monk had left the money with the wife, which pleased the merchant. Finally, he teased her because she hadn't told him she'd received it from the monk.

However, the wife was not scared by this and said that she had received gold from the monk. She argued that she should be allowed to keep it because of good hospitality and use it as she pleased. In return for him giving her his money, he could have her body: “I will pay you only in bed”. The merchant saw no other option but to agree with her demand.

The Host is very courteous. He compliments the Shipman and insults the Monk, warning his guests of similar tricks by other men. The Prioress then agrees to tell a story in response to the Host's request.

The Shipman's Tale, despite its brevity, raises issues that were raised in earlier tales. After the darker parts of the Physician's and Pardoner's Tales, Chaucer returns to his fabliau roots with a reasonably simple trick story complicated by how it is told.

The Shipman's Tale continues the idea that sex and money are inter-related, which is also a theme of The
Wife of Bath's Tale. It seems like the lines about his "jolly body" were originally meant for the Wife of Bath, but they ended up in this tale instead. Scholars have argued that it was intended to be her tale before it became what we know today as The Shipman's Tale.

Moreover, the story of the Shipman is not an unlikely tale for a Wife to tell. Like in many other tales, we are asked to consider each participant at the end and decide who came out on top. It's clear that it isn't the merchant; he made huge profits in his business dealings and had his loan repaid, but he also had sex with another man's wife and got off scot-free. The monk did have sex with her as well, but remained friends with the merchant while getting one hundred francs for doing so. Ultimately though, it is clearly the wife herself who comes out on top; she has enjoyed sexual relations with both men and gets paid one hundred francs from her husband just like before their marriage agreement was signed.

Like the Wife of Bath, this wife has realized that her sexual attractiveness is a valuable asset. She uses it to get what she wants from men in an uncomfortably close way similar to prostitution. The Wife's assertion that women are pawns in business transactions is also true for the merchant's wife. Despite all this, Constance never considers profiting from her own sexual attractiveness like these two wives do.

People in business also value their word, as well as the importance of contracts and agreements. They give one another handshakes and kisses to seal the deal.

Chaucer ties up several of his concerns in this tale, including the idea that women are more powerful than men. The narrator is also pleased at the end when he hears about a woman who has infinite credit because she pays her husband with sex instead of money. Chaucer's medieval readers might have been uncomfortable with such an idea because it implies that women are better than men at making deals and getting what they want from their husbands.

The Prioress' Tale

The Prioress begins her tale by praying to the Virgin Mary. She then asks for God's assistance and guidance as she tells a story of how He shows His reverence in everyday life.

In a certain Asian town, there was a Jewish ghetto with usury and other hateful things. A school for Christians opened in the same town at the end of the street where this Jewish ghetto was located. Among those attending this Christian school were a widow's son who was seven years old and deeply devoted to his faith. He could sing Ave Maria and Alma Redemptoris, songs about Mary and Jesus respectively, as well as pay due reverence to Christ through singing these songs.

A young boy was walking home from school one day while singing his favorite hymn. This angered the Jews of the city, who were enemies of Christianity and had a lot of hatred for Christians. They hired someone to murder him and throw his body into a cesspit.

The widow searched all night for her missing child, begging the Jews to tell her where her child might be found. However, they refused to help her or give any information. Jesus gave the idea of singing in a place where the child was last seen: as she called out to him, he began to sing. The other Christians of the city ran to the pit and sent for the provost (a magistrate).
A provost praised Christ and the Virgin Mary, and had Jews tied up. The child was carried in a great procession to the nearest abbey. The local provost cursed the Jews, ordered their death by hanging, and before he died he sang. An abbot sprinkled holy water on him, allowing him to speak of how his tongue was blessed with a grain from Mary that allowed him to sing. He took it out of his mouth so that he could die as a martyr. He's buried in a marble tomb as an example for us all; but also because "Hugh of Lincoln" (a real child martyr allegedly slain by Jews) is mentioned at the end of this tale.

The Prioress' Tale is a religious tale about the Virgin Mary. The author clearly shows her devotion to Christianity, but there is also an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in the story that may not be apparent to modern readers.

The story is a celebration of motherhood and Christianity. It's also an argument for the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, which was common in medieval times. The tale reminds us that anti-Semitism has been around since before Hitler started it during World War II.

The story itself is a nightmare of performance. The little cleric attempts to sing, but he gets killed for it. It's about how words can be dangerous if used at the wrong time or by the wrong person.

Despite being about a song contest, the key question in The Prioress' Tale is whether it's an anti-Semitic piece. It may have been acceptable to its medieval audience, but we can't really accept that today. However, there might be another way of reading this tale because the Prioress seems very sentimental and cries over dead mice; she also hates Jews so much that she throws their baby in a cesspit. Perhaps Chaucer wants us to see her as someone who's at arm's length from him or perhaps he just wants us to focus on how disgusting the Jews are for throwing a child into a cesspit. In any case, it all depends on your interpretation of these details.

Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas

The Host of the party tells Chaucer, who has been staring at the ground during the Prioress’s tale, to look up and tell a story. He says that Chaucer looks like an elf and calls him “popet” (a doll). The Host then demands that he tell a funny story. Chaucer responds by saying he knows only one rhyme from long ago.

The poem begins by asking the audience to listen, because it is going to be fun and serious. The speaker then introduces a knight named Thopas, who is well-dressed and has blond hair and a handsome nose. He can hunt for deer, go hawking, and he's good with a bow. Many maidens were brought in for him to sleep with but he was chaste.

One day, Thopas went out riding on his horse and heard birds singing. He was struck with a sudden love for an elf queen and rode very fast. His horse got tired, so he decided to rest by the side of the road and fell in love with an elf queen.

Then he climbed back on his horse and found an elf-queen, but instead came across a giant who threatened to kill the horse if Thopas left. The boy was so scared that he went in the opposite direction at full speed. He ran away from the giant, who threw stones at him.
The narrator tells the audience to listen to him because Thopas is back in town. He was about to fight a giant with three heads, so his men gave him some wine and gingerbread and licorice before he got dressed for battle. If they want to hear more of this tale, the narrator will go on with it.

(III)

Chaucer begins the story of Thopas and the Knight, Sir Percival. They drank from a well together until one day... Chaucer is interrupted by the Host who says that his rhymes are worthless. The Host asks him to tell the rest in prose instead. Chaucer agrees, promising to tell something in prose soon.

Sir Thopas is a parody of the Middle English romance. It's packed with bizarre details that would make people laugh in Chaucer's time and now. For example, Sir Thopas is named after a woman and has an effeminate love for an elf-queen before he runs away from his battle at the end of the first fit because he forgot his armor.

In the Ellesmere manuscript, Chaucer's Sir Thopas is always disappearing into the margin. Close readers will note that each fit of Sir Thopas is half as long as its predecessor. It seems like Chaucer has run out of things to say in his story about a knight who wants to be an elf-queen's lover. Note how many times he asks people to listen or be quiet (perhaps implying jeers and responses from a less-than-impressed pilgrim audience). Also notice how details from the prologue seem to echo throughout this tale: an effeminized, antisocial Chaucer becomes an effeminized, entirely chaste Sir Thopas; the Host's comment that Chaucer looks like he would find a "hare" becomes a forest with hares for wild beasts; and "elvish" looking Chaucer inspires the "elf-queen." To all of these we can add that perhaps it was purposeless for him to tell this story because he felt forced into telling it by others.

There are several jokes in this story that Chaucer is poking fun at himself. He's making a joke about how he writes so many stories, and none of them are good enough to tell. Another part of the story is him mocking his own ability to create different voices for all the characters, as if they're telling him what to do (which they are). The fact that Sir Thopas disappears after each fit points out how self-aware Chaucer was about his own elusiveness, which we've already discussed in other tales. The character who represents Chaucer in this tale is obviously not close to being like the real thing - but it's the closest representation we'll get from an omniscient narrator.

**Chaucer's Tale of Melibee**

A man named Melibee once had a wife and daughter. He was walking in the fields one day, when his enemies attacked them by climbing up ladders to their house and beating his wife and wounding his daughter.

When Melibee returned home, he was furious to see what had happened. He tore his clothes and started crying uncontrollably. Prudence stopped him from crying and gave him advice that she had gathered from various sources (authors). She advised him to call a group of people so they could help figure out how to handle the situation.

Melibee, after consulting his wife Prudence, takes counsel from the great number of people in town. The
surgeons and physicians urge caution and a measured response to these events, but his neighbors and young men want war. Melibee wants to wage war against them, but Prudence advises him not to be hasty about it. She says that he should choose carefully who he listens to for advice, because some people are motivated by their own self-interests. After considering all the advice given by others around him (and weighing it against their motives), Melibee decides not to go to battle with his enemies at this time.

Prudence believes that the attack on Sophie is a result of man's weakness. She wants to negotiate peace between England and France, but she leaves everything up to God's will.

Melibee is able to forgive his enemies, who are found and brought before him. Prudence suggests that he forgive them, but Melibee needs to be convinced of the fine idea. He argues with her about it until she convinces him otherwise.

Analysing

Chaucer's Melibee is a long story about an old man who gets robbed. The host of the party interrupts Chaucer mid-story and tells him to tell another one, which he does in Sir Thopas. If you see the giant from Thopas as representing what the Host wants, then Melibee represents Chaucer coming back with his armor on and telling this long story that seems dull at first but has underlying meaning.

Some critics have also argued that Chaucer deliberately omits a line from its source, Renaud de Louens' Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence (itself a translation of Albertanus of Brescia, Liber consolationis et consilii). The omitted line is "Woe to the land that has a child as king." This may be because he was writing for King Richard II. Among Melibee's many pieces of advice, Chaucer omits this one.

"Melibee" is a patchwork of proverbs and sayings, many of which have already appeared in the tales. The characters constantly cite authorities to justify their opinions, and this academic arguing inflates the thin plot into a lot of citation and quotation. We never even find out what happens to mortally-wounded Sophie because everyone keeps citing authority after authority.

