

# GEOFFREY CHAUCER

## The Canterbury tales

### The General Prologue

- 1 Whan that aprill with his shoures soote
  - 2 The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
  - 3 And bathed every veyne in swich licour
  - 4 Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
  - 5 Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
  - 6 Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
  - 7 Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
  - 8 Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
  - 9 And smale foweles maken melodye,
  - 10 That slepen al the nyght with open ye
  - 11 (so priketh hem nature in hir corages);
  - 12 Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
  - 13 And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
  - 14 To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
  - 15 And specially from every shires ende
  - 16 Of engelond to caunterbury they wende,
  - 17 The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
  - 18 That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.
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- 19 Bifil that in that seson on a day,
  - 20 In southwerk at the tabard as I lay
  - 21 Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
  - 22 To caunterbury with ful devout corage,
  - 23 At nyght was come into that hostelrye
  - 24 Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
  - 25 Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
  - 26 In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
  - 27 That toward caunterbury wolden ryde.
  - 28 The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
  - 29 And wel we weren esed atte beste.
  - 30 And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
  - 31 So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
  - 32 That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
  - 33 And made forward erly for to ryse,
  - 34 To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.
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- 35 But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
  - 36 Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
  - 37 Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
  - 38 To telle yow al the condicioun
  - 39 Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
  - 40 And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
  - 41 And eek in what array that they were inne;
  - 42 And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

43 A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man,  
44 That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
45 To riden out, he loved chivalrie,  
46 Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.  
47 Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
48 And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,  
49 As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,  
50 And evere honoured for his worthynesse.  
51 At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.  
52 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
53 Aboven alle nacions in pruce;  
54 In lettow hadde he reysed and in ruce,  
55 No cristen man so ofte of his degree.  
56 In gernade at the seege eek hadde he be  
57 Of algezir, and riden in belmarye.  
58 At lyeys was he and at satalye,  
59 Whan they were wonne; and in the grete see  
60 At many a noble armee hadde he be.  
61 At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,  
62 And foughten for oure feith at tramyssene  
63 In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.  
64 This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also  
65 Somtyme with the lord of palatye  
66 Agayn another hethen in turkye.

67 And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys;  
68 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,  
69 And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.  
70 He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde  
71 In al his lyf unto no maner wight.  
72 He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.  
73 But, for to tellen yow of his array,  
74 His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.  
75 Of fustian he wered a gypon  
76 Al bismotered with his habergeon,  
77 For he was late ycome from his viage,  
78 And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.

79 With hym ther was his sone, a yong squier,  
80 A lovyere and a lusty bacheler,  
81 With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.  
82 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
83 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
84 And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.  
85 And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie  
86 In flaundes, in artoys, and pycardie,  
87 And born hym weel, as of so litel space,  
88 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.  
89 Embrouded was he, as it were a meede  
90 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.

91 Syngyng he was, or floytyng, al the day;  
92 He was as fressh as is the month of may.  
93 Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde.  
94 Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.  
95 He koude songes make and wel endite,  
96 Juste and eek daunce, and weel purtreye and write.  
97 So hote he lovede that by nyghtertale.  
98 He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.  
99 Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,  
100 And carf biforn his fader at the table.

101 A yeman hadde he and servantz namo  
102 At that tyme, for hym liste ride so,  
103 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.  
104 A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,  
105 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,  
106 (wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly:  
107 His arwes drouped nocht with fetheres lowe)  
108 And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.  
109 A not heed hadde he, with a broun visage.  
110 Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage.  
111 Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,  
112 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,  
113 And on that oother syde a gay daggere  
114 Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere;  
115 A cristopher on his brest of silver sheene.  
116 An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;  
117 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

118 Ther was also a nonne, a prioresse,  
119 That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;  
120 Hire gretteste ooth was but by seinte loy;  
121 And she was cleped madame eglentyne.  
122 Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,  
123 Entuned in hir nose ful semely,  
124 And frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,  
125 After the scole of stratford atte bowe,  
126 For frenssh of parys was to hire unknowe.  
127 At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:  
128 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,  
129 Ne wette hir fynGRES in hir sauce depe;  
130 Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe  
131 That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.  
132 In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest.  
133 Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene  
134 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene  
135 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.  
136 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.  
137 And sikerly she was of greet desport,  
138 And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,  
139 And peyned hire to countrefete cheere

140 Of court, and to been estatlich of manere,  
141 And to ben holden digne of reverence.  
142 But, for to speken of hire conscience,  
143 She was so charitable and so pitous  
144 She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous  
145 Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.  
146 Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde  
147 With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel-breed.  
148 But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,  
149 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte;  
150 And al was conscience and tendre herte.  
151 Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was,  
152 Hir nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,  
153 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;  
154 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;  
155 It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;  
156 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.  
157 Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war.  
158 Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar  
159 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,  
160 And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,  
161 On which ther was first write a crowned a,  
162 And after amor vincit omnia.

163 Another nonne with hire hadde she,  
164 That was hir chapeleyne, and preestes thre.

165 A monk ther was, a fair for the maistrie,  
166 An outridere, that lovede venerie,  
167 A manly man, to been an abbot able.  
168 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,  
169 And whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere  
170 Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere  
171 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle.

172 Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle,  
173 The reule of seint maure or of seint beneit,  
174 By cause that it was old and somdel streit  
175 This ilke monk leet olde thynges pace,  
176 And heeld after the newe world the space.  
177 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,  
178 That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men,  
179 Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,  
180 Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees, --  
181 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.  
182 But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;  
183 And I seyde his opinion was good.  
184 What sholde he studie and make hymselfen wood,  
185 Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,  
186 Or swynken with his handes, and labour,  
187 As austyn bit? how shal the world be served?

188 Lat austyn have his swynk to hym reserved!  
189 Therefore he was a prikasour aright:  
190 Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in flight;  
191 Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare  
192 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.  
193 I seigh his sleeves purfiled at the hond  
194 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;  
195 And, for to festne his hood under his chyn,  
196 He hadde of gold ywroght a ful curious pyn;  
197 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.  
198 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,  
199 And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.  
200 He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;  
201 His eyen stepe, and rollynge in his heed,  
202 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;  
203 His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.  
204 Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;  
205 He was nat pale as a forpyned goost.  
206 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.  
207 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

208 A frere ther was, a wantowne and a merye,  
209 A lymytour, a ful solempne man.  
210 In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan  
211 So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.  
212 He hadde maad ful many a mariage  
213 Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.  
214 Unto his ordre he was a noble post.  
215 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he  
216 With frankeleyns over al in his contree,  
217 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;  
218 For he hadde power of confessioun,  
219 As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,  
220 For of his ordre he was licenciat.  
221 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,  
222 And plesaunt was his absolucioun:  
223 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce,  
224 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce.  
225 For unto a povre ordre for to yive  
226 Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;  
227 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,  
228 He wiste that a man was repentaunt;  
229 For many a man so hard is of his herte,  
230 He may nat wepe, although hym soore smerte.  
231 Therefore in stede of wepyng and preyeres  
232 Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.  
233 His typet was ay farsed ful of knyves  
234 And pynnes, for to yeven faire wyves.  
235 And certainly he hadde a murye note:  
236 Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote;  
237 Of yeddynges he baar outrely the pris.

238 His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;  
239 Therto he strong was as a champioun.  
240 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun  
241 And everich hostiler and tappestere  
242 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;  
243 For unto swich a worthy man as he  
244 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,  
245 To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.  
246 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce,  
247 For to deelen with no swich poraille,  
248 But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.  
249 And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,  
250 Curteis he was and lowely of servyse.  
251 Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.  
252 He was the beste beggere in his hous;  
252.1 (and yaf a certeyne ferme for the graunt;  
252.2 Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;)  
253 For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,  
254 So plesaunt was his in principio,  
255 Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente.  
256 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.  
257 And rage he koude, as it were right a whelp.  
258 In love-dayes ther koude he muchel help,  
259 For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer  
260 With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,  
261 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.  
262 Of double worstede was his semycope,  
263 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.  
264 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,  
265 To make his englissh sweete upon his tonge;  
266 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,  
267 His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,  
268 As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.  
269 This worthy lymytour was cleped huberd.

270 A marchant was ther with a forked berd,  
271 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat;  
272 Upon his heed a flaundryssh bever hat,  
273 His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.  
274 His resons he spak ful solempnely,  
275 Sownynge alwey th' encrees of his wynnyng.

276 He wolde the see were kept for any thyng  
277 Bitwixe middelburgh and orewelle.  
278 Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.  
279 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette:  
280 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,  
281 So estatly was he of his governaunce  
282 With his bargaynes and with his chevysaunce.  
283 For sothe he was a worthy man with alle,  
284 But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

285 A clerk ther was of oxenford also,  
286 That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.  
287 As leene was his hors as is a rake,  
288 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,  
289 But looked holwe, and therto sobrelly.  
290 Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;  
291 For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,  
292 Ne was so worldly for to have office.  
293 For hym was levere have at his beddes heed  
294 Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,  
295 Of aristotle and his philosophie,  
296 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.  
297 But al be that he was a philosophre,  
298 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
299 But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,  
300 On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,  
301 And bisily gan for the soules preye  
302 Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.  
303 Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede,  
304 Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,  
305 And that was seyde in forme and reverence,  
306 And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence;  
307 Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,  
308 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

309 A sergeant of the lawe, war and wys,  
310 That often hadde been at the parvys,  
311 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.  
312 Discreet he was and of greet reverence --  
313 He semed swich, his wordes weren so wise.  
314 Justice he was ful often in assise,  
315 By patente and by pleyn commissioun.  
316 For his science and for his heigh renoun,  
317 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.  
318 So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:  
319 Al was fee symple to hym in effect;  
320 His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.  
321 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,  
322 And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
323 In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle  
324 That from the tyme of kyng william were falle.  
325 Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,  
326 Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng;  
327 And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.  
328 He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote.  
329 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
330 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

331 A frankeleyne was in his compaignye.  
332 Whit was his berd as is the dayesyne;

333 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.  
334 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;  
335 To lyven in delit was evere his wone,  
336 For he was epicurus owene sone,  
337 That heeld opinioun that pleyne delit  
338 Was verray felicitee parfit.  
339 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;  
340 Seint julian he was in his contree.  
341 His breed, his ale, was always after oon;  
342 A better envyned man was nowher noon.  
343 Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous  
344 Of fish and flessh, and that so plentevous,  
345 It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,  
346 Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.  
347 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,  
348 So chaunged he his mete and his soper.  
349 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,  
350 And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.  
351 Wo was his cook but if his sauce were  
352 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.  
353 His table dormant in his halle alway  
354 Stood redy covered al the longe day.  
355 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;  
356 Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.  
357 An anlaas and a gipser al of silk  
358 Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.  
359 A shirreve hadde he been, and a contour.  
360 Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.

361 An haberdasshere and a carpenter,  
362 A webbe, a dyere, and a tapycer, --  
363 And they were clothed alle in o lyveree  
364 Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.  
365 Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was;  
366 Hir knyves were chaped noght with bras  
367 But al with silver; wrought ful clene and weel  
368 Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.  
369 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys  
370 To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.  
371 Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,  
372 Was shaply for to been an alderman.  
373 For catel hadde they ynogh and rente,  
374 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;  
375 And elles certeyn were they to blame.  
376 It is ful fair to been ycleped madame,  
377 And goon to vigilies al bifore,  
378 And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

379 A cook they hadde with hem for the nones  
380 To boille the chiknes with the marybones,  
381 And poudre-marchant tart and galyngale.



382 Wel koude he knowe a draughte of londoun ale.  
383 He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,  
384 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.  
385 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,  
386 That on his shyne a mormal hadde he.  
387 For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

388 A shipman was ther, wonynge fer by weste;  
389 For aught I woot, he was of dertemouthe.  
390 He rood upon a rounce, as he kouthe,  
391 In a gowne of faldyng to the knee.  
392 A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he  
393 Aboute his nekke, under his arm adoun.  
394 The hoot somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;  
395 And certainly he was a good felawe.  
396 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe  
397 Fro burdeux-ward, whil that the chapmen sleep.  
398 Of nyce conscience took he no keep.  
399 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,  
400 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.  
401 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,  
402 His stremes, and his daungers hym bisides,  
403 His herberwe, and his moone, his lodemenage,  
404 Ther nas noon swich from hulle to cartage.  
405 Hardy he was and wys to undertake;  
406 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.  
407 He knew alle the havenes, as they were,  
408 Fro gootlond to the cape of fynystere,  
409 And every cryke in britaigne and in spayne.  
410 His barge ycleped was the maudelayne.

411 With us ther was a doctour of phisik;  
412 In al this world ne was the noon hym lik,  
413 To speke of phisik and of surgerye  
414 For he was grounded in astronomye.  
415 He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel  
416 In houres by his magyk natureel.  
417 Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent  
418 Of his ymages for his pacient.  
419 He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
420 Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,  
421 And where they engendred, and of what humour.  
422 He was a verray, parfit praktisour:  
423 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,  
424 Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.  
425 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries  
426 To sende hym drogges and his letuaries,  
427 For ech of hem made oother for to wyne --  
428 Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.  
429 Wel knew he the olde esculapius,  
430 And deyscorides, and eek rufus,

431 Olde ypocras, haly, and galyen,  
432 Serapion, razis, and avycen,  
433 Averrois, damascien, and constantyn,  
434 Bernard, and gatesden, and gilbertyn.  
435 Of his diete mesurable was he,  
436 For it was of no superfluitee,  
437 But of greet norissyng and digestible.  
438 His studie was but litel on the bible.  
439 In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,  
440 Lyned with taffata and with sendal;  
441 And yet he was but esy of dispence;  
442 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
443 For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
444 Therefore he lovede gold in special.

445 A good wif was ther of biside bathe,  
446 But she was somdel deaf, and that was scathe.  
447 Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt,  
448 She passed hem of ypres and of gaunt.  
449 In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon  
450 That to the offryng before hire sholde goon;  
451 And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,  
452 That she was out of alle charitee.  
453 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground;  
454 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound  
455 That on a sonday weren upon hir heed.  
456 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,  
457 Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and newe.  
458 Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.  
459 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:  
460 Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,  
461 Withouten oother compaignye in youthe, --  
462 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.  
463 And thries hadde she been at jusalem;  
464 She hadde passed many a straunge strem;  
465 At rome she hadde been, and at boloigne,  
466 In galice at seint-jame, and at coloine.  
467 She koude muchel of wandryng by the weye.  
468 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.  
469 Upon an amblere esily she sat,  
470 Ywympled wel, and on hir heed an hat  
471 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;  
472 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,  
473 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.  
474 In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe.  
475 Of remedies of love she knew per chance,  
476 For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

477 A good man was ther of religioun,  
478 And was a povre persoun of a toun,  
479 But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.

480 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
481 That cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;  
482 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.  
483 Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,  
484 And in adversitee ful pacient,  
  
485 And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.  
486 Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,  
487 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,  
488 Unto his povre parisshe aboute  
489 Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.  
490 He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.  
491 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,  
492 But he ne left nat, for reyn ne thonder,  
493 In siknesse nor in meschief to visite  
494 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,  
495 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.  
496 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,  
497 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.  
498 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,  
499 And this figure he added eek therto,  
500 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?  
501 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,  
502 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;  
503 And shame it is, if a prest take keep,  
504 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.  
505 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,  
506 By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve.  
507 He sette nat his benefice to hyre  
508 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre  
509 And ran to londoun unto seinte poules  
510 To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,  
511 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;  
512 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,  
513 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;  
514 He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.  
515 And though he hooly were and vertuous,  
516 He was to synful men nat despitous,  
517 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,  
518 But in his techyng discret and benygne.  
519 To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,  
520 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.  
521 But it were any persone obstinat,  
522 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,  
523 Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.  
524 A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.  
525 He waited after no pompe and reverence,  
526 Ne maked him a spiced conscience,  
527 But cristes loore and his apostles twelve  
528 He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe.

529 With hym ther was a plowman, was his brother,  
530 That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother;  
531 A trewe swynkere and a good was he,  
532 Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.  
533 God loved he best with al his hoole herte  
534 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,  
535 And thanne his neighebor right as hymselfe.  
536 He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,  
537 For cristes sake, for every povre wight,  
538 Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.  
539 His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,  
540 Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.  
541 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

542 Ther was also a reve, and a millere,  
543 A somnour, and a pardoner also,  
544 A maunciple, and myself -- ther were namo.

545 The millere was a stout carl for the nones;  
546 Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.  
547 That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,  
548 At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram.  
549 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;  
550 Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,  
551 Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.  
552 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,  
553 And therto brood, as though it were a spade.  
554 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade  
555 A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,  
556 Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;  
557 His nosethirles blake were and wyde.  
558 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.  
559 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.  
560 He was a janglere and a goliardeys,  
561 And that was moost of synne and harlotries.  
562 Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen thries;  
563 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.  
564 A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.  
565 A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,  
566 And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

567 A gentil maunciple was ther of a temple,  
568 Of which achatours myghte take exemple  
569 For to be wise in byyng of vitaille;  
570 For whether that he payde or took by taille,  
571 Algate he wayted so in his achaat  
572 That he was ay biforn and in good staat.  
573 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace  
574 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace  
575 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?  
576 Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,

577 That weren of lawe expert and curious,  
578 Of which ther were a duszeyne in that hous  
579 Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond  
580 Of any lord that is in engelond,  
581 To make hym lyve by his propre good  
582 In honour dettelees (but if he were wood),  
583 Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;  
584 And able for to helpen al a shire  
585 In any caas that myghte falle or happe;  
586 And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.

587 The reve was a sclendre colerik man.  
588 His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;  
589 His heer was by his erys ful round yshorn;

590 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn  
591 Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,  
592 Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.  
593 Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;  
594 Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.  
595 Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn  
596 The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.  
597 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,  
598 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye  
599 Was hoolly in this reves governyng,  
600 And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng,  
601 Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age.  
602 Ther koude no man bryng hym in arrerage.  
603 Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,  
604 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;  
605 They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.  
606 His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;  
607 With grene trees yshadwed was his place.  
608 He koude better than his lord purchace.  
609 Ful riche he was astored pryvely:  
610 His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,  
611 To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,  
612 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.  
613 In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster;  
614 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.  
615 This reve sat upon a ful good stot,  
616 That was al pomely grey and highte scot.  
617 A long surcote of pers upon he hade,  
618 And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.  
619 Of northfolk was this reve of which I telle,  
620 Biside a toun men clepen baldeswelle.  
621 Tukked he was as is a frere aboute,  
622 And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.