The Miller's Tale is like the Parson's Tale, in that it was made up of text. It also proves Chaucer's ability to write a scholarly work about academic discussions.

Within the tale itself, Prudence is another example of a patient and long-suffering wife who demonstrates her virtue through stoicism. She's also an example of someone whose name reflects one of her prominent qualities (Sophie, the daughter, has a name meaning "wisdom"). Her role in the story is not as an active agent; she's a passive influence on other characters. She's worthy to be considered for counseling because she teaches Melibee how to handle his anger by using patience. The title points to Melibee himself—a man able to learn from his wife.

The Monk's Tale

Introductory Note to the Tale of a Monk

After the tale of Melibee, the host wishes his wife could hear it. He jokes that she's a shrew and says he
wants to breed with her. Religion has taken all the good breeding people, leaving just puny creatures behind.

The monk takes all the jokes well, and promises a story about Edward the Confessor. He has 100 tragedies stored up in his head, but first he will tell some stories of people who fell from high degree to misery. Tragedies are usually presented in hexameters, which is why they're so good at presenting their ideas.

The Monk's Tale is a collection of tragedies that warn people not to trust in blind prosperity because Fortune is fickle and ever-changing.

Lucifer was the first tragedy. He fell from heaven to hell. Adam is next, as he was driven out of paradise.

Samson's story is told in greater detail. He fell from grace when he confessed his secret to his wife, who betrayed him and then took another lover. Samson slew one thousand men with an ass's jawbone, then prayed for God to quench his thirst. From the jawbone's tooth sprang a well. He would have conquered the world if he had not told Delilah that his strength came from his refusal to cut his hair. Without this strength, Samson was blinded and imprisoned by enemies who killed everyone inside a temple where they held him captive.

Hercules was a great hero. However, he made one mistake and that was wearing the shirt of Nessus. That led to his downfall. King Nebuchadnezzar had twice defeated Israel but then God punished him because Daniel wouldn't worship the king's statue.

The next tragedy is about Balthasar, the son of Nebuchadnezzar. He also worshipped false idols and had a feast for a thousand lords in which they drank wine out of sacred vessels. But during his feast he saw an armless hand writing on a wall. Daniel warned Balthasar that his father's fate would befall him as well because he was committing the same sins as his father did before him (worshipping false gods). Daniel told Balthasar that Medes and Persians would take over Babylon after it fell apart at the seams due to civil war. The Monk says that this story illustrates how Fortune makes friends with people only so she can make enemies with them later on when their luck changes for the worse.

Cenobia (or Zenobia) was a queen who refused to marry, but she did so because she wanted children. She only slept with her husband for the sake of having kids, but no more than that. However, when her husband died and Rome conquered Palmyra, Cenobia was captured and brought to Rome in chains.

King Pedro of Spain was overthrown by his brother and killed.

King Peter of Cyprus brought ruin to his country and was killed. Other tragedies include Visconti, who imprisoned his nephew; Pisa's count Ugolino, who starved to death with his children after the bishop of Pisa led a rebellion against him; Nero, whose lusts were only satisfied by murder; Seneca, murdered for stating that an emperor should be virtuous; Holofernes ordered people to worship Nebuchadnezzar but was decapitated by Judith.

The Monk then tells the story of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was punished by God for attacking the Jews. God caused him to be infested with maggots. The next story is about Alexander the Great, who was
poisoned by his own child and died from it. Julius Caesar was also assassinated due to a conspiracy against him led by Brutus. Croesus, King of Lydia (a region in Turkey), had all his riches but became arrogant and proud and ended up being hanged as a result of that pride.

All the tales are retellings of popular stories, and they all focus on the same theme: people who have high social status fall into misery or death. They're interrupted by the monk's tale, which might not be as interesting to modern readers because it largely details classical stories that medieval audiences would know about.

The Monk's tragedies are drawn from a variety of sources, including Biblical, classical and historical ones. Chaucer also includes some stories that would have been within the folk memory of his time. Yet the model of tragedy presented by The Monk is not actually based on classical models as such, but on Boethius' ideas about life and fortune. It is a reminder that life can be unpredictable; all high-status people eventually crash down to earth in misery.

Some studies have examined the Monk's tale as a response to Boccaccio's De casibus tragedies, which focuses on tyrants who are supported by writers.

Yet neither of these readings explains why the Monk's Tale is included in The Canterbury Tales. Louise Fradenburg argues persuasively that the Monk's tale is a death knell at the festival, signaling misery and death rather than life and celebration. In fact, his solid physical presence stands in sharp contrast to his tales about how bodies decay and die.

Moreover, the Monk's numbers - he has a hundred tragedies in his cell, of which he manages to fit in seventeen before being interrupted - suggest that each story is progressively worse than the one before it. It seems as if the stories get darker and more depressing with each one.

It's no surprise that the Knight interrupts the Monk, as the story he tells is mostly about death and destruction. The Knight himself is a prominent figure in this tale, which makes his interruption even more significant. If we look at all of these stories together, it seems like there's an overarching theme with characters who are too serious and don't have any fun.