623 A somonour was ther with us in that place,  
624 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,

625 For saucefleem he was, with eyen narwe.  
626 As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,  
627 With scalled browes blake and piled berd.  
628 Of his visage children were aferd.  
629 Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,  
630 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon;  
631 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,  
632 That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes white,  
633 Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.  
634 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,  
635 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;  
636 Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were wood.  
637 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,  
638 Thanne wolde he speke no word but latyn.  
639 A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,  
640 That he had lerned out of som decree --  
641 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;  
642 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay  
643 Kan clepen watte as wel as kan the pope.  
644 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,  
645 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;  
646 Ay questio quid iuris wolde he crie.  
647 He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;  
648 A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde.  
649 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn  
650 A good felawe to have his concubyn  
651 A twelf month, and excuse hym atte fulle;  
652 Ful prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.  
653 And if he foond owher a good felawe,  
654 He wolde techen him to have noon awe  
655 In swich caas of the ercedekenes curs,  
656 But if a mannes soule were in his purs;  
657 For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.  
658 Purs is the ercedekenes helle, seyde he.  
659 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;  
660 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,  
661 For curs wol slee right as assoillyng savith,  
662 And also war hym of a significavit.  
663 In daunger hadde he at his owene gise  
664 The yonge girles of the diocise,  
665 And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.  
666 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed  
667 As greet as it were for an ale-stake.  
668 A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.

669 With hym ther rood a gentil pardoner  
670 Of rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,  
671 That streight was comen fro the court of rome.  
672 Ful loude he soong com hider, love, to me!  
673 This somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;  
674 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.

675 This pardonere hadde heer as yelow as wex,  
676 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;  
677 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,  
678 And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;  
679 But thynne it lay, by colpons oon and oon.  
680 But hood, for jolitee, wered he noon,  
681 For it was trussed up in his walet.  
682 Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;  
683 Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.  
684 Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.  
685 A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.  
686 His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,  
687 Bretful of pardoun, comen from rome al hoot.  
688 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.  
689 No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;  
690 As smothe it was as it were late shave.  
691 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.  
692 But of his craft, fro berwyk into ware,  
693 Ne was ther swich another pardonere  
694 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,  
695 Which that he seyde was oure lady veyl:

696 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl  
697 That seint peter hadde, whan that he wente  
698 Upon the see, til jhesu crist hym hente.  
699 He hadde a croys of latoun ful of stones,  
700 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.  
701 But with thise reliques, whan that he fond  
702 A povre person dwellynge upon lond,  
703 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye  
704 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;  
705 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,  
706 He made the person and the peple his apes.  
707 But trewely to tellen atte laste,  
708 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.  
709 Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,  
710 But alderbest he song an offertorie;  
711 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,  
712 He moste preche and wel affile his tonge  
713 To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;  
714 Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

715 Now have I toold you soothly, in a clause,  
716 Th' estaat, th' array, the nombre, and eek the cause  
717 Why that assembled was this compaignye  
718 In southwerk at this gentil hostelrye  
719 That highte the tabard, faste by the belle.  
720 But now is tyme to yow for to telle  
721 How that we baren us that ilke nyght,  
722 Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght;  
723 And after wol I telle of our viage

724 And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.  
725 But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,  
726 That ye n' arette it nat my vileynye,  
727 Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this mateere,  
728 To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,  
729 Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.  
730 For this ye knowen al so wel as I,  
731 Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,  
732 He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan  
733 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
734 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,  
735 Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
736 Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.  
737 He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;  
738 He moot as wel seye o word as another.  
739 Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,  
740 And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.  
741 Eek plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,  
742 The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.  
743 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,  
744 Al have I nat set folk in hir degree  
745 Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde.  
746 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

747 Greet chiere made oure hoost us everichon,  
748 And to the soper sette he us anon.  
749 He served us with vitaille at the beste;  
750 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.  
751 A semely man oure hooste was withalle  
752 For to han been a marchal in an halle.  
753 A large man he was with eyen stepe --  
754 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in chepe --  
755 Bould of his speche, and wys, and wel ytaught,  
756 And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.  
757 Eek therto he was right a myrie man,  
758 And after soper pleyen he bigan,  
759 And spak of myrthe amanges othere thynges,  
760 Whan that we hadde maad oure rekenynges,  
761 And seyde thus: now, lordynges, trewely,  
762 Ye been to me right welcome, hertely;  
763 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,  
764 I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye  
765 Atones in this herberwe as is now.  
766 Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.  
767 And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,  
768 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.

769 Ye goon to caunterbury -- God yow speede,  
770 The blisful martir quite yow youre meede!  
771 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,  
772 Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;



773 For trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon  
774 To ride by the weye doumb as a stoon;  
775 And therfore wol I maken yow disport,  
776 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.  
777 And if yow liketh alle by oon assent  
778 For to stonden at my juggement,  
779 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,  
780 To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,  
781 Now, by my fader soule that is deed,  
782 But ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed!  
783 Hoold up youre hondes, withouten moore speche.

784 Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche.  
785 Us thoughte it was nocht worth to make it wys,  
786 And graunted hym withouten moore avys,  
787 And bad him seye his voidit as hym leste.  
788 Lordynges, quod he, now herkneth for the beste;  
789 But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn.  
790 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,  
791 That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,  
792 In this viage shal telle tales tweye  
793 To caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,  
794 And homward he shal tellen othere two,  
795 Of adventures that whilom han bifalle.  
796 And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,  
797 That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas  
798 Tales of best sentence and moost solaas,  
799 Shal have a soper at oure aller cost  
800 Heere in this place, sittynge by this post,

801 Whan that we come agayn fro caunterbury.  
802 And for to make yow the moore mury,  
803 I wol myselfen goodly with yow ryde,  
804 Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde,  
805 And whoso wole my juggement withseye  
806 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.  
807 And if ye vouche sauf that it be so,  
808 Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo,  
809 And I wol erly shape me therfore.

810 This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore  
811 With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also  
812 That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so,  
813 And that he wolde been oure governour,  
814 And oure tales juge and reportour,  
815 And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,  
816 And we wol reuled been at his devys  
817 In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent  
818 We been acorded to his juggement.  
819 And therupon the wyn was fet anon;  
820 We dronken, and to reste wente echon,

821 Withouten any lenger tarynge.  
822 Amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge,  
823 Up roosoure hoost, and wasoure aller cok,  
824 And gradrede us togidre alle in a flok,  
825 And forth we riden a litel moore than paas  
826 Unto the wateryng of seint thomas;  
827 And thereoure hoost bigan his hors areste  
828 And seyde, lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste.  
829 Ye woot youre foreward, and I it yow recorde.  
830 If even-song and morwe-song accorde,  
831 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.  
832 As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,  
833 Whoso be rebel to my juggement  
834 Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.  
835 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;  
836 He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.  
837 Sire knyght, quod he, my mayster and my lord,  
838 Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.  
839 Cometh neer, quod he, my lady prioresse.  
840 And ye, sire clerk, lat be youre shamefastnesse,  
841 Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man!  
842 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,  
843 And shortly for to tellen as it was,  
844 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,  
845 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght,  
846 Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght,  
847 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,  
848 By foreward and by composicioun,  
849 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?  
850 And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,  
851 As he that wys was and obedient  
852 To kepe his foreward by his free assent,  
853 He seyde, syn I shal bigynne the game,  
854 What, welcome be the cut, a goddes name!  
855 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.  
856 And with that word we ryden forthoure weye,  
857 And he bigan with right a myrie cheere  
858 His tale anon, and seyde as ye may heere.

## The Knight's Tale

### Part I

859 Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,  
860 Ther was a duc that highte theseus;  
861 Of atthenes he was lord and governour,  
862 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,  
863 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.  
864 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;  
865 What with his wysdom and his chivalrie,  
866 He conquered al the regne of femenye,

867 That whilom was ycleped scithia,  
868 And weddede the queene ypolita,  
869 And broghte hire hoom with hym in his contree  
870 With muchel glorie and greet solempnytee,  
871 And eek hir yonge suster emelye.  
872 And thus with victorie and with melodye  
873 Lete I this noble duc to atthenes ryde,  
874 And al his hoost in armes hym bisyde.  
875 And certes, if it nere to long to heere,  
876 I wolde have toold yow fully the manere  
877 How wonnen was the regne of femenye  
878 By theseus and by his chivalrye;  
879 And of the grete bataille for the nones  
880 Bitwixen atthenes and amazones;

881 And how asseged was ypolita,  
882 The faire, hardy queene of scithia;  
883 And of the feste that was at hir weddyng,  
884 And of the tempest at hir hoom-comyng;  
885 But al that thyng I moot as now forbere.  
886 I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,  
887 And wayke been the oxen in my plough.  
888 The remenant of the tale is long ynough.  
889 I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;  
890 Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,  
891 And lat se now who shal the soper wynne;  
892 And ther I lefte, I wol ayeyn bigynne.  
893 This duc, of whom I make mencion,  
894 Whan he was come almoost unto the toun,  
895 In al his wele and in his mooste pride,  
896 He was war, as he caste his eye aside,  
897 Where that ther kneled in the heighe weye  
898 A compaignye of ladyes, tweye and tweye,  
899 Ech after oother, clad in clothes blake;  
900 But swich a cry and swich a wo they make  
901 That in this world nys creature lyvyng  
902 That herde swich another waymentyng;  
903 And of this cry they nolde nevere stenten  
904 Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.  
905 What fold been ye, that at myn homcomyng  
906 Perturben so my feste with cryng?  
907 Quod theseus. Have ye so greet envye  
908 Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?  
909 Or who hath yow mysboden or offended?  
910 And telleth me if it may been amended,  
911 And why that ye been clothed thus in blak.  
912 The eldeste lady of hem alle spak,  
913 Whan she hadde swowned with a deedly cheere,  
914 That it was routhe for to seen and heere.  
915 She seyde: lord, to whom fortune hath yiven  
916 Victorie, and as a conqueror to lyven,

917 Nat greveth us youre glorie and youre honour,  
918 But we biseken mercy and socour.  
919 Have mercy on oure wo and oure distresse!  
920 Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,  
921 Upon us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.  
922 For, certes, lord, ther is noon of us alle,  
923 That she ne hath been a duchesse or a queene.  
924 Now be we caytyves, as it is wel seene,  
925 Thanked be fortune and hire false wheel,  
926 That noon estaat assureth to be weel.  
927 And certes, lord, to abyden youre presence,  
928 Heere in this temple of the goddesse clemence  
929 We han ben waitynge al this fourtenyght.  
930 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy myght.  
931 I, wrecche, which that wepe and wayle thus,  
932 Was whilom wyf to kyng cappaneus,  
933 That starf at thebes -- cursed be that day! --  
934 And alle we that been in this array  
935 And maken al this lamentacioun,  
936 We losten alle oure housbondes at that toun,  
937 Whil that the seege therabout lay.  
938 And yet now the olde creon, weylaway!  
939 That lord is now of thebes the citee,  
940 Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,  
941 He, for despit and for his tirannye,  
942 To do the dede bodyes vileynye  
943 Of alle oure lordes whiche that been yslawe,  
944 Hath alle the bodyes on an heep ydrawe,  
945 And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,  
946 Neither to been yburyed nor ybrent,  
947 But maketh houndes ete hem in despit.  
948 And with that word, withouten moore respit,  
949 They fillen gruf and criden pitously,  
950 Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,  
951 And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte.  
952 This gentil duc doun from his courser sterte  
953 With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.  
954 Hym thoughte that his herte wolde breke,  
955 Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so maat,  
956 That whilom weren of so greet estaat;  
957 And in his armes he hem alle up hente,  
958 And hem conforteth in ful good entente,  
959 And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knyght,  
960 He wolde doon so ferforthly his myght  
961 Upon the tiraunt creon hem to wreke,  
962 That al the peple of grece sholde speke  
963 How creon was of theseus yserved  
964 As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.  
965 And right anoon, withouten moore abood,  
966 His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood  
967 To thebes-ward, and al his hoost beside.

968 No neer atthenes wolde he go ne ride,  
969 Ne take his ese fully half a day,  
970 But onward on his wey that nyght he lay,  
971 And sente anon ypolita the queene,  
972 And emelye, hir yonge suster sheene,  
973 Unto the toun of atthenes to dwelle,  
974 And forth he rit; ther is namoore to telle.  
975 The rede statue of mars, with spere and targe,  
976 So shyneth in his white baner large,  
977 That alle the feeldes glyteren up and doun;  
978 And by his baner born is his penoun  
979 Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete  
980 The mynotaur, which that he slough in crete.  
981 Thus rit this duc, thus rit this conquerour,  
982 And in his hoost of chivalrie the flour,  
983 Til that he cam to thebes and alighte  
984 Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoughte to fighte.  
985 But shortly for to speken of this thyng,  
986 With creon, which that was of thebes kyng,

987 He faught, and slough hym manly as a knyght  
988 In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flyght;  
989 And by assaut he wan the citee after,  
990 And rente adoun bothe wall and sparre and rafter;  
991 And to the ladyes he restored agayn  
992 The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,  
993 To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.  
994 But it were al to longe for to devyse  
995 The grete clamour and the waymentyng  
996 That the ladyes made at the brennyng  
997 Of the bodies, and the grete honour  
998 That theseus, the noble conquerour,  
999 Dooth to the ladyes, whan they from hym wente;  
1000 But shortly for to telle is myn entente.  
1001 Whan that this worthy duc, this theseus,  
1002 Hath creon slayn, and wonne thebes thus,  
1003 Stille in that feeld he took al nyght his reste,  
1004 And dide with al the contree as hym leste.  
1005 To ransake in the taas of bodyes dede,  
1006 Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,  
1007 The pilours diden bisynesse and cure  
1008 After the bataille and disconfiture.  
1009 And so bifel that in the taas they founde,  
1010 Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde,  
1011 Two yonge knyghtes liggyng by and by,  
1012 Bothe in oon armes, wrought ful richely,  
1013 Of whiche two arcita highte that oon,  
1014 And that oother knyght highte palamon.  
1015 Nat fully quyke, ne fully dede they were,  
1016 But by hir cote-armures and by hir gere  
1017 The heraudes knewe hem best in special

1018 As they that weren of the blood roial  
1019 Of thebes, and of sustren two yborn.  
1020 Out of the taas the pilours han hem torn,  
1021 And han hem caried softe unto the tente  
1022 Of theseus; and he ful soone hem sente  
1023 To atthenes, to dwellen in prisoun  
1024 Perpetuelly, -- he nolde no raunsoun.  
1025 And whan this worthy duc hath thus ydon,  
1026 He took his hoost, and hoom he rit anon  
1027 With laurer crowned as a conquerour;  
1028 And ther he lyveth in joye and in honour  
1029 Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?  
1030 And in a tour, in angwissh and in wo,  
1031 This palamon and his felawe arcite  
1032 For everemoore; ther may no gold hem quite.  
1033 This passeth yeer by yeer and day by day,  
1034 Till it fil ones, in a morwe of may,  
1035 That emelye, that fairer was to sene  
1036 Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene,  
1037 And fressher than the may with floures newe --  
1038 For with the rose colour stroof hire hewe,  
1039 I noot which was the fyner of hem two --  
1040 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,  
1041 She was arisen and al redy dight;  
1042 For may wole have no slogardie a-nyght.  
1043 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,  
1044 And maketh hym out of his slep to sterte,  
1045 And seith arys, and do thyn observaunce.  
1046 This maked emelye have remembraunce  
1047 To doon honour to may, and for to ryse.  
1048 Yclothed was she fressh, for to devyse:  
1049 Hir yellow heer was broyded in a tresse  
1050 Bihynde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.  
1051 And in the gardyn, at the sonne upriste,  
1052 She walketh up and doun, and as hire liste  
1053 She gadereth floures, party white and rede,  
1054 To make a subtil gerland for hire hede;  
1055 And as an aungel hevenyssshly she soong.  
1056 The grete tour, that was so thikke and stroong,  
1057 Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,  
1058 (ther as the knyghtes weren in prisoun  
1059 Of which I tolde yow and tellen shal)  
1060 Was evene joynant to the gardyn wal  
1061 Ther as this emelye hadde hir pleyynge.  
1062 Bright was the sonne and cleer that morwenynge,  
1063 And palamoun, this woful prisoner,  
1064 As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,  
1065 Was risen and romed in a chambre an heigh,  
1066 In which he al the noble citee seigh,  
1067 And eek the gardyn, ful of braunches grene,  
1068 Ther as this fresshe emelye the shene

1069 Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.  
1070 This sorweful prisoner, this palamoun,  
1071 Goth in the chambre romynge to and fro,  
1072 And to hymself compleynynge of his wo.  
1073 That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, allas!  
1074 And so bifel, by aventure or cas,  
1075 That thurgh a wyndow, thikke of many a barre  
1076 Of iren greet and square as any sparre,  
1077 He cast his eye upon emelya,  
1078 And therwithal he bleynte and cride, a!  
1079 As though he stongen were unto the herte.  
1080 And with that cry arcite anon up sterte,  
1081 And seyde, cosyn myn, what eyleth thee,  
1082 That art so pale and deedly on to see?  
1083 Why cridestow? who hath thee doon offence?  
1084 For goddes love, taak al in pacience  
1085 Oure prisoun, for it may noon oother be.  
1086 Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.  
1087 Som wikke aspect or disposicioun  
1088 Of saturne, by som constellacioun,  
1089 Hath yeven us this, although we hadde it sworn;

1090 So stood the hevene whan that we were born.  
1091 We moste endure it; this is the short and playn.  
1092 This palamon answerde and seyde agayn:  
1093 Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun  
1094 Thow hast a veyn ymaginacioun.  
1095 This prison caused me nat for to crye,  
1096 But I was hurt right now thurghout myn ye  
1097 Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.  
1098 The fairnesse of that lady that I see  
1099 Yond in the gardyn romen to and fro  
1100 Is cause of al my cryng and my wo.  
1101 I noot wher she be womman or goddesse,  
1102 But venus is it soothly, as I gesse.  
1103 And therwithal on knees doun he fil,  
1104 And seyde: venus, if it be thy wil  
1105 Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure  
1106 Bifore me, sorweful, wrecched creature,  
1107 Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.  
1108 And if so be my destyne be shapen  
1109 By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,  
1110 Of oure lynage have som compassioun,  
1111 That is so lowe ybrought by tirannye.  
1112 And with that word arcite gan espye  
1113 Wher as this lady romed to and fro,  
1114 And with that sighte hir beautee hurte hym so,  
1115 That, if that palamon was wounded sore,  
1116 Arcite is hurt as mucche as he, or moore.  
1117 And with a sigh he seyde pitously:  
1118 The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly

1119 Of hire that rometh in the yonder place,  
1120 And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,  
1121 That I may seen hire atte leeste weye,  
1122 I nam but deed; ther nis namoore to seye.  
1123 This palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,  
1124 Dispitously he looked and answerde,  
1125 Wheither seistow this in earnest or in pley?  
1126 Nay, quod arcite, in earnest, by my fey!  
1127 God helpe me so, me list ful yvele pleye.  
1128 This palamon gan knytte his browes tweye.  
1129 It nere, quod he, to thee no greet honour  
1130 For to be fals, ne for to be traitour  
1131 To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother  
1132 Ysworn ful depe, and ech of us til oother,  
1133 That nevere, for to dyen in the peyne,  
1134 Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,  
1135 Neither of us in love to hyndre oother,  
1136 Ne in noon oother cas, my leeve brother;  
1137 But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me  
1138 In every cas, as I shal forthren thee, --  
1139 This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;  
1140 I woot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.  
1141 Thus artow of my conseil, out of doute,  
1142 And now thow woldest falsly been aboute  
1143 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,  
1144 And evere shal til that myn herte sterve.  
1145 Nay, certes, false arcite, thow shalt nat so.  
1146 I loved hire first, and tolde thee my wo  
1147 As to my conseil and my brother sworn  
1148 To forthre me, as I have toold biforn.  
1149 For which thou art ybounden as a knyght  
1150 To helpen me, if it lay in thy myght,  
1151 Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.  
1152 This arcite ful proudly spak ageyn:  
1153 Thow shalt, quod he, be rather fals than I;  
1154 And thou art fals, I telle thee outrely,  
1155 For paramour I loved hire first er thow.  
1156 What wiltow seyen? thou woost nat yet now  
1157 Wheither she be a womman or goddesse!  
1158 Thyn is affeccoun of hoolynesse,  
1159 And myn is love, as to a creature;  
1160 For which I tolde thee myn aventure  
1161 As to my cosyn and my brother sworn.  
1162 I pose that thow lovedest hire biforn;  
1163 Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,  
1164 That "who shal yeve a love any lawe?"  
1165 Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,  
1166 Than may be yeve to any erthely man;  
1167 And therefore positif lawe and swich decree  
1168 Is broken al day for love in ech degree.  
1169 A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.



1170 He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,  
1171 Al be she mayde, or wydwe, or elles wyf.  
1172 And eek it is nat likly al thy lyf  
1173 To stonden in hir grace; namoore shal I;  
1174 For wel thou woost thyselven, verrailly,  
1175 That thou and I be dampned to prisoun  
1176 Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.  
1177 We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon;  
1178 They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon.  
1179 Ther cam a kyte, whil that they were so wrothe,  
1180 And baar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe.  
1181 And therfore, at the kynges court, my brother,  
1182 Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother.  
1183 Love, if thee list, for I love and ay shal;  
1184 And soothly, levee brother, this is al.  
1185 Heere in this prisoun moote we endure,  
1186 And everich of us take his aventure.  
1187 Greet was the strif and long bitwix hem tweye,  
1188 If that I hadde leyser for to seye,  
1189 But to th' effect. It happed on a day,  
1190 To telle it yow as shortly as I may,  
1191 A worthy duc that highte perotheus,  
1192 That felawe was unto duc theseus  
1193 Syn thilke day that they were children lite,  
  
1194 Was come to atthenes his felawe to visite,  
1195 And for to pleye as he was wont to do;  
1196 For in this world he loved no man so,  
1197 And he loved hym als tendrely agayn.  
1198 So wel they lovede, as olde bookes sayn,  
1199 That whan that oon was deed, soothly to telle,  
1200 His felawe wente and soughte hym doun in helle, --  
1201 But of that storie list me nat to write.  
1202 Duc perotheus loved wel arcite,  
1203 And hadde hym knowe at thebes yeer by yere,  
1204 And finally at requeste and preyere  
1205 Of perotheus, withouten any raunsoun,  
1206 Duc theseus hym leet out of prisoun  
1207 Frely to goon wher that hym liste over al,  
1208 In swich a gyse as I you tellen shal.  
1209 This was the forward, pleyedly for t' endite,  
1210 Bitwixen theseus and hym arcite  
1211 That if so were that arcite were yfounde  
1212 Evere in his lif, by day or nyght, oo stounde  
1213 In any contree of this theseus,  
1214 And he were caught, it was acorded thus,  
1215 That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed.  
1216 Ther nas noon oother remedie ne reed;  
1217 But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde.  
1218 Lat hym be war! his nekke lith to wedde.  
1219 How greet a sorwe suffreth now arcite!

1220 The deeth he feeleth thurgh his herte smyte;  
1221 He wepeth, wayleth, crieth pitously;  
1222 To sleen hymself he waiteth prively.  
1223 He seyde, allas that day that I was born!  
1224 Now is my prisoun worse than biforn;  
1225 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle.  
1226 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.  
1227 Allas, that evere knew I perotheus!  
1228 For elles hadde I dwelled with theseus,  
1229 Yfetered in his prisoun everemo.  
1230 Thanne hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.  
1231 Oonly the sighte of hire whom that I serve,  
1232 Though that I nevere hir grace may deserve,  
1233 Wolde han suffised right ynough for me.  
1234 O deere cosyn palamon, quod he,  
1235 Thyn is the victorie of this aventure.  
1236 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure, --  
1237 In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!  
1238 Wel hath fortune yturned thee the dys,  
1239 That hast the sighte of hire, and I th' absence.  
1240 For possible is, syn thou hast hire presence,  
1241 And art a knyght, a worthy and an able,  
1242 That by som cas, syn fortune is chaungeable,  
1243 Thow maist to thy desir somtyme atteyne.  
1244 But I, that am exiled and bareyne  
1245 Of alle grace, and in so greet dispeir,  
1246 That ther nys erthe, water, fir, ne eir,  
1247 Ne creature that of hem maked is,  
1248 That may me helpe or doon confort in this,  
1249 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse.  
1250 Farwel my lif, my lust, and my gladnesse!  
1251 Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune  
1252 On purveiaunce of god, or of fortune,  
1253 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse  
1254 Wel bettre than they kan hemself devyse?  
1255 Som man desireth for to han richesse,  
1256 That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse;  
1257 And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,  
1258 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.  
1259 Infinite harmes been in this mateere.  
1260 We witen nat what thing we preyen heere:  
1261 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.  
1262 A dronke man woot wel he hath an hous,  
1263 But he noot which the righte wey is thider,  
1264 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.  
1265 And certes, in this world so faren we;  
1266 We seken faste after felicitee,  
1267 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.  
1268 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,  
1269 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun  
1270 That if I myghte escapen from prisoun,

1271 Thanne hadde I been in joye and perfit heele,  
1272 Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.  
1273 Syn that I may nat seen you, emelye,  
1274 I nam but deed; ther nys no remedye.  
1275 Upon that oother syde palamon,  
1276 Whan that he wiste arcite was agon,  
1277 Swich sorwe he maketh that the grete tour  
1278 Resouneth of his youlyng and clamour.  
1279 The pure fettres on his shynes grete  
1280 Weren of his bittre, salte teeres wete.  
1281 Allas, quod he, arcita, cosyn myn,  
1282 Of al oure strif, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.  
1283 Thou walkest now in thebes at thy large,  
1284 And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.  
1285 Thou mayst, syn thou hast wisdom and manhede,  
1286 Assemblen alle the folk of oure kynrede,  
1287 And make a werre so sharp on this citee,  
1288 That by som aventure or some tretee  
1289 Thou mayst have hire to lady and to wyf  
1290 For whom that I moste nedes lese my lyf.  
1291 For, as by wey of possibilitee,  
1292 Sith thou art at thy large, of prisoun free,  
1293 And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage  
1294 Moore than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.  
1295 For I moot wepe and wayle, whil I lyve,  
1296 With al the wo that prison may me yive,  
1297 And eek with peyne that love me yeveth also,  
1298 That doubleth al my torment and my wo.

1299 Therwith the fyr of jalousie up sterte  
1300 Withinne his brest, and hente him by the herte  
1301 So woody that he lyk was to biholde  
1302 The boxtree or the asshen dede and colde.  
1303 Thanne seyde he, o crueel goddes that governe  
1304 This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,  
1305 And writen in the table of atthamaunt  
1306 Youre parlement and youre eterne graunt,  
1307 What is mankynde moore unto you holde  
1308 Than is the sheep that rouketh in the folde?  
1309 For slayn is man right as another beest,  
1310 And dwelleth eek in prison and arreest,  
1311 And hath siknesse and greet adversitee,  
1312 And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee.  
1313 What governance is in this prescience,  
1314 That giltelees tormenteth innocence?  
1315 And yet encresseth this al my penaunce,  
1316 That man is bounden to his observaunce,  
1317 For goddes sake, to letten of his wille,  
1318 Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfillle.  
1319 And whan a beest is deed he hath no peyne;  
1320 But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,

1321 Though in this world he have care and wo.  
1322 Withouten doute it may stonden so.  
1323 The answeere of this lete I to dyvynys,  
1324 But wel I woot that in this world greet pyne ys.  
1325 Allas, I se a serpent or a theef,  
1326 That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,  
1327 Goon at his large, and where hym list may turne.  
1328 But I moot been in prisoun thurgh saturne,  
1329 And eek thurgh juno, jalous and eek wood,  
1330 That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood  
1331 Of thebes with his waste walles wyde;  
1332 And venus sleeth me on that oother syde  
1333 For jalousie and fere of hym arcite.  
1334 Now wol I stynte of palamon a lite,  
1335 And lete hym in his prisoun stille dwelle,  
1336 And of arcita forth I wol yow telle.  
1337 The somer passeth, and the nyghtes longe  
1338 Encressen double wise the peynes stronge  
1339 Bothe of the loveere and the prisoner.  
1340 I noot which hath the wofuller mester.  
1341 For, shortly for to seyn, this palamoun  
1342 Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,  
1343 In cheynes and in fettres to been deed;  
1344 And arcite is exiled upon his heed  
1345 For everemo, as out of that contree,  
1346 Ne nevere mo he shal his lady see.  
1347 Yow loveres axe I now this questioun:  
1348 Who hath the worse, arcite or palamoun?  
1349 That oon may seen his lady day by day,  
1350 But in prison he moot dwelle alway;  
1351 That oother wher hym list may ride or go,  
1352 But seen his lady shal he nevere mo.  
1353 Now demeth as yow liste, ye that kan,  
1354 For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Explicit prima pars.

### **Sequitur pars secunda.**

1355 Whan that arcite to thebes comen was,  
1356 Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde allas!  
1357 For seen his lady shal he nevere mo.  
1358 And shortly to concluden al his wo,  
1359 So muche sorwe hadde nevere creature  
1360 That is, or shal, whil that the world may dure.  
1361 His slep, his mete, his drynke, is hym biraft,  
1362 That lene he wex and drye as is a shaft;  
1363 His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,  
1364 His hewe falow and pale as asshen colde,  
1365 And solitarie he was and evere allone,  
1366 And waillynge al the nyght, makynge his mone;

1367 And if he herde song or instrument,  
1368 Thanne wolde he wepe, he myghte nat be stent.  
1369 So feble eek were his spiritz, and so lowe,  
1370 And chaunged so, that no man koude knowe  
1371 His speche nor his voys, though men it herde.  
1372 And in his geere for al the world he ferde,  
1373 Nat oonly lik the loveris maladye  
1374 Of hereos, but rather lyk manye,  
1375 Engendred of humour malencolik,  
1376 Biforen, in his celle fantastik.  
1377 And shortly, turned was al up so doun  
1378 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun  
1379 Of hym, this woful love-re daun arcite.  
1380 What sholde I al day of his wo endite?  
1381 Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two  
1382 This crueel torment and this peyne and wo,  
1383 At thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,  
1384 Upon a nyght in sleep as he hym leyde,  
1385 Hym thoughte how that the wynged God mercurie  
1386 Biforn hym stood and bad hym to be murie.  
1387 His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;  
1388 An hat he werede upon his heris brighte.  
1389 Arrayed was this god, as he took keep,  
1390 As he was whan that argus took his sleep;  
1391 And seyde hym thus: to atthenes shaltou wende,  
1392 Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.  
1393 And with that word arcite wook and sterte.  
1394 Now trewely, hou soore that me smerte,  
1395 Quod he, to atthenes right now wol I fare,  
1396 Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare  
1397 To se my lady, that I love and serve.

1398 In hire presence I recche nat to sterve.  
1399 And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,  
1400 And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,  
1401 And saugh his visage al in another kynde.  
1402 And right anon it ran hym in his mynde,  
1403 That, sith his face was so disfigured  
1404 Of maladye the which he hadde endured,  
1405 He myghte wel, if that he bar hym lowe,  
1406 Lyve in atthenes everemoore unknowe.  
1407 And seen his lady wel ny day by day.  
1408 And right anon he chaunged his array,  
1409 And cladde hym as a povre laborer,  
1410 And al allone, save oonly a squier  
1411 That knew his privetee and al his cas,  
1412 Which was disgised povrely as he was,  
1413 To atthenes is he goon the nexte way.  
1414 And to the court he wente upon a day,  
1415 And at the gate he profreth his servyse

1416 To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.  
1417 And shortly of this matere for to seyn,  
1418 He fil in office with a chamberleyn  
1419 The which that dwellynge was with emelye;  
1420 For he was wys and koude soone espye  
1421 Of every servaunt which that serveth here.  
1422 Wel koude he hewen wode, and water bere,  
1423 For he was yong and myghty for the nones,  
1424 And therto he was long and big of bones  
1425 To doon that any wight kan hym devyse.  
1426 A yeer or two he was in this servyse,  
1427 Page of the chambre of emelye the brighte;  
1428 And philostrate he seyde that he highte.  
1429 But half so wel biloved a man as he  
1430 Ne was ther nevere in court of his degree;  
1431 He was so gentil of condicioun  
1432 That thurghout al the court was his renoun.  
1433 They seyden that it were a charitee  
1434 That theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,  
1435 And putten hym in worshipful servyse,  
1436 Ther as he myghte his vertu excercise.  
1437 And thus withinne a while his name is spronge,  
1438 Bothe of his dedes and his goode tonge,  
1439 That theseus hath taken hym so neer,  
1440 That of his chambre he made hym a squier,  
1441 And gaf hym gold to mayntene his degree.  
1442 And eek men broghte hym out of his contree,  
1443 From yeer to yeer, ful pryvely his rente;  
1444 But honestly and slyly he it spente,  
1445 That no man wondred how that he it hadde.  
1446 And thre yeer in this wise his lif he ladde,  
1447 And bar hym so, in pees and eek in werre,  
1448 Ther was no man that theseus hath derre.  
1449 And in this blisse lete I now arcite,  
1450 And speke I wole of palamon a lite.  
1451 In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun  
1452 Thise seven yeer hath seten palamoun  
1453 Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse.  
1454 Who feeleth double soor and hevynesse  
1455 But palamon, that love destreyneth so  
1456 That wood out of his wit he goth for wo?  
1457 And eek therto he is a prisoner  
1458 Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yer.  
1459 Who koude ryme in englyssh proprely  
1460 His martirdom? for sothe it am nat I;  
1461 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.  
1462 It fel that in the seventh yere, of may  
1463 The thridde nyght, (as olde bookes seyn,  
1464 That al this storie tellen moore pleyn)  
1465 Were it by aventure or destynee --  
1466 As, whan a thyng is shapen, it shal be --

1467 That soone after the mydnyght palamoun,  
1468 By helpyng of a freend, brak his prisoun  
1469 And fleeth the citee faste as he may go.  
1470 For he hadde yeve his gayler drynke so  
1471 Of a clarree maad of a certeyn wyn,  
1472 With nercotikes and opie of thebes fyn,  
1473 That al that nyght, thogh that men wolde him shake,  
1474 The gayler sleep, he myghte nat awake;  
1475 And thus he fleeth as faste as evere he may.  
1476 The nyght was short and faste by the day,  
1477 That nedes cost he moot hymselfen hyde;  
1478 And til a grove faste ther bisyde  
1479 With dredeful foot thanne stalketh palamon.  
1480 For, shortly, this was his opinion,  
1481 That in that grove he wolde hym hyde al day,  
1482 And in the nyght thanne wolde he take his way  
1483 To thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye  
1484 On theseus to helpe him to werreye;  
1485 And shortly, outhere he wolde lese his lif,  
1486 Or wynnem emelye unto his wyf.  
1487 This is th' effect and his entente pleyn.  
1488 Now wol I turne to arcite ageyn,  
1489 That litel wiste how ny that was his care,  
1490 Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.  
1491 The bisy larke, messenger of day,  
1492 Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,  
1493 And firy phebus riseth up so bright  
1494 That al the orient laugheth of the light,  
1495 And with his stremes dryeth in the greves  
1496 The silver dropes hangynge on the leves.  
1497 And arcita, that in the court roial  
1498 With theseus is squier principal,  
1499 Is risen and looketh on the myrie day.  
1500 And for to doon his observaunce to may,  
1501 Remembrynge on the poynt of his desir,  
1502 He on a courser, startlynge as the fir,  
1503 Is riden into the feeldes hym to pleye,

1504 Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye.  
1505 And to the grove of which that I yow tolde  
1506 By aventure his wey he gan to holde,  
1507 To maken hym a gerland of the greves  
1508 Were it of wodebynde or hawethorn leves,  
1509 And loude he song ayeyn the sonne shene:  
1510 May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,  
1511 Welcome be thou, faire, fresshe may,  
1512 In hope that I som grene gete may.  
1513 And from his courser, with a lusty herte,  
1514 Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,  
1515 And in a path he rometh up and doun,

1516 Ther as by aventure this palamoun  
1517 Was in a bussh, that no man myghte hym se,  
1518 For soore afered of his deeth was he.  
1519 No thyng ne knew he that it was arcite;  
1520 God woot he wolde have trowed it ful lite.  
1521 But sooth is seyde, go sithen many yeres,  
1522 That feeld hath eyen and the wode hath eres.  
1523 It is ful fair a man to bere hym evene,  
1524 For al day meeteth men at unset stevene.  
1525 Ful litel woot arcite of his felawe,  
1526 That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,  
1527 For in the bussh he sitteth now ful stille.  
1528 Whan that arcite hadde romed al his fille,  
1529 And songen al the roundel lustily,  
1530 Into a studie he fil sodeynly,  
1531 As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,  
1532 Now in the crope, now doun in the breres,  
1533 Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.  
1534 Right as the friday, soothly for to telle,  
1535 Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,  
1536 Right so kan geery venus overcaste  
1537 The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day  
1538 Is gereful, right so chaungeth she array.  
1539 Selde is the friday al the wowke ylike.  
1540 Whan that arcite had songe, he gan to sike,  
1541 And sette hym doun withouten any moore.  
1542 Allas, quod he, that day that I was bore!  
1543 How longe, juno, thurgh thy crueltee,  
1544 Woltow werreyen thebes the citee?  
1545 Allas, ybrought is to confusioun  
1546 The blood roial of cadme and amphioun, --  
1547 Of cadmus, which that was the firste man  
1548 That thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,  
1549 And of the citee first was crouned kyng.  
1550 Of his lynage am I and his ofspryng  
1551 By verray ligne, as of the stok roial,  
1552 And now I am so caytyf and so thral,  
1553 That he that is my mortal enemy,  
1554 I serve hym as his squier povrely.  
1555 And yet dooth juno me wel moore shame,  
1556 For I dar noght biknowe myn owene name;  
1557 But ther as I was wont to highte arcite,  
1558 Now highte I philostrate, noght worth a myte.  
1559 Allas, thou felle mars! allas, juno!  
1560 Thus hath youre ireoure lynage al fordo,  
1561 Save oonly me and wrecched palamoun,  
1562 That theseus martireth in prisoun.  
1563 And over al this, to sleen me outrely,  
1564 Love hath his firy dart so brennyngly  
1565 Ystiked thurgh my trewe, careful herte,  
1566 That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.