**The Nun's Priest's Tale**

The Nun's Priest's Tale begins with the Knight interrupting the Monk. He praises him and then says that he would like to hear a story about someone rising from poverty to prosperity, rather than hearing another tragic tale of how people fall from grace.

The host, who is bored with the monk's story, tells him to tell a different tale. The monk says that he hasn't come to play and have fun so his story ends here. The host then turns to the nun's priest and asks him for a funny tale. The Nun's Priest agrees and begins telling his story of the friar, clerk, knight and squire.

A widow had a small cottage in the countryside. She lived there with her daughters and raised some animals, including a rooster called Chaunticleer. He was very loud in his crowing, with a red comb and
black beak. He had seven hens who were his consorts or mistresses; one of them was named Pertelote.

One morning, Chaunticleer started groaning in his throat as if he was having a bad dream. Pertelote asked him what was wrong and he said that he had seen an animal like a hound trying to kill him. The dog’s color was between yellow and red, it had black tipped ears and tail, and its body looked lean.

Pertelote mocked him for being a coward. She argued that dreams aren’t meaningful visions, but rather caused by bad substances in the body. Her solution was to pick herbs from the yard and use them to bring his humors back to normal.

Chaunticleer argued that while Cato is an authority on dreams, there are many other authorities who argue that dreams are signs of things to come. He gave the example of one man who dreamt his friend was murdered and his body hidden in a dung cart. The man remembered this dream, went to where he thought it might have happened, and found his friend’s body in a dung cart. This story also shows how two men were going to cross the sea but one had a prophetic dream about being drowned if they did so; he told his companion not to go but he wouldn’t listen and ended up drowning when the ship sank because its bottom tore open during their voyage. Another story Chaunticleer cited was Macrobius' - he said that Macrobius foresaw Caesar’s murder by reading omens from some birds flying above him as well as Croesus’ - Croesus once saw himself covered with blood after dreaming about it three nights running and Andromache’s (the wife of Hector) - she dreamed her son would be killed by Achilles before Troy fell which came true when Achilles slew Hector at Troy; both stories show how prophecies can come true through dreams.

Then Chaunticleer asked Pertelote to tell them about joy, and stop talking about the prophecy. He said that her beauty made him fearless. He then quoted a proverb: “Woman is man’s joy and all his bliss”, which actually means “Woman is man's ruin”. Then he flew down from his beam, called all of his hens to him, and showed them a grain lying in the yard. He clasped Pertelote with his wings until morning came.

After the month of March, Chaunticleer was walking around with all his wives. Suddenly a coal fox came in through the hedges and into the yard. He waited for a while before he made his move. The narrator then goes off on an aside about how Chaunticleer should have taken women's advice before moving back to the story, reminding us that it is about a rooster after all.

Chaunticleer sang merrily in the yard, and caught sight of the fox. He would have run away if it weren't for the fact that the fox was claiming to be his friend. The fox talked about how Chaunticleer's parents were good singers. He mentioned that his father used to stand on his tiptoes and stretch out his neck before singing. The fox then asked whether Chaunticleer could sing like him – and he stood on his tiptoes, stretched out his neck, closed his eyes, and began singing as best he could while being strangled by the cunning predator.

The poor widow and her two daughters heard the chickens scream, so they ran after the fox toward the grove. Many other animals were running behind them as well. Chaunticleer tried to talk to the fox, but he was too busy trying to eat him. The cock convinced the fox that there was a better way for him to get food: by cursing others instead of eating them (because it's easier).

The narrator then addresses those who think the story is ridiculous. The moral of the story, rather than the
actual tale itself, should be taken away: keep your hands off of it and let its chaff blow away in the wind. Thus ends Chaucer's Nun's Priest Tale.

The Nun's Priest's Tale is one of the most loved and well-known tales in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. It is a beast fable, just like Aesop's fable, and as one of his successors, Robert Henryson would go on to explore in great detail. The key relationship here is that between human and animal. The key question of the genre is addressed by the narrator himself: telling those who find a tale about animals foolish to take the moral from it while ignoring its story or plot. But can we take a human moral from a tale about animals? Can an animal represent – even just in story – a human?

It is interesting to notice that the boundary between animals and humans in this story is blurred. The Host mocks the Nun's Priest, who would have been celibate. He suggests that he would have made a good breeder because of his looks and personality. This shows us how much we are like animals, but also how similar our world can be to theirs.

The question in the passage is about whether Chauntecleer should take Pertelote's advice. Should he ignore his dreams and go on with his life? He does not heed her warning, which turns out to be true because he sees a fox.

Until we remember that the story is about a chicken, not an archetypal fox. The fox's actions are in line with what we would expect from animals: it eats chickens. This is highlighted when the narrator quotes Cato and discusses how animals should act like humans don't. Chaunticleer calls his wives over to have sex because he found a grain of corn—and then has animal sex all night long. It contradicts itself by saying that a chicken shouldn't act like this, but at the same time it wouldn’t be interesting if they didn’t because this kind of behavior fuels fables. If the Nun's Priest had too much dignity for breeding chickens, Chaunticleer has human urges too strong for him to write good stories.