1567 Ye sleen me with youre eyen, emelye!  
1568 Ye been the cause wherfore that I dye.  
1569 Of al the remenant of myn oother care  
1570 Ne sette I nat the montance of a tare,  
1571 So that I koude doon aught to youre plesaunce.  
1572 And with that word he fil down in a traunce  
1573 A longe tyme, and after he up sterte.  
1574 This palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte  
1575 He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde,  
1576 For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.  
1577 And whan that he had herd arcites tale,  
1578 As he were wood, with face deed and pale,  
1579 He stirte hym up out of the buskes thikke,  
1580 And seide: arcite, false traytour wikke,  
1581 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,  
1582 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,  
1583 And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,  
1584 As I ful ofte have told thee heerbiforn,  
1585 And hast byjaped heere duc theseus,  
1586 And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus!  
1587 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.  
1588 Thou shalt nat love my lady emelye,  
1589 But I wol love hire oonly and namo;  
1590 For I am palamon, thy mortal foo.  
1591 And though that I no wepene have in this place,  
1592 But out of prison am astert by grace,  
1593 I drede noght that outhere thou shalt dye,  
1594 Or thou ne shalt nat loven emelye.  
1595 Chees which thou wolt, for thou shalt nat asterte!  
1596 This arcite, with ful despitous herte,  
1597 Whan he hym knew, and hadde his tale herd,  
1598 As fiers as leon pulled out his swerd,  
1599 And seyde thus: by God that sit above,  
1600 Nere it that thou art sik and wood for love,  
1601 And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,  
1602 Thou sholdest nevere out of this grove pace,  
1603 That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.  
1604 For I defye the seurete and the bond  
1605 Which that thou seist that I have maad to thee.  
1606 What, verray fool, thyng wel that love is free,  
1607 And I wol love hire maugree al thy myght!

1608 But for as muche thou art a worthy knyght;  
1609 And wilnest to darreyne hire by bataille,  
1610 Have heer my trouthe, tomorwe I wol nat faille,  
1611 Withoute wityng of any oother wight,  
1612 That heere I wol be founden as a knyght,  
1613 And bryngen harneys right ynough for thee;  
1614 And ches the beste, and leef the worste for me.  
1615 And mete and drynke this nyght wol I brynge

1616 Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy beddyng.  
1617 And if so be that thou my lady wynne,  
1618 And sle me in this wode ther I am inne,  
1619 Thow mayst wel have thy lady as for me.  
1620 This palamon answerde, I graunte it thee.  
1621 And thus they been departed til amorwe,  
1622 Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.  
1623 O cupide, out of alle charitee!  
1624 O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!  
1625 Ful sooth is seyde that love ne lordshipe  
1626 Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe.  
1627 Wel fynden that arcite and palamoun.  
1628 Arcite is riden anon unto the toun,  
1629 And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,  
1630 Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,  
1631 Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne  
1632 The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne;  
1633 And on his hors, allone as he was born,  
1634 He carieth al the harneys hym biforn.  
1635 And in the grove, at tyme and place yset,  
1636 This arcite and this palamon ben met.  
1637 Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face,  
1638 Right as the hunters in the regne of trace,  
1639 That stondesth at the gappe with a spere,  
1640 Whan hunted is the leon or the bere,  
1641 And hereth hym come russhyng in the greves,  
1642 And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,  
1643 And thynketh, heere cometh my mortal enemy!  
1644 Withoute faille, he moot be deed, or I;  
1645 For outhur I moot sleen hym at the gappe,  
1646 Or he moot sleen me, if that me myshappe, --  
1647 So ferdn they in chaungyng of hir hewe,  
1648 As fer as everich of hem oother knewe.  
1649 Ther nas no good day, ne no saluyng,  
1650 But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,  
1651 Everich of hem heelp for to armen oother  
1652 As freendly as he were his owene brother;  
1653 And after that, with sharpe speres stronge  
1654 They foynen ech at oother wonder longe.  
1655 Thou myghtest wene that this palamon  
1656 In his fightyng were a wood leon,  
1657 And as a crueel tigre was arcite;  
1658 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,  
1659 That frothen whit as foom for ire wood.  
1660 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.  
1661 And in this wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle,  
1662 And forth I wole of theseus yow telle.  
1663 The destinee, ministre general,  
1664 That executeth in the world over al  
1665 The purveiaunce that God hath seyn biforn,  
1666 So strong it is that, though the world had sworn

1667 The contrarie of a thyng by ye or nay,  
1668 Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day  
1669 That falleth nat eft withinne a thousand yeer.  
1670 For certainly, oure appetites heer,  
1671 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,  
1672 Al is this reuled by the sighte above.  
1673 This mene I now by myghty theseus,  
1674 That for to hunten is so desirus,  
1675 And namely at the grete hert in may,  
1676 That in his bed ther daweth hym no day  
1677 That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde  
1678 With hunte and horn and houndes hym bisyde.  
1679 For in his huntyng hath he swich delit  
1680 That it is al his joye and appetit  
1681 To been hymself the grete hertes bane,  
1682 For after mars he serveth now dyane.  
1683 Cleer was the day, as I have toold er this,  
1684 And theseus with alle joye and blis,  
1685 With his ypolita, the faire queene,  
1686 And emelye, clothed al in grene,  
1687 On huntyng be they riden roially.  
1688 And to the grove that stood ful faste by,  
1689 In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,  
1690 Duc theseus the streighte wey hath holde.  
1691 And to the launde he rideth hym ful right,  
1692 For thider was the hert wont have his flight,  
1693 And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.  
1694 This duc wol han a cours at hym or tweye  
1695 With houndes swiche as that hym list comaunde.  
1696 And whan this duc was come unto the launde,  
1697 Under the sonne he looketh, and anon  
1698 He was war of arcite and palamon,  
1699 That foughten breme, as it were bores two.  
1700 The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro  
1701 So hidously that with the leeste strook  
1702 It semed as it wolde felle an ook.  
1703 But what they were, no thyng he ne woot.  
1704 This duc his courser with his spores smoot,  
1705 And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,  
1706 And pulled out a swerd, and cride, hoo!  
1707 Namooore, up peyne of lesynge of youre heed!  
1708 By myghty mars, he shal anon be deed  
1709 That smyteth any strook that I may seen.  
1710 But telleth me what myster men ye been,  
1711 That been so hardy for to fighten heere

1712 Withouten juge or oother officere,  
1713 As it were in a lystes roially.  
1714 This palamon answerde hastily,  
1715 And seyde, sire, what nedeth wordes mo?

1716 We have the deeth disserved bothe two.  
1717 Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,  
1718 That been encombred of oure owene lyves;  
1719 And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,  
1720 Ne yif us neither mercy ne refuge,  
1721 But sle me first, for seinte charitee!  
1722 But sle my felawe eek as wel as me;  
1723 Or sle hym first, for though thow knowest it lite,  
1724 This is thy mortal foo, this is arcite,  
1725 That fro thy lond is banysshed on his heed,  
1726 For which he hath deserved to be deed.  
1727 For this is he that cam unto thy gate  
1728 And seyde that he highte philostrate.  
1729 Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yer,  
1730 And thou hast maked hym thy chief squier;  
1731 And this is he that loveth emelye.  
1732 For sith the day is come that I shal dye,  
1733 I make pleynly my confessioun  
1734 That I am thilke woful palamoun  
1735 That hath thy prisoun broken wikkedly.  
1736 I am thy mortal foo, and it am I  
1737 That loveth so hoothe emelye the brighte  
1738 That I wol dye present in hir sighte.  
1739 Wherefore I axe deeth and my juwise;  
1740 But sle my felawe in the same wise,  
1741 For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.  
1742 This worthy duc answerde anon agayn,  
1743 And seyde, this is a short conclusioun.  
1744 Youre owene mouth, by youre confessioun,  
1745 Hath dampned yow, and I wol it recorde;  
1746 It nedeth nought to pyne yow with the corde.  
1747 Ye shal be deed, by myghty mars the rede!  
1748 The queene anon, for verray wommanhede,  
1749 Gan for to wepe, and so dide emelye,  
1750 And alle the ladyes in the compaignye.  
1751 Greet pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,  
1752 That evere swich a chaunce sholde falle;  
1753 For gentil men they were of greet estaat,  
1754 And no thyng but for love was this debaat;  
1755 And saugh hir bloody woundes wyde and soore,  
1756 And alle crieden, bothe lasse and moore,  
1757 Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!  
1758 And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,  
1759 And wolde have kist his feet ther as he stood;  
1760 Til at the laste aslaked was his mood,  
1761 For pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.  
1762 And though he first for ire quook and sterte,  
1763 He hath considered shortly, in a clause,  
1764 The trespas of hem bothe, and eek the cause,  
1765 And although that his ire hir gilt accused,  
1766 Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused,

1767 As thus: he thoghte wel that every man  
1768 Wol helpe hymself in love, if that he kan,  
1769 And eek delivere hymself out of prisoun.  
1770 And eek his herte hadde compassioun  
1771 Of wommen, for they wepen evere in oon;  
1772 And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,  
1773 And softe unto hymself he seyde, fy  
1774 Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,  
1775 But been a leon, bothe in word and dede,  
1776 To hem that been in repentaunce and drede,  
1777 As wel as to a proud despitous man  
1778 That wol mayntene that he first bigan.  
1779 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,  
1780 That in swich cas kan no divisioun,  
1781 But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon.  
1782 And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,  
1783 He gan to looken up with eyen lighte,  
1784 And spak this same wordes al on highte:  
1785 The God of love, a, benedicite!  
1786 How myghty and how greet a lord is he!  
1787 Ayeyns his myght ther gayneth none obstacles.  
1788 He may be cleped a God for his myracles;  
1789 For he kan maken, at his owene gyse,  
1790 Of everich herte as that hym list divyse.  
1791 Lo heere this arcite and this palamoun,  
1792 That quitly weren out of my prisoun,  
1793 And myghte han lyved in thebes roially,  
1794 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,  
1795 And that hir deth lith in my myght also;  
1796 And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,  
1797 Broght hem hyder bothe for to dye.  
1798 Now looketh, is nat that an heigh folye?  
1799 Who may been a fool, but if he love?  
1800 Bihoold, for goddes sake that sit above,  
1801 Se how they blede! be they nocht wel arrayed?  
1802 Thus hath hir lord, the God of love, ypayed  
1803 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!  
1804 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse  
1805 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle.  
1806 But this is yet the beste game of alle,  
1807 That she for whom they han this jolitee  
1808 Kan hem therfore as mucche thank as me.  
1809 She woot namoore of al this hootte fare,  
1810 By god, than woot a cokkow or an hare!  
1811 But all moot ben assayed, hoot and coold;  
1812 A man moot ben a fool, or yong or oold, --  
1813 I woot it by myself ful yore agon,  
1814 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.  
1815 And therfore, syn I knowe of loves peyne,  
1816 And woot hou soore it kan a man distreyne,

1817 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his laas,  
1818 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespaas,  
  
1819 At requeste of the queene, that kneleth heere,  
1820 And eek of emelye, my suster deere.  
1821 And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere  
1822 That nevere mo ye shal my contree dere,  
1823 Ne make werre upon me nyght ne day,  
1824 But been my freendes in all that ye may.  
1825 I yow foryeve this trespas every deel.  
1826 And they hym sworn his axyng faire and weel,  
1827 And hym of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,  
1828 And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:  
1829 To speke of roial lynage and richesse,  
1830 Though that she were a queene or a princesse,  
1831 Ech of you bothe is worthy, doutelees,  
1832 To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees  
1833 I speke as for my suster emelye,  
1834 For whom ye have this strif and jalousye.  
1835 Ye woot yourself she may nat wedden two  
1836 Atones, though ye fighten everemo.  
1837 That oon of you, al be hym looth or lief,  
1838 He moot go pipen in an yvy leef;  
1839 This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,  
1840 Al be ye never so jalouse ne so wrothe.  
1841 And forthy I yow putte in this degree,  
1842 That ech of yow shal have his destynee  
1843 As hym is shape, and herkneth in what wyse;  
1844 Lo heere youre ende of that I shal devyse.  
1845 My wyl is this, for plat conclusioun,  
1846 Withouten any replicacioun, --  
1847 If that you liketh, take it for the beste:  
1848 That everich of you shal goon where hym leste  
1849 Frely, withouten raunson or daunger;  
1850 And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,  
1851 Everich of you shal brynge an hundred knyghtes  
1852 Armed for lystes up at alle rightes,  
1853 Al redy to darreyne hire by bataille.  
1854 And this bihote I yow withouten faille,  
1855 Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knyght,  
1856 That wheither of yow bothe that hath myght, --  
1857 This is to seyn, that wheither he or thow  
1858 May with his hundred, as I spak of now,  
1859 Sleen his contrarie, or out of lystes dryve,  
1860 Thanne shal I yeve emelya to wyve  
1861 To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.  
1862 The lystes shal I maken in this place,  
1863 And God so wisly on my soule rewe,  
1864 As I shal evene juge been and trewe.  
1865 Ye shul noon oother ende with me maken,  
1866 That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.

1867 And if yow thynketh this is weel ysayd,  
1868 Seyeth youre avys, and holdeth you apayd.  
1869 This is youre ende and youre conclusioun.  
1870 Who looketh lightly now but palamoun?  
1871 Who spryngeth up for joye but arcite?  
1872 Who kouthe telle, or who kouthe it endite,  
1873 The joye that is maked in the place  
1874 Whan theseus hath doon so fair a grace?  
1875 But doun on knees wente every maner wight,  
1876 And thonked hym with al hir herte and myght,  
1877 And namely the thebans often sithe.  
1878 And thus with good hope and with herte blithe  
1879 They taken hir leve, and homward gonne they ride  
1880 To thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

Explicit secunda pars.

### **Sequitur pars tercia.**

1881 I trowe men wolde deme it negligence  
1882 If I foryete to tellen the dispence  
1883 Of theseus, that gooth so bisily  
1884 To maken up the lystes roially,  
1885 That swich a noble theatre as it was,  
1886 I dar wel seyen in this world ther nas.  
1887 The circuit a myle was aboute,  
1888 Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute.  
1889 Round was the shap, in manere of compas,  
1890 Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,  
1891 That whan a man was set on o degree,  
1892 He letted nat his felawe for to see.  
1893 Estward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,  
1894 Westward right swich another in the opposit.  
1895 And shortly to concluden, swich a place  
1896 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;  
1897 For in the lond ther was no crafty man  
1898 That geometrie or ars-metrike kan,  
1899 Ne portreyour, ne kervere of ymages,  
1900 That theseus ne yaf him mete and wages,  
1901 The theatre for to maken and devyse.  
1902 And for to doon his ryte and sacrificise,  
1903 He estward hath, upon the gate above,  
1904 In worshipe of venus, goddesse of love,  
1905 Doon make an auter and an oratorie;  
1906 And on the gate westward, in memorie  
1907 Of mars, he maked hath right swich another,  
1908 That coste largely of gold a fother.  
1909 And northward, in a touret on the wal,  
1910 Of alabastre whit and reed coral,  
1911 An oratorie, riche for to see,  
1912 In worshipe of dyane of chastitee,

1913 Hath theseus doon wroght in noble wyse.  
1914 But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse  
1915 The noble kervyng and the portreitures,  
1916 The shap, the contenance, and the figures,  
1917 That weren in these oratories thre.

1918 First in the temple of venus maystow se  
1919 Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,  
1920 The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,  
1921 The sacred teeris, and the waymentynge,  
1922 The firy strokes of the desiryng  
1923 That loves servantz in this lyf endure;  
1924 The othes that hir covenantz assuren;  
1925 Plesaunce and hope, desir, foolhardynesse,  
1926 Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,  
1927 Charmes and force, lesynges, flaterye,  
1928 Despense, bisynesse, and jalousye,  
1929 That wered of yelewe gooldes a gerland,  
1930 And a cokkow sittynge on hir hand;  
1931 Festes, instrumentz, caroles, daunces,  
1932 Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces  
1933 Of love, which that I rekned and rekne shal,  
1934 By ordre weren peynted on the wal,  
1935 And mo than I kan make of mencion.  
1936 For soothly al the mount of citheroun,  
1937 Ther venus hath hir principal dwellyng,  
1938 Was shewed on the wal in portreyng,  
1939 With al the gardyn and the lustynesse.  
1940 Nat was foryeten the porter, ydelnesse,  
1941 Ne narcisus the faire of yore agon,  
1942 Ne yet the folye of kyng salomon,  
1943 Ne yet the grete strengthe of ercules --  
1944 Th-enchaumentz of medea and circes --  
1945 Ne of turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,  
1946 The riche cesus, kaytyf in servage.  
1947 Thus may ye seen that wysdom ne richesse,  
1948 Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe ne hardynesse,  
1949 Ne may with venus holde champartie,  
1950 For as hir list the world than may she gye.  
1951 Lo, alle these folk so caught were in hir las,  
1952 Til they for wo ful ofte seyde alas!  
1953 Suffiseth heere ensamples oon or two,  
1954 And though I koude rekene a thousand mo.  
1955 The statue of venus, glorious for to se,  
1956 Was naked, fletynge in the large see,  
1957 And fro the navele doun al covered was  
1958 With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas.  
1959 A citole in hir right hand hadde she,  
1960 And on hir heed, ful semely for to se,  
1961 A rose gerland, fressh and wel smellyng;



1962 Above hir heed hir dowves flikerynge.  
1963 Biforn hire stood hir sone cupido;  
1964 Upon his shuldres wynges hadde he two,  
1965 And blynd he was, as it is often seene;  
1966 A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.  
1967 Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al  
1968 The portreiture that was upon the wal  
1969 Withinne the temple of myghty mars the rede?  
1970 Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,  
1971 Lyk to the estres of the grisly place  
1972 That highte the grete temple of mars in trace,  
1973 In thilke colde, frosty regioun  
1974 Ther as mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.  
1975 First on the wal was peynted a forest,  
1976 In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,  
1977 With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde,  
1978 Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to biholde,  
1979 In which ther ran a rumbel in a swough,  
1980 As though a storm sholde bresten every bough.  
1981 And dounward from an hille, under a bente,  
1982 Ther stood the temple of mars armypotente,  
1983 Wroght al of burned steel, of which the entree  
1984 Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.  
1985 And therout came a rage and swich a veze  
1986 That it made al the gate for to rese.  
1987 The northren lyght in at the dores shoon,  
1988 For wyndowe on the wal ne was ther noon,  
1989 Thurgh which men myghten any light discerne.  
1990 The dore was al of adamant eterne,  
1991 Yclenched overthwart and endelong  
1992 With iren tough; and for to make it strong,  
1993 Every pyle, the temple to sustene,  
1994 Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.  
1995 Ther saugh I first the derke ymaginyng  
1996 Of felonye, and al the compassyng;  
1997 The crueel ire, reed as any gleede;  
1998 The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;  
1999 The smylere with the knyf under the cloke;  
2000 The shepne brennyng with the blake smoke;  
2001 The tresoun of the mordryng in the bedde;  
2002 The open werre, with woundes al bibledde;  
2003 Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp manace.  
2004 Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.  
2005 The sleere of hymself yet saugh I ther, --  
2006 His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;  
2007 The nayl ydryven in the shode a-nyght;  
2008 The colde deeth, with mouth gapyng upright.  
2009 Amyddes of the temple sat meschaunce,  
2010 With disconfort and sory contenance.  
2011 Yet saugh I woodnesse, laughyng in his rage,  
2012 Armed compleint, outhees, and fiers outrage;

2013 The careyne in the busk, with throte ycorve;  
2014 A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm ystorve;  
2015 The tiraunt, with the pray by force yraft;  
2016 The toun destroyed, ther was no thyng laft.  
2017 Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;  
2018 The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;  
2019 The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;  
2020 The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel.  
2021 Noght was foryeten by the infortune of marte  
2022 The cartere overryden with his carte:  
2023 Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.  
2024 Ther were also, of martes divisioun,

2025 The barbour, and the bocher, and the smyth,  
2026 That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his styth.  
2027 And al above, depeynted in a tour,  
2028 Saugh I conquest, sittynge in greet honour,  
2029 With the sharpe swerd over his heed  
2030 Hangynge by a soutil twynes threed.  
2031 Depeynted was the slaughtre of julius,  
2032 Of grete nero, and of antonius;  
2033 Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,  
2034 Yet was hir deth depeynted ther-biforn  
2035 By manasyng of mars, right by figure.  
2036 So was it shewed in that portreiture,  
2037 As is depeynted in the sterres above  
2038 Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.  
2039 Suffiseth oon ensample in stories olde;  
2040 I may nat rekene hem alle though I wolde.  
2041 The statue of mars upon a carte stood  
2042 Armed, and looked grym as he were wood;  
2043 And over his heed ther shynen two figures  
2044 Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,  
2045 That oon puella, that oother rubeus --  
2046 This God of armes was arrayed thus.  
2047 A wolf ther stood biforn hym at his feet  
2048 With eyen rede, and of a man he eet;  
2049 With soutil pencil depeynted was this storie  
2050 In redoutynge of mars and of his glorie.  
2051 Now to the temple of dyane the chaste,  
2052 As shortly as I kan, I wol me haste,  
2053 To telle yow al the descripsioun.  
2054 Depeynted been the walles up and doun  
2055 Of huntyng and of shamefast chastitee.  
2056 Ther saugh I how woful calistopee,  
2057 Whan that diane agreved was with here,  
2058 Was turned from a womman til a bere,  
2059 And after was she maad the loode-sterre;  
2060 Thus was it peynted, I kan sey yow no ferre.  
2061 Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.

2062 Ther saugh I dane, yturned til a tree, --  
2063 I mene nat the goddesse diane,  
2064 But penneus doghter, which that highte dane.  
2065 Ther saugh I attheon an hert ymaked,  
2066 For vengeaunce that he saugh diane al naked;  
2067 I saugh how that his houndes have hym caught  
2068 And freeten hym, for that they knewe hym naught.  
2069 Yet peynted was a litel forther moor  
2070 How atthalante hunted the wilde boor,  
2071 And meleagre, and many another mo,  
2072 For which dyane wroghte hym care and wo.  
2073 Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,  
2074 The which me list nat drawen to memorie.  
2075 This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,  
2076 With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;  
2077 And undernethe hir feet she hadde a moone, --  
2078 Wexynge it was and sholde wanye soone.  
2079 In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,  
2080 With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.  
2081 Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,  
2082 Ther pluto hath his derke regioun.  
2083 A womman travailynge was hire biforn;  
2084 But for hir child so longe was unborn,  
2085 Ful pitously lucyna gan she calle,  
2086 And seyde, help, for thou mayst best of alle!  
2087 Wel koude he peynten lifly that it wroghte;  
2088 With many a floryn he the hewes boghte.  
2089 Now been thise lystes maad, and theseus,  
2090 That at his grete cost arrayed thus  
2091 The temples and the theatre every deel,  
2092 Whan it was doon, hym lyked wonder weel.  
2093 But stynte I wole of theseus a lite,  
2094 And speke of palamon and of arcite.  
2095 The day approacheth of hir retournynge,  
2096 That everich sholde an hundred knyghtes brynge  
2097 The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde.  
2098 And til atthenes, hir covenant for to holde,  
2099 Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knyghtes,  
2100 Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.  
2101 And sikerly ther trowed many a man  
2102 That nevere, sithen that the world bigan,  
2103 As for to speke of knyghthod of hir hond,  
2104 As fer as God hath maked see or lond,  
2105 Nas of so fewe so noble a compaignye.  
2106 For every wight that lovede chivalrye,  
2107 And wolde, his thanks, han a passant name,  
2108 Hath preyed that he myghte been of that game;  
2109 And wel was hym that therto chosen was.  
2110 For if ther fille tomorwe swich a cas,  
2111 Ye knowen wel that every lusty knyght  
2112 That loveth paramours and hath his myght,

2113 Were it in engelond or elleswhere,  
2114 They wolde, hir thanks, wilnen to be there, --  
2115 To fighte for a lady, benedicitee!  
2116 It were a lusty sighte for to see.  
2117 And right so ferden they with palamon.  
2118 With hym ther wenten knyghtes many on;  
2119 Som wol ben armed in an haubergeoun,  
2120 And in a brestplate and light gypoun;  
2121 And som wol have a paire plates large;  
2122 And som wol have a pruce sheeld or a targe;  
2123 Som wol ben armed on his legges weel,  
2124 And have an ax, and som a mace of steel --  
2125 Ther is no newe gyse that it nas old.  
2126 Armed were they, as I have yow told,  
2127 Everych after his opinioun.  
2128 Ther maistow seen, comynge with palamoun,  
2129 Lygurge hymself, the grete kyng of trace.

2130 Blak was his berd, and manly was his face;  
2131 The cercles of his eyen in his heed,  
2132 They gloweden bitwixen yelow and reed,  
2133 And lik a grifphon looked he aboute,  
2134 With kempe heeris on his browes stoute;  
2135 His lymes grete, his brawnes harde and stronge,  
2136 His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe;  
2137 And as the gyse was in his contree,  
2138 Ful hye upon a chaar of gold stood he,  
2139 With foure white boles in the trays.  
2140 In stede of cote-armure over his harnays,  
2141 With nayles yelewe and brighte as any gold,  
2142 He hadde a beres skyn, col-blak for old.  
2143 His longe heer was kembd bihynde his bak;  
2144 As any ravenes fethere it shoon for blak;  
2145 A wrethe of gold, arm-greet, of huge wighte,  
2146 Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,  
2147 Of fyne rubyes and of dyamauntz.  
2148 Aboute his chaar ther wenten white alauntz,  
2149 Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,  
2150 To hunten at the leoun or the deer,  
2151 And folwed hym with mosel faste ybounde,  
2152 Colered of gold, and tourettes fyled rounde.  
2153 An hundred lordes hadde he in his route,  
2154 Armed ful wel, with hertes stierne and stoute.  
2155 With arcita, in stories as men fynde,  
2156 The grete emetreus, the kyng of inde,  
2157 Upon a steede bay trapped in steel,  
2158 Covered in clooth of gold, dyapred weel,  
2159 Cam ridynge lyk the God of armes, mars.  
2160 His cote-armure was of clooth of tars  
2161 Couched with perles white and rounde and grete;

2162 His sadel was of brend gold newe ybete;  
2163 A mantelet upon his shulder hangynge,  
2164 Bret-ful of rubyes rede as fyr sparklynge;  
2165 His crispe heer lyk rynges was yronne,  
2166 And that was yelow, and glytered as the sonne.  
2167 His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,  
2168 His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn;  
2169 A fewe frakenes in his face yspreynd,  
2170 Bitwixen yelow and somdel blak ymeynd;  
2171 And as a leon he his lookyng caste.  
2172 Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.  
2173 His berd was wel bigonne for to sprynge;  
2174 His voys was as a trompe thonderynge.  
2175 Upon his heed he wered of laurer grene  
2176 A gerland, fressh and lusty for to sene.  
2177 Upon his hand he bar for his deduyt  
2178 An egle tame, as any lilye whyt.  
2179 An hundred lordes hadde he with hym there,  
2180 Al armed, save hir heddes, in al hir gere,  
2181 Ful richely in alle maner thynges.  
2182 For trusteth wel that dukes, erles, kynges  
2183 Were gadered in this noble compaignye,  
2184 For love and for encrees of chivalrye.  
2185 Aboute this kyng ther ran on every part  
2186 Ful many a tame leon and leopart.  
2187 And in this wise thise lordes, alle and some,  
2188 Been on the sonday to the citee come  
2189 Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.  
2190 This theseus, this duc, this worthy knyght,  
2191 Whan he had broght hem into his citee,  
2192 And inned hem, everich at his degree,  
2193 He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour  
2194 To esen hem and doon hem al honour,  
2195 That yet men wenen that no mannes wit  
2196 Of noon estaat ne koude amenden it.  
2197 The mynstralcye, the service at the feeste,  
2198 The grete yiftes to the meeste and leeste,  
2199 The riche array of theseus paleys,  
2200 Ne who sat first ne last upon the deys,  
2201 What ladyes fairest been or best daunsynge,  
2202 Or which of hem kan dauncen best and synge,  
2203 Ne who moost felyngly speketh of love;  
2204 What haukes sitten on the perche above,  
2205 What houndes ligger on the floor adoun, --  
2206 Of al this make I now no mencioun,  
2207 But al th' effect, that thynketh me the beste.  
2208 Now cometh the point, and herketh if yow leste.  
2209 The sonday nyght, er day bigan to sprynge,  
2210 Whan palamon the larke herde synge,  
2211 (although it nere nat day by houres two,  
2212 Yet song the larke) and palamon right tho

2213 With hooly herte and with an heigh corage,  
2214 He roos to wenden on his pilgrymage  
2215 Unto the blisful citherea benigne, --  
2216 I mene venus, honorable and digne.  
2217 And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas  
2218 Unto the lystes ther hire temple was,  
2219 And doun he kneleth, and with humble cheere  
2220 And herte soor, he seyde as ye shal heere:  
2221 Faireste of faire, o lady myn, venus,  
2222 Doughter to jove, and spouse of vulcanus,  
2223 Thow gladere of the mount of citheron,  
2224 For thilke love thow haddest to adoon,  
2225 Have pitee of my bittre teeris smerte,  
2226 And taak myn humble preyere at thyn herte.  
2227 Allas! I ne have no langage to telle  
2228 Th' effectes ne the tormentz of myn helle;  
2229 Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;  
2230 I am so confus that I kan nocht seye  
2231 But, -- mercy, lady bright, that knowest weele  
2232 My thought, and seest what harmes that feele!  
2233 Considere al this and rewe upon my soore,  
2234 As wisly as I shal for everemoore,

2235 Emforth my myght, thy trewe servant be,  
2236 And holden werre alwey with chastitee.  
2237 That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe!  
2238 I kepe nocht of armes for to yelpe,  
2239 Ne I ne axe nat tomorwe to have victorie,  
2240 Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie  
2241 Of pris of armes blowen up and doun;  
2242 But I wolde have fully possessioun  
2243 Of emelye, and dye in thy servyse.  
2244 Fynd thow the manere hou, and in what wyse:  
2245 I recche nat but it may bettre be  
2246 To have victorie of hem, or they of me,  
2247 So that I have my lady in myne armes.  
2248 For though so be that mars is God of armes,  
2249 Youre vertu is so greet in hevne above  
2250 That if yow list, I shal wel have my love.  
2251 Thy temple wol I worshipe everemo,  
2252 And on thyn auter, where I ride or go,  
2253 I wol doon sacrifice and fires beete.  
2254 And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,  
2255 Thanne preye I thee, tomorwe with a spere  
2256 That arcita me thurgh the herte bere.  
2257 Thanne rekke I nocht, whan I have lost my lyf,  
2258 Though that arcita wynne hire to his wyf.  
2259 This is th' effect and ende of my preyere:  
2260 Yif me my love, thow blisful lady deere.  
2261 Whan the orison was doon of palamon,  
2262 His sacrifice he dide, and that anon,

2263 Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,  
2264 Al telle I nocht as now his observaunces;  
2265 But atte laste the statue of venus shook,  
2266 And made a signe, wherby that he took  
2267 That his preyere accepted was that day.  
2268 For thogh the signe shewed a delay,  
2269 Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his boone;  
2270 And with glad herte he wente hym hoom ful soone.  
2271 The thridde houre inequal that palamon  
2272 Bigan to venus temple for to gon,  
2273 Up roos the sonne, and up roos emelye,  
2274 And to the temple of dyane gan hye.  
2275 Hir maydens, that she thider with hire ladde,  
2276 Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,  
2277 Th' encens, the clothes, and the remenant al  
2278 That to the sacrifice longen shal;  
2279 The hornes fulle of meeth, as was the gyse:  
2280 Ther lakked nocht to doon hir sacrificise.  
2281 Smokyng the temple, ful of clothes faire,  
2282 This emelye, with herte debonaire,  
2283 Hir body wessh with water of a welle.  
2284 But hou she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,  
2285 But it be any thing in general;  
2286 And yet it were a game to heeren al.  
2287 To hym that meneth wel it were no charge;  
2288 But it is good a man been at his large.  
2289 Hir brighte heer was kembd, untressed al;  
2290 A coroune of a grene ook cerial  
2291 Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.  
2292 Two fyres on the auter gan she beete,  
2293 And dide hir thynges, as men may biholde  
2294 In stace of thebes and thise bookes olde.  
2295 Whan kyndled was the fyr, with pitous cheere  
2296 Unto dyane she spak as ye may heere:  
2297 O chaste goddessse of the wodes grene,  
2298 To whom bothe hevne and erthe and see is sene,  
2299 Queene of the regne of pluto derk and lowe,  
2300 Goddessse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe  
2301 Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,  
2302 As keepe me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,  
2303 That attheon aboughte cruelly.  
2304 Chaste goddessse, wel wostow that I  
2305 Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,  
2306 Ne nevere wol I be no love ne wyf.  
2307 I am, thow woost, yet of thy compaignye,  
2308 A mayde, and love huntynge and venerye,  
2309 And for to walken in the wodes wilde,  
2310 And nocht to ben a wyf and be with childe.  
2311 Noght wol I knowe compaignye of man.  
2312 Now help me, lady, sith ye may and kan,  
2313 For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.