Although Chanticleer and Pertelote are animals in the Canterbury Tales, their relationship is actually quite stable. In fact, they have a fulfilling sexual relationship that's not as complicated as other relationships like the Franklin and the Wife of Bath's. They don't just have sex for pleasure; it's part of a healthy relationship.

Interpreting dreams is a common theme in Middle English literature. It's also the subject of many poems, including Chaucer's Book of the Duchess and House of Fame. Dreams are intertwined with text, which makes it easier to interpret them when they're written down as a poem. So what does that mean for interpreting dreams? Are they real or fake? Do we learn anything from them?

This story is a return to the basics. It takes place in an ordinary setting, with no references to high culture or classical tragedies like those found in The Monk's Tale. Moreover, it focuses on bodily functions and human waste – for example, when Chaunticleer has dreams that come true, they involve poop carts and broken bottoms of ships. This story also features more humor than most other tales in the Canterbury Tales. In fact, it foreshadows the end of Chaucer's storytelling project because its theme can be interpreted as “a return” to the beginning of his journey (i.e., a literal return to Canterbury).

If we look at the story, it seems to be a promotion of prophetic dreams. However, if we analyze the animal nature of its characters, then maybe that's not accurate. The moral may be the importance of
speaking or not speaking.

One of the things that makes Chaunticleer a problem is his ability to speak and argue with his wife, as well as cry "cok! Cok!" when he sees grain on the floor. He is both chicken and human, which reminds us of Chaucer's dual identity in The Nun's Priest's Tale. However, people usually know when they should keep quiet: Pertelote wakes Chaunticleer from his dream; he foolishly opens his mouth to sing for the fox; and it was because of him that Chaunticleer fell into a trap, which allows him to open up about what happened. Therefore, we must learn when to be silent so we can avoid making mistakes like these.

It is a common theme in fables, and it's especially noticeable when the author ignores the correct moments to have a character speak or not speak. It also has dangerous moral implications for The Canterbury Tales as a whole because of its constant reference to oral communication.

The Second Nun's Tale

The Nun's Prologue

The prologue to the Second Nun's Tale is an invocation for people to avoid sin and avoid the devil, as well as a formal invocation of Mary. The narrator then goes on to interpret Cecilia's name: it can be read as "heaven’s lily" or "the way toward understanding." The lily might represent her chasteness, or perhaps her honesty. Or maybe it would be best interpreted as “the way toward heaven” because she was such a good teacher, but could also mean that she was quick and busy in doing good works.

St. Cecilia was born in Rome and lived a devout Christian life. She didn't want to lose her virginity by getting married, so she wore a hairshirt underneath her wedding dress. On their wedding night, she told Valerian that an angel would kill him if he touched her immorally. Valerian wanted to see this angel, so St. Cecilia sent him to Pope Urban on the Via Appia (a road outside of Rome). Once Pope Urban purified him of his sins with holy water and read from the Bible for Valerian, he could see the angel as well as another man clad in white robes who had a book which bore gold letters asking Valerian whether or not he believed what St. Cecilia told him about angels; when he said yes, Pope Urban baptized him and sent them back home together where they consummated their marriage without sinning against God's will.

Valerian returned home to find his brother Tibertius with Cecilia. He brought two crowns from Paradise and gave one to each of them. The angel claimed that only the pure and chaste would be able to see this crown, which is why Valerian asked for the angel's blessing on his brother so he could also see it. Tibertius came in and smelled the flowers but couldn't see them, so Valerian explained Christianity to him so he could understand what was happening. After some convincing, Tibertius agreed to go with Valerian and Cecilia when they went back to Pope Urban as well as get baptized by him.

Tibertius was baptized and became a Christian. He lived with his wife, Valerian, for some time. The two of them made many requests to God that were granted. However, the Roman soldiers in Rome sought out Tibertius and Valerian because they wanted to kill them both. They brought the couple before Almachius who ordered their death by beheading. During their execution, one of the sergeants claimed that he saw spirits ascend to heaven after they died (Valerian and Tibertius). Many people heard this testimony and converted into Christianity as a result. This angered Almachius so much that he had Maximus beaten until
he died for saying something against him or his gods (the Roman gods). Cecilia buried Maximus next to her husband's body because she believed it was what God wanted her to do; therefore she did it without any hesitation or fear from anyone else in Rome at the time.

Almachius ordered Cecilia to appear, but she refused. She criticized his religion and argued on behalf of Christianity. Almachius gave her a choice between admitting guilt for being Christian and performing certain acts; she denied both charges. He wanted her killed by boiling water, which was prepared all day long under the hot sun. However, he could not make her sweat – even when left out in the baking heat for all night long!

Almachius then commanded his servant to kill her while she was in the bath. He struck three times, but never cut off her head and she lay there for three days. Christians stopped the bleeding with sheets and although she suffered greatly, she continued teaching them about Christianity. She even gave them her property and belongings before dying after three days. Pope Urban buried her among other saints by night and dedicated a church in Rome where people still worship today as St. Cecilia's Church.

The Second Nun's Tale is a conventional religious biography, a “saint’s life”. It follows the story of Saint Cecilia in an unemotional and dry manner that exalts her suffering and patient adherence to her faith. In other words, it stresses how human she was by showing how inhumanly she suffered for her faith. This can be compared to the Prioress' and Clerk's tales because they stress their characters' saintliness from the very beginning as well

The little clerk in the Prioress' tale is like a saint. The character transcends the horrors of this world and even death itself, as she's rewarded for her good deeds by being made into a saint at the end of the story. Some critics have compared this to another tale that follows it, wondering whether Cecilia might undergo some sort of transformation since she's not changed when heated up, unlike Canon Yeoman's trick-coals.

This story is about the nature of Christianity. It's a metaphor for how Christians are in their own world, separate from everyone else. The fact that only they can see angelic floral coronets and not others highlights this idea. It also touches on the contradiction of being both human and divine, which Cecilia (the main character) addresses by saying she has no interest in sex at the beginning of the tale.

The Canon's Yeoman's Tale

After the story of Saint Cecilia, the company continues on their journey. They are then overtaken by two men – one clad in black with a white undergarment and his horse sweating profusely. The man's Yeoman is similarly dressed and also sweating so much that he can hardly go any further. The first man greets them warmly and explains that he had hoped to join them; his Yeoman too is extremely courteous.

The host asks if the Canon can tell a tale. The Yeoman says that he knows more than enough about mirth and jollity, but adds that if the Host knew him better, he'd be surprised at what his master is capable of doing. He's an outstanding man who could pave all of the ground from here to Canterbury in silver and gold.

The Host is surprised to learn that the Canon cares so little about his honor and dresses shabbily. The
Yeoman seems shocked at first, but then reveals in secret that the Canon believes overdone dress sense is a vice. The Host asks where the Canon lives, and the Yeoman tells him he hides out in back alleys of suburbs. He also explains why his face looks discolored: he spends most of his time blowing on fires – which leads into an explanation that both he and the Canon spend their time doing "illiouon," borrowing money and promising profit before disappearing with it all.

While the Yeoman was talking, the Canon drew near and heard everything. He scolded the Yeoman for his lack of discretion in saying such things to a stranger.

The Host tells the Canon to be quiet. He warns him that he's revealing things that shouldn't be revealed, and he asks the Yeoman to continue telling his story. The Canon realizes that the Yeoman won't stop talking, so he leaves in a hurry. Since his lord is gone, the Yeoman decides to tell everyone what really happened.

A Ballad on Love

(First part) I have been studying this science for seven years, and yet I don't really understand it. The narrator calls the knowledge a "slidynge" science because he has become poor by studying alchemy. It's not worth the time or effort to study. He then describes what alchemists do in detail with scientific terminology, including lists of glass and pottery vessels, lab equipment like tubes and beakers, minerals like arsenic and brimstone etc.

The narrator then lists the four spirits and seven bodies in medieval alchemy. The narrator states that those who practice alchemy will never profit from it. They'll lose everything they put into it, because no matter how long they sit and learn terms, they won't gain anything from them. The narrator turns on God by saying that though we had hope of finding the philosopher's stone through alchemy, we haven't been able to find it yet.

The narrator says that alchemists are liars. He then explains how they react to their failed experiments - by throwing away the metal, even though some of it survives. The narrator also reveals that despite any arguments about why the pot shattered, the alchemists always seem to get it wrong. Finally, he claims that nothing is what it seems: apples which look nice may not be good; men who appear wise might actually be foolish and most trustworthy-looking people could turn out to be thieves.

The second part of the tale is about a canon, who has an amazing ability to make everyone he communicates with behave strangely. People travel long distances just to meet him, even though they don't know that he's a liar and trickster. The narrator then makes an aside saying that his story is not representative of all canons, but only one bad man among many good ones.

There was a priest in London who sang masses for the dead. One day, he loaned some money to a man named Canon. Three days later, Canon returned and paid him back on time. The priest thanked him for paying him back when he said he would and asked if he could show his master something before leaving. He then promised that it wouldn't take long but would be worth seeing. The narrator commented on how this was false of Canon because the Yeoman saw through him so easily (“This chanon was my lord…”). Even though the Yeoman recognized this fact, his cheeks still turned red as he described what happened next with Canon (the other one).
The priest's servant was sent to get some mercury and coal, while the false Canon prepared a crucible. He showed it to the priest and told him to put an ounce of mercury in there. The priest did as he asked, and then they placed it in the fire. However, the fake Canon secretly took a fake coal with a hole in it that contained silver filings. When he wiped his forehead from all his hard work, he laid down this "coal" right above where the crucible was located. Naturally, when the wax melted away from this phony coal due to heat exposure, its silver filings fell into place over top of where the actual quicksilver was located inside of its own container within that same furnace.