2314 And palamon, that hath swich love to me,  
2315 And eek arcite, that loveth me so soore,  
2316 (this grace I preye thee withoute moore)  
2317 As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,  
2318 And from me turne away hir hertes so  
2319 That al hire hote love and hir desir,  
2320 And al hir bisy torment, and hir fir  
2321 Be queynt, or turned in another place.  
2322 And if so be thou wolt nat do me grace,  
2323 Or if my destynee be shapen so  
2324 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,  
2325 As sende me hym that moost desireth me.  
2326 Bihood, goddesse of clene chastitee,  
2327 The bittre teeris that on my chekes falle.  
2328 Syn thou art mayde and kepere of us alle,  
2329 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve  
2330 And whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve.  
2331 The fires brenne upon the auter cleere,  
2332 Whil emelye was thus in hir preyere.  
2333 But sodeynly she saugh a sighte queynte,  
2334 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,  
2335 And quyked agayn, and after that anon  
2336 That oother fyr was queynt and al agon;  
2337 And as it queynte it made a whistelynge,  
2338 As doon thise wete brondes in hir brennynge,  
2339 And at the brondes ende out ran anon

2340 As it were bloody dropes many oon;  
2341 For which so soore agast was emelye  
2342 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,  
2343 For she ne wiste what it signyfyed;  
2344 But oonly for the feere thus hath she cried,  
2345 And weep that it was pitee for to heere.  
2346 And therwithal dyane gan appeere,  
2347 With bowe in honde, right as an hunteresse,  
2348 And seyde, doghter, stynt thyn hevynesse.  
2349 Among the goddes hye it is affermed,  
2350 And by eterne word writen and confermed,  
2351 Thou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho  
2352 That han for thee so muchel care and wo;  
2353 But unto which of hem I may nat telle.  
2354 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.  
2355 The fires which that on myn auter brenne  
2356 Shulle thee declaren, er that thou go henne,  
2357 Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.  
2358 And with that word, the arwes in the caas  
2359 Of the goddesse clateren faste and rynge,  
2360 And forth she wente, and made a vanysshynge;  
2361 For which this emelye astoned was,  
2362 And seyde, what amounteth this, allas?  
2363 I putte me in thy proteccioun,



2364 Dyane, and in thy disposicioun.  
2365 And hoom she goth anon the nexte weye.  
2366 This is th' effect; ther is namoore to seye.  
2367 The nexte houre of mars folwyng this,  
2368 Arcite unto the temple walked is  
2369 Of fierse mars, to doon his sacrificise,  
2370 With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.  
2371 With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,  
2372 Right thus to mars he seyde his orisoun:  
2373 O stronge god, that in the regnes colde  
2374 Of trace honoured art and lord yholde,  
2375 And hast in every regne and every lond  
2376 Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,  
2377 And hem fortunest as thee lyst devyse,  
2378 Accepte of me my pitous sacrificise.  
2379 If so be that my youthe may deserve,  
2380 And that my myght be worthy for to serve  
2381 Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,  
2382 Thanne preye I thee to rewe upon my pyne.  
2383 For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fir  
2384 In which thou whilom brendest for desir,  
2385 Whan that thou usedest the beautee  
2386 Of faire, yonge, fresshe venus free,  
2387 And haddest hire in armes at thy wille --  
2388 Although thee ones on a tyme mysfille,  
2389 Whan vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,  
2390 And foond thee liggyng by his wyf, allas! --  
2391 For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,  
2392 Have routhe as wel upon my peynes smerte.  
2393 I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou woost,  
2394 And, as I trowe, with love offended moost  
2395 That evere was any lyves creature;  
2396 For she that dooth me al this wo endure  
2397 Ne reccheth nevere wher I synke or fleete.  
2398 And wel I woot, er she me mercy heete,  
2399 I moot with strengthe wynne hire in the place,  
2400 And, wel I woot, withouten help or grace  
2401 Of thee, ne may my strengthe nocht availle.  
2402 Thanne help me, lord, tomorwe in my bataille,  
2403 For thilke fyr that whilom brente thee,  
2404 As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me,  
2405 And do that I tomorwe have victorie.  
2406 Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!  
2407 Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren  
2408 Of any place, and alwey moost labouren  
2409 In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,  
2410 And in thy temple I wol my baner honge  
2411 And alle the armes of my compaignye;  
2412 And everemo, unto that day I dye,  
2413 Eterne fir I wol bifore thee fynde.  
2414 And eek to this avow I wol me bynde:

2415 My beard, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,  
2416 That nevere yet ne felte offensioun  
2417 Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,  
2418 And ben thy trewe servant whil I lyve.  
2419 Now, lord, have routhe upon my sorwes soore;  
2420 Yif me victorie, I aske thee namoore.  
2421 The preyere stynt of arcita the stronge,  
2422 The rynges on the temple dore that honge,  
2423 And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,  
2424 Of which arcita somewhat hym agaste.  
2425 The fyres brenden upon the auter brighte,  
2426 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;  
2427 A sweete smel the ground anon up yaf,  
2428 And arcita anon his hand up haf,  
2429 And moore encens into the fyr he caste,  
2430 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste  
2431 The statue of mars bigan his hauberk ryng;  
2432 And with that soun he herde a murmuryng  
2433 Ful lowe and dym, and seyde thus, victorie!  
2434 For which he yaf to mars honour and glorie.  
2435 And thus with joye and hope wel to fare  
2436 Arcite anon unto his in is fare,  
2437 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.  
2438 And right anon swich strif ther is bigonne,  
2439 For thilke grauntyng, in the hevne above,  
2440 Bitwixe venus, the goddesse of love,  
2441 And mars, the stierne God armypotente,  
2442 That juppiter was bisy it to stente;  
2443 Til that the pale saturnus the colde,  
2444 That knew so manye of adventures olde,  
2445 Foond in his olde experience an art  
2446 That he ful soone hath plesed every part.  
2447 As sooth is seyde, elde hath greet advantage;  
  
2448 In elde is bothe wysdom and usage;  
2449 Men may the olde atrenne, and noght atrede.  
2450 Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede,  
2451 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,  
2452 Of al this strif he gan remedie fynde.  
2453 My deere doghter venus, quod saturne,  
2454 My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,  
2455 Hath moore power than woot any man.  
2456 Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;  
2457 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;  
2458 Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte,  
2459 The murmure and the cherles rebellyng,  
2460 The groynyng, and the pryvee empoysonyng;  
2461 I do vengeance and pleyne correccioun,  
2462 Whil I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.  
2463 Myn is the ruyne of the hye halles,  
2464 The fallynge of the toures and of the walles

2465 Upon the mynour or the carpenter.  
2466 I slow sampson, shakynge the piler;  
2467 And myne be the maladyes colde,  
2468 The derke tresons, and the castes olde;  
2469 My lookyng is the fader of pestilence.  
2470 Now weep namoore, I shal doon diligence  
2471 That palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,  
2472 Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.  
2473 Though mars shal helpe his knyght, yet nathelees  
2474 Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,  
2475 Al be ye noght of o compleccioun,  
2476 That causeth al day swich divisioun.  
2477 I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille;  
2478 Weep now namoore, I wol thy lust fulfille.  
2479 Now wol I stynten of the goddes above,  
2480 Of mars, and of venus, goddesse of love,  
2481 And telle yow as pleyedly as I kan  
2482 The grete effect, for which that I bygan.

Explicit tercia pars.

### **Sequitur pars quarta.**

2483 Greet was the feeste in atthenes that day,  
2484 And eek the lusty seson of that may  
2485 Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce  
2486 That al that monday justen they and daunce,  
2487 And spenden it in venus heigh servyse.  
2488 But by the cause that they sholde ryse  
2489 Eerly, for to seen the grete fight,  
2490 Unto hir reste wenten they at nyght.  
2491 And on the morwe, whan that day gan sprynge,  
2492 Of hors and harneys noyse and claterynge  
2493 Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;  
2494 And to the paleys rood ther many a route  
2495 Of lordes upon steedes and palfreys.  
2496 Ther maystow seen devisyng of harneys  
2497 So unkouth and so riche, and wrought so weel  
2498 Of goldsmythrye, of browdyng, and of steel;  
2499 The sheeldes brighte, testeres, and trappures,  
2500 Gold-hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;  
2501 Lordes in parentz on hir courseres,  
2502 Knyghtes of retenue, and eek squieres  
2503 Nailynge the speres, and helmes bokelynge;  
2504 Giggynge of sheeldes, with layneres lacyng  
2505 (there as nede is they weren no thyng ydel);  
2506 The fomy steedes on the golden brydel  
2507 Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also  
2508 With fyle and hamer prikyng to and fro;  
2509 Yemen on foote, and communes many oon  
2510 With fyle and hamer prikyng to and fro;

2511 Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,  
2512 That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;  
2513 The paleys ful of peple up and doun,  
2514 Heere thre, ther ten, holdynge hir questioun,  
2515 Dyvynyng of thise thebane knyghtes two.  
2516 Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;  
2517 Somme helden with hym with the blake berd,  
2518 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke herd;  
2519 Somme seyde he looked grymme, and he wolde fighte;  
2520 He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.  
2521 Thus was the halle ful of divynyng,  
2522 Longe after that the sonne gan to sprynge.  
2523 The grete theseus, that of his sleep awaked  
2524 With mynstralcie and noyse that was maked,  
2525 Heeld yet the chambre of his paleys riche,  
2526 Til that the thebane knyghtes, bothe yliche  
2527 Honored, were into the paleys fet.  
2528 Duc theseus was at a wyndow set,  
2529 Arrayed right as he were a God in trone.  
2530 The peple preesseth thiderward ful soone  
2531 Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,  
2532 And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence.  
2533 And heraud on a scaffold made an oo!  
2534 Til al the noyse of peple was ydo,  
2535 And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,  
2536 Tho shewed he the myghty dukes wille.  
2537 The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun  
2538 Considered that it were destruccioun  
2539 To gentil blood to fighten in the gyse  
2540 Of mortal bataille now in this emprise.  
2541 Wherefore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,  
2542 He wol his firste purpos modifye.  
2543 No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,  
2544 No maner shot, ne polax, ne short knyf

2545 Into the lystes sende, or thider brynge;  
2546 Ne short swerd, for to stoke with poynt bitynge,  
2547 No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.  
2548 Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde  
2549 But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounde spere;  
2550 Foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.  
2551 And he that is at meschief shal be take  
2552 And noght slayn, but be broght unto the stake  
2553 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;  
2554 But thider he shal by force, and there abyde.  
2555 And if so falle the chieftayn be take  
2556 On outhur syde, or elles sleen his make,  
2557 No lenger shal the turneyng laste.  
2558 God spede you! gooth forth, and ley on faste!  
2559 With long swerd and with maces fighteth youre fille.  
2560 Gooth now youre wey, this is the lordes wille.

2561 The voys of peple touchede the hevene,  
2562 So loude cride they with murie stevene,  
2563 God save swich a lord, that is so good,  
2564 He wilneth no destruccion of blood!  
2565 Up goon the trompes and the melodye,  
2566 And to the lystes rit the compaignye,  
2567 By ordinance, thurghout the citee large,  
2568 Hanged with clooth of gold, and nat with sarge.  
2569 Ful lik a lord this noble duc gan ryde,  
2570 Thise two thebans upon either syde;  
2571 And after rood the queene, and emelye,  
2572 And after that another compaignye  
2573 Of oon and oother, after hir degree.  
2574 And thus they passen thurghout the citee,  
2575 And to the lystes come they by tyme.  
2576 It nas nat of the day yet fully pryme  
2577 Whan set was theseus ful riche and hye,  
2578 Ypolita the queene, and emelye,  
2579 And othere ladys in degrees aboute.  
2580 Unto the seetes preesseth al the route.  
2581 And westward, thurgh the gates under marte,  
2582 Arcite, and eek the hondred of his parte,  
2583 With baner reed is entred right anon;  
2584 And in that selve moment palamon  
2585 Is under venus, estward in the place,  
2586 With baner whyt, and hardy chiere and face.  
2587 In al the world, to seken up and doun,  
2588 So evene, withouten variacioun,  
2589 Ther nere swiche compaignyes tweye;  
2590 For ther was noon so wys that koude seye  
2591 That any hadde of oother avauntage  
2592 Of worthynesse, ne of estaat, ne age,  
2593 So evene were they chosen, for to gesse.  
2594 And in two renges faire they hem dresse.  
2595 Whan that hir names rad were everichon,  
2596 That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,  
2597 Tho were the gates shet, and cried was loude:  
2598 Do now youre devoir, yonge knyghtes proude!  
2599 The heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun;  
2600 Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun.  
2601 Ther is namoore to seyn, but west and est  
2602 In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;  
2603 In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde.  
2604 Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde;  
2605 Ther shyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;  
2606 He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.  
2607 Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;  
2608 Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte;  
2609 The helmes they tohewen and toshrede;  
2610 Out brest the blood with stierne stremes rede;  
2611 With myghty maces the bones they tobreste.

2612 He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste;  
2613 Ther stomblen steedes stronge, and doun gooth al;  
2614 He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal;  
2615 He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,  
2616 And he hym hurtleth with hors adoun;  
2617 He thurgh the body is hurt and sither take,  
2618 Maugree his heed, and broght unto the stake:  
2619 As forward was, right there he moste abyde.  
2620 Another lad is on that oother syde.  
2621 And some tyme dooth hem theseus to reste,  
2622 Hem to refresshe and drynken, if hem leste.  
2623 Ful ofte a day han thise thebanes two  
2624 Togydre ymet, and wroght his felawe wo;  
2625 Unhorsed hath ech oother of hem tweye.  
2626 Ther nas no tygre in the vale of galgopheye,  
2627 Whan that hir whelp is stole whan it is lite,  
2628 So crueel on the hunte as is arcite  
2629 For jelous herte upon this palamon.  
2630 Ne in belmarye ther nys so fel leon,  
2631 That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,  
2632 Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,  
2633 As palamon to sleen his foo arcite.  
2634 The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;  
2635 Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.  
2636 Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede.  
2637 For er the sonne unto the reste wente,  
2638 The stronge kyng emetreus gan hente  
2639 This palamon, as he faught with arcite,  
2640 And made his swerd depe in his flessh to byte;  
2641 And by the force of twenty is he take  
2642 Unyolden, and ydrawe unto the stake.  
2643 And in the rescus of this palamoun  
2644 The stronge kyng lygurge is born adoun,  
2645 And kyng emetreus, for al his strengthe,  
  
2646 Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,  
2647 So hitte him palamoun er he were take;  
2648 But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.  
2649 His hardy herte myghte hym helpe naught:  
2650 He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,  
2651 By force and eek by composicioun.  
2652 Who sorweth now but woful palamoun,  
2653 That moot namoore goon agayn to fighte?  
2654 And whan that theseus hadde seyn this sighte,  
2655 Unto the folk that foghten thus echon  
2656 He cryde, hoo! namoore, for it is doon!  
2657 I wol be trewe juge, and no partie.  
2658 Arcite of thebes shal have emelie,  
2659 That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne.  
2660 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne  
2661 For joye of this, so loude and heighe withalle,

2662 It semed that the lystes sholde falle.  
2663 What kan now faire venus doon above?  
2664 What seith she now? what dooth this queene of love,  
2665 But wepeth so, for wantynge of hir wille,  
2666 Til that hir teeres in the lystes fille?  
2667 She seyde, I am ashamed, douteless.  
2668 Saturnus seyde, doghter, hoold thy pees!  
2669 Mars hath his wille, his knyght hath al his boone,  
2670 And, by myn heed, thow shalt been esed soone.  
2671 The trompours, with the loude mynstralcie,  
2672 The heraudes, that ful loude yelle and crie,  
2673 Been in hire wele for joye of daun arcite.  
2674 But herkneth me, and stynteth noyse a lite,  
2675 Which a myracle ther bifel anon.  
2676 This fierse arcite hath of his helm ydon,  
2677 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,  
2678 He priketh endelong the large place  
2679 Lokynge upward upon this emelye;  
2680 And she agayn hym caste a freendlich ye  
2681 (for women, as to speken in comune,  
2682 Thei folwen alle the favour of fortune)  
2683 And was al his chiere, as in his herte.  
2684 Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,  
2685 From pluto sent at requeste of saturne,  
2686 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,  
2687 And leep aside, and foundred as he leep;  
2688 And er that arcite may taken keep,  
2689 He pighte hym on the pomel of his heed,  
2690 That in the place he lay as he were deed,  
2691 His brest tobrosten with his sadel-bowe.  
2692 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,  
2693 So was the blood yronnen in his face.  
2694 Anon he was yborn out of the place,  
2695 With herte soor, to theseus paleys.  
2696 Tho was he korven out of his harneys,  
2697 And in a bed ybrought ful faire and blyve;  
2698 For he was yet in memorie and alyve,  
2699 And alwey crynge after emelye.  
2700 Duc theseus, with al his compaignye,  
2701 Is comen hoom to atthenes his citee,  
2702 With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.  
2703 Al be it that this aventure was falle,  
2704 He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.  
2705 Men seyde eek that arcite shal nat dye;  
2706 He shal been heeled of his maladye.  
2707 And of another thyng they weren as fayn,  
2708 That of hem alle was ther noon yslayn,  
2709 Al were they soore yhurt, and namely oon,  
2710 That with a spere was thirled his brest boon.  
2711 To othere woundes and to broken armes  
2712 Somme hadden salves, and somme hadden charmes;

2713 Fermacies of herbes, and eek save  
2714 They dronken, for they wolde hir lymes have.  
2715 For which this noble duc, as he wel kan,  
2716 Conforteth and honoureth every man,  
2717 And made revel al the longe nyght  
2718 Unto the straunge lordes, as was right.  
2719 Ne ther was holden no disconfitynge  
2720 But as a justes, or a tourneyng;  
2721 For soothly ther was no disconfiture.  
2722 For fallyng nys nat but an aventure,  
2723 Ne to be lad by force unto the stake  
2724 Unyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,  
2725 O persone allone, withouten mo,  
2726 And haryed forth by arme, foot, and too,  
2727 And eke his steede dryven forth with staves  
2728 With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves, --  
2729 It nas arretted hym no vileynye;  
2730 Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.  
2731 For which anon duc theseus leet crye,  
2732 To stynten alle rancour and envye,  
2733 The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,  
2734 And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother;  
2735 And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,  
2736 And fully heeld a feeste dayes three,  
2737 And conveyed the kynges worthily  
2738 Out of his toun a journee largely.  
2739 And hoom wente every man the righte way.  
2740 Ther was namoore but fare wel, have good day!  
2741 Of this bataille I wol namoore endite,  
2742 But speke of palamon and of arcite.  
2743 Swelleth the brest of arcite, and the soore  
2744 Encreesseth at his herte moore and moore.  
2745 The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,  
2746 Corrupteth, and is in his bouk ylaft,  
2747 That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusyng,  
2748 Ne drynke of herbes may ben his helpyng.  
2749 The vertu expulsif, or animal,  
  
2750 Fro thilke vertu cleped natural  
2751 Ne may the venym voyden ne expelle.  
2752 The pipes of his longes gonne to swelle,  
2753 And every lacerte in his brest adoun  
2754 Is shent with venym and corrupcioun.  
2755 Hym gayneth neither, for to gete his lif,  
2756 Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif.  
2757 Al is tobrosten thilke regioun;  
2758 Nature hath now no dominacioun.  
2759 And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,  
2760 Fare wel phisik! go ber the man to chirche!  
2761 This al and som, that arcite moot dye;  
2762 For which he sendeth after emelye,



2763 And palamon, that was his cosyn deere.  
2764 Thanne seyde he thus, as ye shal after heere:  
2765 Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte  
2766 Declare o point of alle my sorwes smerte  
2767 To yow, my lady, that I love moost;  
2768 But I biquethe the servyce of my goost  
2769 To yow aboven every creature,  
2770 Syn that my lyf may no lenger dure.  
2771 Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,  
2772 That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!  
2773 Allas, the deeth! allas, myn emelye!  
2774 Allas, departynge of oure compaignye!  
2775 Allas, myn hertes queene! allas, my wyf!  
2776 Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!  
2777 What is this world? what asketh men to have?  
2778 Now with his love, now in his colde grave  
2779 Allone, withouten any compaignye.  
2780 Fare wel, my sweete foo, myn emelye!  
2781 And softe taak me in youre armes tweye,  
2782 For love of god, and herkneth what I seye.  
2783 I have heer with my cosyn palamon  
2784 Had strif and rancour many a day agon  
2785 For love of yow, and for my jalousye.  
2786 And juppiter so wys my soule gye,  
2787 To speken of a servaunt proprely,  
2788 With alle circumstances trewely --  
2789 That is to seyen, trouthe, honour, knyghthede,  
2790 Wysdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kynrede,  
2791 Fredom, and al that longeth to that art --  
2792 So juppiter have of my soule part,  
2793 As in this world right now ne knowe I non  
2794 So worthy to ben loved as palamon,  
2795 That serveth yow, and wol doon al his lyf.  
2796 And if that evere ye shul ben a wyf,  
2797 Foryet nat palamon, the gentil man.  
2798 And with that word his speche faille gan,  
2799 For from his feet up to his brest was come  
2800 The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome,  
2801 And yet mooreover, for in his armes two  
2802 The vital strengthe is lost and al ago.  
2803 Only the intellect, withouten moore,  
2804 That dwelled in his herte syk and soore,  
2805 Gan faillen whan the herte felte deeth.  
2806 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth,  
2807 But on his lady yet caste he his ye;  
2808 His laste word was, mercy, emelye!  
2809 His spirit changed hous and wente ther,  
2810 As I cam nevere, I kan nat tellen wher.  
2811 Therefore I stynte, I nam no divinistre;  
2812 Of soules fynde I nat in this registre,  
2813 Ne me ne list thilke opinions to telle

2814 Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.  
2815 Arcite is coold, ther mars his soule gye!  
2816 Now wol I speken forth of emelye.  
2817 Shrighte emelye, and howleth palamon,  
2818 And theseus his suster took anon  
2819 Swownyng, and baar hire fro the corps away.  
2820 What helpeth it to tarien forth the day  
2821 To tellen how she weep bothe eve and morwe?  
2822 For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,  
2823 Whan that hir housbondes ben from hem ago,  
2824 That for the moore part they sorwen so,  
2825 Or ellis fallen in swich maladye,  
2826 That at the laste certainly they dye.  
2827 Infinite been the sorwes and the teeres  
2828 Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeeres,  
2829 In al the toun for deeth of this theban.  
2830 For hym ther wepeth bothe child and man;  
2831 So greet wepyng was ther noon, certayn,  
2832 Whan ector was ybrought, al fressh yslayn,  
2833 To troye. Allas, the pitee that was ther,  
2834 Cracchyng of chekes, rentyng eek of heer.  
2835 Why woldestow be deed, thise wommen crye,  
2836 And haddest gold ynough, and emelye?  
2837 No man myghte gladen theseus,  
2838 Savyng his olde fader egeus,  
2839 That knew this worldes transmutacioun,  
2840 As he hadde seyn it change bothe up and doun,  
2841 Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse,  
2842 And shewed hem ensamples and liknesse.  
2843 Right as ther dyed nevere man, quod he,  
2844 That he ne lyvede in erthe in some degree,  
2845 Right so ther lyvede never man, he seyde,  
2846 In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.  
2847 This world nys but a thurghfare ful of wo,  
2848 And we been pilgrymes, passyng to and fro.  
2849 Deeth is an ende of every worldly soore.  
2850 And over al this yet seyde he muchel moore  
2851 To this effect, ful wisely to enhorte  
2852 The peple that they sholde hem reconforte.  
2853 Duc theseus, with al his bisy cure,  
  
2854 Caste now wher that the sepulture  
2855 Of goode arcite may best ymaked be,  
2856 And eek moost honorable in his degree.  
2857 And at the laste he took conclusioun  
2858 That ther as first arcite and palamoun  
2859 Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,  
2860 That in that selve grove, swoote and grene,  
2861 Ther as he hadde his amoureuse desires,  
2862 His compleynte, and for love his hootte fires,  
2863 He wolde make a fyr in which the office

2864 Funeral he myghte al accomplice.  
2865 And leet comande anon to hakke and hewe  
2866 The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe  
2867 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne.  
2868 His officers with swifte feet they renne  
2869 And ryde anon at his comandement.  
2870 And after this, theseus hath ysent  
2871 After a beere, and it al over spradde  
2872 With clooth of gold, the richeste that he hadde.  
2873 And of the same suyte he cladde arcite;  
2874 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves white,  
2875 Eek on his heed a coroune of laurer grene,  
2876 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.  
2877 He leyde hym, bare the visage, on the beere;  
2878 Therwith he weep that pitee was to heere.  
2879 And for the peple sholde seen hym alle,  
2880 Whan it was day, he broghte hym to the halle,  
2881 That roreth of the cryng and the soun.  
2882 Tho cam this woful theban palamoun,  
2883 With flotery berd and ruggy, asshy heeres,  
2884 In clothes blake, ydropped al with teeres;  
2885 And, passynge othere of wepyng, emelye,  
2886 The rewefulleste of al the compaignye.  
2887 In as muche as the servyce sholde be  
2888 The moore noble and riche in his degree,  
2889 Duc theseus leet forth thre steedes bryng,  
2890 That trapped were in steel al gliteryng,  
2891 And covered with the armes of daun arcite.  
2892 Upon thise steedes, that weren grete and white,  
2893 Ther seten folk, of whiche oon baar his sheeld,  
2894 Another his spere up on his hondes heeld,  
2895 The thridde baar with hym his bowe turkeys  
2896 (of brend gold was the caas and eek the harneys);  
2897 And riden forth a paas with sorweful cheere  
2898 Toward the grove, as ye shul after heere.  
2899 The nobleste of the grekes that ther were  
2900 Upon hir shuldres caryeden the beere,  
2901 With slakke paas, and eyen rede and wete,  
2902 Thurghout the citee by the maister strete,  
2903 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye  
2904 Right of the same is the strete ywrye.  
2905 Upon the right hond wente olde egeus,  
2906 And on that oother syde duc theseus,  
2907 With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,  
2908 Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;  
2909 Eek palamon, with ful greet compaignye;  
2910 And after that cam woful emelye,  
2911 With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,  
2912 To do the office of funeral servyse.  
2913 Heigh labour and ful greet apparaillyng  
2914 Was at the service and the fyr-makyng,

2915 That with his grene top the hevene raughte;  
2916 And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte --  
2917 This is to seyn, the bowes weren so brode.  
2918 Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode.  
2919 But how the fyr was maked upon highte,  
2920 Ne eek the names that the trees highte,  
2921 As ook, firre, birch, aspe, alder, holm, popler,  
2922 Wylugh, elm, plane, asshe, box, chasteyn, lynde, laurer,  
2923 Mapul, thorn, bech, hasel, ew, whippeltree, --  
2924 How they weren feld, shal nat be toold for me;  
2925 Ne hou the goddes ronnen up and doun,  
2926 Disherited of hire habitacioun,  
2927 In which they woneden in reste and pees,  
2928 Nymphes, fawnes and amadrides;  
2929 Ne hou the beestes and the briddes alle  
2930 Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;  
2931 Ne how the ground agast was of the light,  
2932 That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;  
2933 Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,  
2934 And thanne with drye stikkes cloven a thre,  
2935 And thanne with grene wode and spicerye,  
2936 And thanne with clooth of gold and with perrye,  
2937 And gerlandes, hangynge with ful many a flour;  
2938 The mirre, th' encens, with al so greet odour;  
2939 Ne how arcite lay among al this,  
2940 Ne what richesse aboute his body is;  
2941 Ne how that emelye, as was the gyse,  
2942 Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;  
2943 Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,  
2944 Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desir;  
2945 Ne what jeweles men in the fyre caste,  
2946 Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;  
2947 Ne how somme caste hir sheeld, and somme hir spere,  
2948 And of hire vestimentz, whiche that they were,  
2949 And coppes fulle of wyn, and milk, and blood,  
2950 Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;  
2951 Ne how the grekes, with an huge route,  
2952 Thries riden al the fyr aboute  
2953 Upon the left hand, with a loud shoutynge,  
2954 And thries with hir speres claterynge;  
2955 And thries how the ladyes gonne crye;

2956 Ne how that lad was homward emelye;  
2957 Ne how arcite is brent to asshe colde;  
2958 Ne how that lyche-wake was yholde  
2959 Al thilke nyght; ne how the grekes pleye  
2960 The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;  
2961 Who wrastleth best naked with oille enoynt,  
2962 Ne who that baar hym best, in no disjoynt.  
2963 I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon  
2964 Hoom til atthenes, whan the pley is doon;

2965 But shortly to the point thanne wol I wende,  
2966 And maken of my longe tale an ende.  
2967 By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres,  
2968 Al stynted is the moornynge and the teres  
2969 Of grekes, by oon general assent.  
2970 Thanne semed me ther was a parlement  
2971 At atthenes, upon certein pointz and caas;  
2972 Among the whiche pointz yspoken was,  
2973 To have with certein contrees alliaunce,  
2974 And have fully of thebans obeisaunce.  
2975 For which this noble theseus anon  
2976 Leet senden after gentil palamon,  
2977 Unwist of hym what was the cause and why;  
2978 But in his blake clothes sorwefully  
2979 He cam at his comandement in hye.  
2980 Tho sente theseus for emelye.  
2981 Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,  
2982 And theseus abiden hadde a space  
2983 Er any word cam fram his wise brest,  
2984 His eyen sette he ther as was his lest.  
2985 And with a sad visage he siked stille,  
2986 And after that right thus he seyde his wille:  
2987 The firste moevere of the cause above,  
2988 Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,  
2989 Greet was th' effect, and heigh was his entente.  
2990 Wel wiste he why, and what thereof he mente;  
2991 For with that faire cheyne of love he bond  
2992 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond  
2993 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee.  
2994 That same prince and that moevere, quod he,  
2995 Hath stablised in this wrecched world adoun  
2996 Certeyne dayes and duracioun  
2997 To al that is engendred in this place,  
2998 Over the whiche day they may nat pace,  
2999 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge.  
3000 Ther nedeth nocht noon auctoritee t' allegge,  
3001 For it is preeved by experience,  
3002 But that me list declaren my sentence.  
3003 Thanne may men by this ordre wel discerne  
3004 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.  
3005 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,  
3006 That every part dirryveth from his hool;  
3007 For nature hath nat taken his bigynnyng  
3008 Of no partie or cantel of a thyng,  
3009 But of a thyng that parfit is and stable,  
3010 Descendynge so til it be corrumpable.  
3011 And therefore, of his wise purveiaunce,  
3012 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,  
3013 That speses of thynges and progressiouns  
3014 Shullen enduren by successiouns,  
3015 And nat eterne, withouten any lye.

3016 This maystow understonde and seen at ye.  
3017 Loo the ook, that hath so long a norisshynge  
3018 From tyme that it first bigynneth to sprynge,  
3019 And hath so long a lif, as we may see,  
3020 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.  
3021 Considereth eek how that the harde stoon  
3022 Under oure feet, on which we trede and goon,  
3023 Yet wasteth it as it lyth by the weye.  
3024 The brode ryver somtyme wexeth dreye;  
3025 The grete tounes se we wane and wende.  
3026 Thanne may ye se that al this thyng hath ende.  
3027 Of man and womman seen we wel also  
3028 That nedes, in oon of thise termes two,  
3029 This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,  
3030 He moot be deed, the kyng as shal a page;  
3031 Som in his bed, som in the depe see,  
3032 Som in the large feeld, as men may see;  
3033 Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.  
3034 Thanne may I seyn that al this thyng moot deye.  
3035 What maketh this but juppiter, the kyng,  
3036 That is prince and cause of alle thyng,  
3037 Convertinge al unto his propre welle  
3038 From which it is dirryved, sooth to telle?  
3039 And heer-agayns no creature on lyve,  
3040 Of no degree, availleth for to stryve.  
3041 Thanne is it wysdom, as it thynketh me,  
3042 To maken vertu of necessitee,  
3043 And take it weel that we may nat eschue,  
3044 And namely that to us alle is due.  
3045 And whoso gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,  
3046 And rebel is to hym that al may gye.  
3047 And certainly a man hath moost honour  
3048 To dyen in his excellence and flour,  
3049 Whan he is siker of his goode name;  
3050 Thanne hath he doon his freend, ne hym, no shame.  
3051 And gladder oghte his freend been of his deeth,  
3052 Whan with honour up yolden is his breeth,  
3053 Than whan his name apalled is for age,  
3054 For al forgeten is his vassellage.  
3055 Thanne is it best, as for a worthy fame,  
3056 To dyen whan that he is best of name.  
3057 The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.  
3058 Why grucchen we, why have we hevynesse,  
3059 That goode arcite, of chivalrie the flour,  
3060 Departed is with duetee and honour  
3061 Out of this foule prisoun of this lyf?

3062 Why grucchen heere his cosyn and his wyf  
3063 Of his welfare, that loved hem so weel?  
3064 Kan he hem thank? nay, God woot, never a deel,  
3065 That both his soule and eek hemself offende,

3066 And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.  
3067 What may I conclude of this longe serye,  
3068 But after wo I rede us to be merye,  
3069 And thanken juppiter of al his grace?  
3070 And er that we departen from this place  
3071 I rede that we make of sorwes two  
3072 O parfit joye, lastynge everemo.  
3073 And looketh now, wher moost sorwe is herinne,  
3074 Ther wol we first amenden and bigynne.  
3075 Suster, quod he, this is my fulle assent,  
3076 With al th' avys heere of my parlement,  
3077 That gentil palamon, youre owene knyght,  
3078 That serveth yow with wille herte, and myght,  
3079 And ever hath doon syn ye first hym knewe,  
3080 That ye shul of youre grace upon hym rewe,  
3081 And taken hym for housbonde and for lord.  
3082 Lene me youre hond, for this is oure accord.  
3083 Lat se now of youre wommanly pitee.  
3084 He is kynges brother sone, pardee;  
3085 And though he were a povre bachelor,  
3086 Syn he hath served yow so many a yeer,  
3087 And had for yow so greet adversitee,  
3088 It moste been considered, leeveth me;  
3089 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.  
3090 Thanne seyde he thus to palamon the knight:  
3091 I trowe ther nedeth litel sermonyng  
3092 To make yow assente to this thyng.  
3093 Com neer, and taak youre lady by the hond.  
3094 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond  
3095 That highte matrimoigne or mariage,  
3096 By al the conseil and the baronage.  
3097 And thus with alle blisse and melodye  
3098 Hath palamon ywedded emelye.  
3099 And god, that al this wyde world hath wrought,  
3100 Sende hym his love that hath it deere aboght;  
3101 For now is palamon in alle wele,  
3102 Lyvyng in blisse, in richesse, and in heele,  
3103 And emelye hym loveth so tendrely,  
3104 And he hire serveth al so gentilly,  
3105 That nevere was ther no word hem bitwene  
3106 Of jalousie or any oother teene.  
3107 Thus endeth palamon and emelye;  
3108 And God save al this faire compaignye! amen.

### **The Miller's Prologue**

3109 Whan that the knyght had thus his tale ytoold,  
3110 In al the route nas ther yong ne oold  
3111 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,  
3112 And worthy for to drawen to memorie;

3113 And namely the gentils everichon.  
3114 Oure hooste lough and swoor, so moot I gon,  
3115 This gooth aright; unboked is the male.  
3116 Lat se now who shal telle another tale;  
3117 For trewely the game is wel bigonne.  
3118 Now telleth ye, sir monk, if that ye konne  
3119 Somwhat to quite with the knyghtes tale.  
3120 The millere, that for dronken was al pale,  
3121 So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,  
3122 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,  
3123 Ne abyde no man for his curteisie,  
3124 But in pilates voys he gan to crie,  
3125 And swoor, by armes, and by blood and bones,  
3126 I kan a noble tale for the nones,  
3127 With which I wol now quite the knyghtes tale.  
3128 Oure hooste saugh that he was dronke of ale,  
3129 And seyde, abyd, robyn, my leeve brother;  
3130 Som bettre man shal telle us first another.  
3131 Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.  
3132 By goddes soule, quod he, that wol nat I;  
3133 For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.  
3134 Oure hoost answerde, tel on, a devel wey!  
3135 Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome.  
3136 Now herkneth, quod the millere, alle and some!  
3137 But first I make a protestacioun  
3138 That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun;  
3139 And therfore if that I mysspeke or seye,  
  
3140 Wyte it the ale of southwerk, I you preye.  
3141 For I wol telle a legende and a lyf  
3142 Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,  
3143 How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.  
3144 The reve answerde and seyde, stynt thy clappe!  
3145 Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye.  
3146 It is a synne and eek a greet folye  
3147 To apeyren any man, or hym defame,  
3148 And eek to bryngen wyves in swich fame.  
3149 Thou mayst ynogh of othere thynges seyn.  
3150 This dronke millere spak ful soone ageyn  
3151 And seyde, leve brother oswold,  
3152 Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.  
3153 But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;  
3154 Ther been ful goode wyves many oon,  
3155 And evere a thousand goode ayeyns oon badde.  
3156 That knowestow wel thyself, but if thou madde.  
3157 Why artow angry with my tale now?  
3158 I have a wyf, pardee, as wel as thou;  
3159 Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plough,  
3160 Take upon me moore than ynogh,  
3161 As demen of myself that I were oon;  
3162 I wol bileve wel that I am noon.