Next, the Canon told the priest to bring him a piece of chalk and a silver rod. He promised that he would make an ingot of gold out of the two items in front of the priest's eyes. The Canon secretly inserted a metal rod into the chalk, then threw it into water. When it melted away, only the silver rod remained. The priest was delighted by this trick but wanted more proof from his host before paying for anything else. So, taking up another ounce of quicksilver (a liquid), which is easily changed back and forth from a solid state to one consisting entirely of gas particles (gas), he took up some hollow tubes filled with silver filings at one end and put them above some quicksilver in a bowl on top of hot coals. It looked as if there had been no change when he removed them from over the flames—it seemed as if all traces of silver had disappeared into thin air!

The Canon uses various tricks and schemes to get money from his audience. For example, he tells the priest that if he gets caught as a sorcerer, he will be killed. This way, the Canon can charge higher prices for his services.

The narrator believes it is easy for men to take gold and turn it into nothing. Many authorities have written about the philosopher's stone, including Arnaldus of Villanova, Hermes Trismegistus, and Plato. The narrator firmly concludes that God does not want man to discover how to get this philosopher's stone. Therefore we should let it go on as a mystery.

The Second Nun's Tale is hardly over when two new characters arrive on the pilgrimage, riding up behind them and eventually overtaking them. The arrival of the Canon and his Yeoman is such an unusual event that it was left out of one manuscript. It has transformation as its central theme—not surprisingly, then, it pinpoints a change already starting to occur within the fabric of the Canterbury Tales as a whole.

Alchemy is the subject of a tale called “The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale,” which argues that all things are in a state of perpetual change. Coals can become the philosopher's stone, metal melts to become a false covering for a crucifix, and thanks to trickery by the narrator we are never quite sure what substance it is we are examining. Can we ever tell what it is we're looking at?

The Canon is a mysterious figure and he seems to be the only character who can't tell stories about his own life. He's also shrouded in mystery, almost like a ghost or someone not of this world. The Yeoman claims that the story is about another canon but it's highly unlikely that he knows so much about him. Therefore, we should assume that the Canon is just a fictional character on whom the Yeoman bases his story.

The Yeoman starts out by praising the Canon as a great, wonderful man. However, he then quickly reverses his opinion and portrays the Canon as an untrustworthy character. This makes it hard to determine what is true about him and what isn't. The visual imagery of both characters also suggests that
they are undergoing some sort of transformation (the sweating horses).

The central image of the Canon Yeoman's tale is the furnace in their workshop. It represents hell, as well as evil and falseness. The furnace also refers to money because money can be seen as a root of all evil, which is what the Pardoner argues in his tale. Also, justice isn't served at the end of this story like it was for Nicholas after he was branded by Absolon in The Miller's Tale.

However, the way that this timely reminder of the profitability of falsehood intrudes upon the tale also points to a complex narrative problem. Just as hollow words and empty bones could bring people to salvation, so too can trickery actually make someone money. The Canon's Yeoman can supposedly turn this experience into a moral tale for everyone to listen to. Of what substance is a tale made? Can it acknowledge the desire for gold without endorsing it? As it reaches its conclusion, the pilgrimage is waylaid by another pertinent reminder of storytelling and language's questionable nature. Tales and language are not always innocent.

**The Manciple's Tale**

The host turns to the cook, who is sleeping on his horse. The cook says that he would rather sleep than drink some of the best wine in Cheapside. The manciple steps up and politely excuses him from telling a tale, then mocks him for being drunk. He calls out to the Cook's face about how open his mouth is and how bad his breath smells, which angers the Cook so much that he falls off of his horse into mud. Everyone helps lift him back onto it, but they all agree that he’s too drunk to tell a story and needs more help staying on it than anything else.

The Host then says that it is unwise to openly mock the Cook because one day he might get revenge. The Manciple agrees and gives the Cook some wine, which makes him very thankful. Everyone laughs at this, including the Host, who comments on how good drink can turn rancor into love by blessing Bacchus, god of wine. He asks for a tale from the Manciple.

Phoebus, the god of poetry and music, was a bachelor who lived on earth. He excelled in singing and playing musical instruments. Phoebus had a white crow that could imitate any man's voice perfectly and sing better than a nightingale.

Phoebus had a wife whom he loved very much. He also did his best to make her happy and treat her with respect, except that he was extremely jealous. The narrator says it's pointless to be so jealous because if your spouse is faithful there's no need for you to monitor them and if they're not then nothing you can do will stop them from cheating on you. Take any bird, the narrator suggests, put it in a cage and even though the cage may be gilded and luxurious the bird would rather eat worms in the forest than stay in its cage. Therefore men are always attracted by women who are socially inferior to their wives. Flesh loves novelty.

Phoebus had no idea that his wife was having an affair, but she did. She sent for her lover and they made love on Phoebus's bed. The white crow saw all of this happen, so he told Phoebus when he returned home.
Phoebus thought the crow was singing a song that he didn't know, but the crow clarified that his wife had sex with another man in their bed.

Phoebus was so upset that he killed his wife and destroyed all of his instruments. He blamed the crow for what happened, calling him a traitor. The crow tried to explain himself but Phoebus wouldn't listen. Instead, he plucked out every single white feather on the crow's body and made it black as coal.

Phoebus' actions are why crows are black today.

The narrator turns to his audience and tells them that they should be careful of what they say. They shouldn't tell a man that his wife is cheating on him because he will hate the messenger. One must think before speaking, and one's tongue should never wag faster than their brain. We can also learn from this tale about how destructive jealousy can be, as well as how it destroys poetry itself.

The Manciple's Tale is similar to the Nun's Priest's Tale, but it has a darker tone. It seems like a beast fable at first because it has talking animals and uses metaphors. However, the tale comes back down to reality quickly when we realize that the god of poetry is actually human and not divine. The crow becomes an omen of death instead of something happy or nice. The message of the story is clear: know when to be silent and don't tell everything you know all the time.

Chaucer's Retraction is a poem that warns against telling certain stories. It also teaches us to be careful about what we say, because it can have negative consequences. Chaucer says he has told too many tales and now regrets it. He feels guilty for writing the Canterbury Tales, which are full of sin and blasphemy.

**The Parson's Tale and Chaucer's Retraction**

**The Preacher's Introduction**

By the time the Manciple's tale was finished, it was too late. The Host then turns to the Parson and asks him to "nytte up wel a greet mateere" (conclude a huge matter) by telling his final tale. The Parson refused, saying that he would tell no fable because Paul tells Timothy in one of his letters not to do so.

The Parson tells a story about morality and virtuous matters. He also makes jokes, but he doesn't know much about alliterative poetry. Everyone agrees that the Parson's tale was the best way to end the project, and they ask for him to tell his tale before sunset.

**The Clergyman’s Story**

The Parson's tale is a lengthy sermon that defines the three parts of penitence (contrition, confession and satisfaction) as well as its causes.

The second part of the sermon considers confession, which is when a person shares their sins with a priest. Sin can be divided into two types: venial and deadly. Venial sin is less serious than deadly sin, but both are still considered to be sinful acts.
The third part of the sermon presents each sin and its spiritual remedy. Pride is at the root of all sins, as it leads to Envy, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony and Lechery. The Parson states that oral confession is required for absolution from these sins.

There are many conditions to penitence, including the intensity of the sin committed and how quickly you change your ways. The result is that you become a better person. You can see this in Christianity, where people feel bad about their sins and move on with their lives. This passage also talks about satisfaction, which means making up for what you've done wrong. In the end, it suggests that there is a paradise where no one feels hunger or thirst or coldness because they have perfect knowledge of God. To get to this paradise, however, requires spiritual poverty (giving up worldly things) and avoiding sin so as not to go back into hell.

The author of this book wants to make it clear that he is not a good writer. He's pretty ignorant and he's just writing what he thinks, so if you don't like anything in the book, please blame him for it and not God because He would have done better if only He knew how.

The author asks the reader to pray for him, so that he may be forgiven by God for his sins. He also asks that Christ have mercy on him and forgive his transgressions. In particular, he mentions translations of worldly vanities: Troilus and Criseyde, The Book of Fame, The Book of the Twenty-Five Ladies, The Duchesses Tale, Parliament of Fowls (Parlement/Tale), and Canterbury Tales.

The narrator thanks Christ for his translation of the Boece, which is a book about saints' legends and homilies. He hopes that through Christ's grace he can be one of those saved in the day of reckoning.

The book ends with a Latin prayer and Amen, before announcing that the compilation of Canterbury Tales has ended. It adds that it is “of whos soule Jhesu Crist have mercy”.

One of the biggest questions about The Canterbury Tales is how they end. Chaucer often created false endings or trick endings, which end by not ending and do not conclude. In fact, there is a false ending in the Parson's Tale when he ends with a sermon that seems to be perfectly genuine but isn't really because it was written as an example for clergymen on how to save their souls.

Yet, can we take the Parson's sermon seriously? It seems to be just another genre in a book that has anthologized various genres and drawn attention to their speaker. The Pardoner points out that these speakers are ventriloquizing, or speaking through someone else.

There is a lot of disagreement about the right answer to this question. The same problem applies to Chaucer's retraction, which blurs the line between the author and his character. Is it possible that Chaucer wrote The Canterbury Tales?

Perhaps Chaucer's retraction was genuine. In this theory, he was dying and couldn't finish the work or for some reason felt compelled to end it before the Host's plan was complete. So, before the final tale could be told, he ended with a pious sermon and then a Retraction: no one could therefore accuse his tales of being unchristian. Is it a death bed confession?

A retraction is a fairly common ending to medieval works, and it may point us toward the reason why
Chaucer wrote this way: It could be read as comedy rather than penance. Furthermore, it's questionable to use the Parson's Tale as an interpretative key for unlocking all of the Canterbury Tales because some tales are deliberately provocative about Christianity, such as The Miller's Tale or The Wife of Bath's Tale. In any case, Christianity is certainly a major theme in many of these stories.

Endings in Chaucer are difficult to interpret because there isn't a definitive meaning behind them. Perhaps these endings were intended by the author himself or perhaps they're just another way of closing down his tales and telling us that we should know when to stop talking. It's possible that this is an imaginary deathbed scene where he puns on the word peace, but it could also be real or literary. The interpretation of the work as a whole can certainly encapsulate how difficult it is to understand even one ending within this book.