3163 An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf  
3164 Of goddes pryvetee, nor of his wyf.  
3165 So he may fynde goddes foyson there,  
3166 Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.  
3167 What sholde I moore seyn, but this millere  
3168 He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,  
3169 But tolde his cherles tale in his manere.  
3170 M' athynketh that I shal reherce it heere.  
3171 And therfore every gentil wight I preye,  
3172 For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye  
3173 Of yvel entente, but for I moot reherce  
3174 Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,  
3175 Or elles falsen som of my mateere.  
3176 And therfore, whoso list it nat yheere,  
3177 Turne over the leef and chese another tale;  
3178 For he shal fynde ynowe, grete and smale,  
3179 Of storial thyng that toucheth gentillesse,  
3180 And eek moralitee and hoolynesse.  
3181 Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys.  
3182 The millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;  
3183 So was the reve eek and othere mo,  
3184 And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.  
3185 Avyseth yow, and put me out of blame;  
3186 And eek men shal nat maken ernest of game.

## The Miller's Tale

3187 Whilom ther was dwellynge at oxenford  
3188 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,  
3189 And of his craft he was a carpenter.  
3190 With hym ther was dwellynge a poure scoler,  
3191 Hadde lerned art, but al his fantasye  
3192 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,  
3193 And koude a certeyn of conclusiouns,  
3194 To demen by interrogaciouns,  
3195 If that men asked hym in certein houres  
3196 Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures,  
3197 Or if men asked hym what sholde bifalle  
3198 Of every thyng; I may nat rekene hem alle.  
3199 This clerk was cleped hende nicholas.  
3200 Of deerne love he koude and of solas;  
3201 And therto he was sleigh and ful privee,  
3202 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.  
3203 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye  
3204 Allone, withouten any compaignye,  
3205 Ful fetisly ydight with herbes swoote;  
3206 And he hymself as sweete as is the roote  
3207 Of lycorys, or any cetewale.  
3208 His almageste, and bookes grete and smale,  
3209 His astrelabie, longynge for his art,

3210 His augrym stones layen faire apart,  
3211 On shelves couched at his beddes heed;  
3212 His presse ycovered with a faldyng reed;  
3213 And al above ther lay a gay sautrie,  
3214 On which he made a-nyghtes melodie  
3215 So swetely that all the chambre rong;  
3216 And angelus ad virginem he song;  
3217 And after that he song the kynges noote.  
3218 Ful often blessed was his myrie throte.  
3219 And thus this sweete clerk his tyme spent  
3220 After his freendes fyndyng and his rente.  
3221 This carpenter hadde wedded newe a wyf,  
3222 Which that he lovede moore than his lyf;  
3223 Of eighteteene yeer she was of age.  
3224 Jalous he was, and heeld hire narwe in cage,  
3225 For she was wylde and yong, and he was old,

3226 And demed hymself been lik a cokewold.  
3227 He knew nat catoun, for his wit was rude,  
3228 That bad man sholde wedde his simylitude.  
3229 Men sholde wedden after hire estaat,  
3230 For youthe and elde is often at debaat.  
3231 But sith that he was fallen in the snare,  
3232 He moste endure, as oother folk, his care.  
3233 Fair was this yonge wyf, and therwithal  
3234 As any wezele hir body gent and smal.  
3235 A ceynt she werede, barred al of silk,  
3236 A barmcloth eek as whit as morne milk  
3237 Upon hir lendes, ful of many a goore.  
3238 Whit was hir smok, and broyden al bifoore  
3239 And eek bihynde, on hir coler aboute,  
3240 Of col-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute.  
3241 The tapes of hir white voluper  
3242 Were of the same suyte of hir coler;  
3243 Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye.  
3244 And sikerly she hadde a likerous ye;  
3245 Ful smale y pulled were hire browes two,  
3246 And tho were bent and blake as any sloo.  
3247 She was ful moore blisful on to see  
3248 Than is the newe pere-jonette tree,  
3249 And softer than the wolle is of a wether.  
3250 And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether,  
3251 Tasseled with silk, and perled with latoun.  
3252 In al this world, to seken up and doun,  
3253 There nys no man so wys that koude thenche  
3254 So gay a popelote or swich a wenche.  
3255 Ful brighter was the shynyng of hir hewe  
3256 Than in the tour the noble yforged newe.  
3257 But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne  
3258 As any swalwe sittyng on a berne.  
3259 Therto she koude skippe and make game,

3260 As any kyde or calf folwyng his dame.  
3261 Hir mouth was sweete as bragot or the meeth,  
3262 Or hoord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.  
3263 Wynsyng she was, as is a joly colt,  
3264 Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.  
3265 A brooch she baar upon hir lowe coler,  
3266 As brood as is the boos of a bokeler.  
3267 Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye.  
3268 She was a prymerole, a piggesnye,  
3269 For any lord to leggen in his bedde,  
3270 Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.  
3271 Now, sire, and eft, sire, so bifel the cas,  
3272 That on a day this hende nicholas  
3273 Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,  
3274 Whil that hir housbonde was at oseneye,  
3275 As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte;  
3276 And prively he caughte hire by the queynte,  
3277 And seyde, ywis, but if ich have my wille,  
3278 For deerne love of thee, lemman, I spille.  
3279 And heeld hire harde by the haunchebones,  
3280 And seyde, lemman, love me al atones,  
3281 Or I wol dyen, also God me save!  
3282 And she sproong as a colt dooth in the trave,  
3283 And with hir heed she wryed faste away,  
3284 And seyde, I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey!  
3285 Why, lat be, quod she, lat be, nicholas,  
3286 Or I wol crie -- out, harrow -- and -- allas! --  
3287 Do wey youre handes, for youre curteisye!  
3288 This nicholas gan mercy for to crye,  
3289 And spak so faire, and profred him so faste,  
3290 That she hir love hym graunted atte laste,  
3291 And swore hir ooth, by seint thomas of kent,  
3292 That she wol been at his comandement,  
3293 Whan that she may hir leyser wel espie.  
3294 Myn housbonde is so ful of jalousie  
3295 That but ye wayte wel and been privee,  
3296 I woot right wel I nam but deed, quod she.  
3297 Ye moste been ful deerne, as in this cas.  
3298 Nay, therof care thee noght, quod nicholas.  
3299 A clerk hadde litherly biset his whyle,  
3300 But if he koude a carpenter bigyle.  
3301 And thus they been accorded and ysworn  
3302 To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.  
3303 Whan nicholas had doon thus everideel,  
3304 And thakked hire aboute the lendes weel,  
3305 He kiste hire sweete and taketh his sawtrie,  
3306 And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodie.  
3307 Thanne fil it thus, that to the paryssh chirche,  
3308 Cristes owene werkes for to wirche,  
3309 This goode wyf went on an haliday.  
3310 Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,

3311 So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.  
3312 Now was ther of that chirche a parissh clerk,  
3313 The which that was ycleped absolon.  
3314 Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,  
3315 And strouted as a fanne large and brode;  
3316 Ful streight and evene lay his joly shode.  
3317 His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos.  
3318 With poules wyndow corven on his shoos,  
3319 In hoses rede he wente fetisly.  
3320 Yclad he was ful smal and proprely  
3321 Al in a kirtel of a lyght waget;  
3322 Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.  
3323 And therupon he hadde a gay surplys  
3324 As whit as is the blosme upon the rys.  
3325 A myrie child he was, so God me save.  
3326 Wel koude he laten blood and clippe and shave,  
3327 And maken a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.  
3328 In twenty manere koude he trippe and daunce  
3329 After the scole of oxenforde tho,  
3330 And with his legges casten to and fro,  
3331 And pleyen songes on a smal rubible;  
3332 Therto he song som tyme a loud quynyble;

3333 And as wel koude he pleye on a giterne.  
3334 In al the toun nas brewhous ne tavernne  
3335 That he ne visited with his solas,  
3336 Ther any gaylard tappestere was.  
3337 But sooth to seyn, he was somdeel squaymous  
3338 Of fartyng, and of speche daungerous.  
3339 This absolon, that jolif was and gay,  
3340 Gooth with a sencer on the haliday,  
3341 Sensynge the wyves of the parisshe faste;  
3342 And many a lovely look on hem he caste,  
3343 And namely on this carpenteris wyf.  
3344 To looke on hire hym thoughte a myrie lyf,  
3345 She was so propre and sweete and likerous.  
3346 I dar wel seyn, if she hadde been a mous,  
3347 And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.  
3348 This parissh clerk, this joly absolon,  
3349 Hath in his herte swich a love-longynge  
3350 That of no wyf took he noon offrynge;  
3351 For curteisie, he seyde, he wolde noon.  
3352 The moone, whan it was nyght, ful brighte shoon,  
3353 And absolon his gyterne hath ytake,  
3354 For paramours he thoghte for to wake.  
3355 And forth he gooth, jolif and amorous,  
3356 Til he cam to the carpenteres hous  
3357 A litel after cokkes hadde ycrowe,  
3358 And dressed hym up by a shot-wyndowe  
3359 That was upon the carpenteris wal.  
3360 He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal,

3361 Now, deere lady, if thy wille be,  
3362 I praye yow that ye wole rewe on me,  
3363 Ful wel acordaunt to his gyternynge.  
3364 This carpenter awook, and herde him synge,  
3365 And spak unto his wyf, and seyde anon,  
3366 What! alison! herestow nat absolon,  
3367 That chaunteth thus under oure boures wal?  
3368 And she answerde hir housbonde therwithal,  
3369 Yis, God woot, john, I heere it every deel.  
3370 This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than weel?  
3371 Fro day to day this joly absolon  
3372 So woweth hire that hym is wo bigon.  
3373 He waketh al the nyght and al the day;  
3374 He kembeth his lokkes brode, and made hym gay;  
3375 He woweth hire by meenes and brocage,  
3376 And swoor he wolde been hir owene page;  
3377 He syngeth, brokkynge as a nyghtyngale;  
3378 He sente hire pyment, meeth, and spiced ale,  
3379 And wafres, pipyng hoot out of the gleede;  
3380 And, for she was of town, he profred meede.  
3381 For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,  
3382 And somme for strokes, and somme for gentillesse.  
3383 Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,  
3384 He pleyeth herodes upon a scaffold hye.  
3385 But what availleth hym as in this cas?  
3386 She loveth so this hende nicholas  
3387 That absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;  
3388 He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn.  
3389 And thus she maketh absolon hire ape,  
3390 And al his earnest turneth til a jape.  
3391 Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,  
3392 Men seyn right thus, alwey the nye slye  
3393 Maketh the ferre leeve to be looth.  
3394 For though that absolon be wood or wrooth,  
3395 By cause that he fer was from hire sight,  
3396 This nye nicholas stood in his light.  
3397 Now ber thee wel, thou hende nicholas,  
3398 For absolon may waille and synge allas.  
3399 And so bifel it on a saterday,  
3400 This carpenter was goon til osenay;  
3401 And hende nicholas and alisoun  
3402 Acorded been to this conclusioun,  
3403 That nicholas shal shapen hym a wyle  
3404 This sely jalous housbonde to bigyle;  
3405 And if so be the game wente aright,  
3406 She sholde slepen in his arm al nyght,  
3407 For this was his desir and hire also.  
3408 And right anon, withouten wordes mo,  
3409 This nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,  
3410 But dooth ful softe unto his chambre carie  
3411 Bothe mete and drynke for a day or tweye,

3412 And to hire housbonde bad hire for to seye,  
3413 If that he axed after nicholas,  
3414 She sholde seye she nyste where he was,  
3415 Of al that day she saugh hym nat with ye;  
3416 She trowed that he was in maladye,  
3417 For for no cry hir mayde koude hym calle,  
3418 He nolde answeere for thyng that myghte falle.  
3419 This passeth forth al thilke saterday,  
3420 That nicholas stille in his chambre lay,  
3421 And eet and sleep, or dide what hym leste,  
3422 Til sonday, that the sonne gooth to reste.  
3423 This sely carpenter hath greet merveylye  
3424 Of nicholas, or what thyng myghte hym eyle,  
3425 And seyde, I am adrad, by seint thomas,  
3426 It stondest nat aright with nicholas.  
3427 God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!  
3428 This world is now ful tikel, sikerly.  
3429 I saugh to-day a cors yborn to chirche  
3430 That now, on monday last, I saugh hym wirche.  
3431 Go up, quod he unto his knave anoon,  
3432 Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a stoon.  
3433 Looke how it is, and tel me boldely.  
3434 This knave gooth hym up ful sturdily,

3435 And at the chambre dore whil that he stood,  
3436 He cride and knocked as that he were wood,  
3437 What! how! what do ye, maister nicholay?  
3438 How may ye slepen al the longe day?  
3439 But al for noght, he herde nat a word.  
3440 An hole he foond, ful lowe upon a bord,  
3441 Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,  
3442 And at that hole he looked in ful depe,  
3443 And at the laste he hadde of hym a sight.  
3444 This nicholas sat evere capyng upright,  
3445 As he had kiked on the newe moone.  
3446 Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister soone  
3447 In what array he saugh this ilke man.  
3448 This carpenter to blessen hym bigan,  
3449 And seyde, help us, seinte frydeswyde!  
3450 A man woot litel what hym shal bityde.  
3451 This man is falle, with his astromye,  
3452 In some woodnesse or in som agonye.  
3453 I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!  
3454 Men sholde nat knowe of goddes pryvetee.  
3455 Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man  
3456 That noght but oonly his bileve kan!  
3457 So ferde another clerk with astromye;  
3458 He walked in the feeldes, for to pryve  
3459 Upon the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,  
3460 Til he was in a marle-pit yfalle;  
3461 He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint thomas,

3462 Me reweth soore of hende nicholas.  
3463 He shal be rated of his studyng,  
3464 If that I may, by jhesus, hevene kyng!  
3465 Get me a staf, that I may underspore,  
3466 Whil that thou, robyn, hevest up the dore.  
3467 He shal out of his studyng, as I gesse --  
3468 And to the chambre dore he gan hym dresse.  
3469 His knave was a strong carl for the nones,  
3470 And by the haspe he haaf it of atones;  
3471 Into the floor the dore fil anon.  
3472 This nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,  
3473 And evere caped upward into the eir.  
3474 This carpenter wende he were in despeir,  
3475 And hente hym by the sholdres myghtily,  
3476 And shook hym harde, and cride spitously,  
3477 What! nicholay! what, how! what, looke adoun!  
3478 Awak, and thenk on cristes passioun!  
3479 I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes.  
3480 Therwith the nyght-spel seyde he anon-rightes  
3481 On foure halves of the hous aboute,  
3482 And on the thressfold of the dore withoute:  
3483 Jhesu crist and seinte benedight,  
3484 Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,  
3485 For nyghtes verye, the white pater-noster!  
3486 Where wentestow, seinte petres soster?  
3487 And atte laste this hende nicholas  
3488 Gan for to sik soore, and seyde, allas!  
3489 Shal al the world be lost aftsoones now?  
3490 This carpenter answerde, what seystow?  
3491 What! think on god, as we doon, men that swynke.  
3492 This nicholas answerde, fecche me drynke,  
3493 And after wol I speke in pryvetee  
3494 Of certeyn thyng that toucheth me and thee.  
3495 I wol telle it noon oother man, certeyn.  
3496 This carpenter goth doun, and comth ageyn,  
3497 And broghte of myghty ale a large quart;  
3498 And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,  
3499 This nicholas his dore faste shette,  
3500 And doun the carpenter by hym he sette.  
3501 He seyde john, myn hooste, lief and deere,  
3502 Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere  
3503 That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;  
3504 For it is cristes conseil that I seye,  
3505 And if thou telle it man, thou art forlore;  
3506 For this vengeaunce thou shalt han therfore,  
3507 That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood.  
3508 Nay, crist forbede it, for his hooly blood!  
3509 Quod tho this sely man, I nam no labbe;  
3510 Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe.  
3511 Sey what thou wolt, I shal it nevere telle  
3512 To child ne wyf, by hym that harwed helle!

3513 Now john, quod nicholas, I wol nat lye;  
3514 I have yfounde in myn astrologye,  
3515 As I have looked in the moone bright,  
3516 That now a monday next, at quarter nyght,  
3517 Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,  
3518 That half so greet was nevere noes flood.  
3519 This world, he seyde, in lasse than an hour  
3520 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour.  
3521 Thus shal mankynde drenche, and lese hir lyf.  
3522 This carpenter answerde, allas, my wyf!  
3523 And shal she drenche? allas, myn alisoun!  
3524 For sorwe of this he fil almoost adoun,  
3525 And seyde, is ther no remedie in this cas?  
3526 Why, yis, for gode, quod hende nicholas,  
3527 If thou wolt werken after loore and reed.  
3528 Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed;  
3529 For thus seith salomon, that was ful trewe,  
3530 Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe. --  
3531 And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,  
3532 I undertake, withouten mast and seyl,  
3533 Yet shal I saven hire and thee and me.  
3534 Hastow nat herd hou saved was noe,  
3535 Whan that oure lord hadde warned hym biforn  
3536 That al the world with water sholde be lorn?  
3537 Yis, quod this carpenter, ful yoore ago.  
3538 Hastou nat herd, quod nicholas, also  
3539 The sorwe of noe with his felaweshipe,

3540 Er that he myghte gete his wyf to shipe?  
3541 Hym hadde be levere, I dar wel undertake  
3542 At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake  
3543 That she hadde had a ship herself allone.  
3544 And therefore, woostou what is best to doone?  
3545 This asketh haste, and of an hastif thyng  
3546 Men may nat preche or maken tariyng.  
3547 Anon go gete us faste into this in  
3548 A knedyng trogh, or ellis a kymelyn,  
3549 For ech of us, but looke that they be large,  
3550 In which we mowe swymme as in a barge,  
3551 And han therinne vitaille suffisant  
3552 But for a day, -- fy on the remenant!  
3553 The water shal aslake and goon away  
3554 Aboute pryme upon the nexte day.  
3555 But robyn may nat wite of this, thy knave,  
3556 Ne eek thy mayde gille I may nat save;  
3557 Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,  
3558 I wol nat tellen goddes pryvetee.  
3559 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,  
3560 To han as greet a grace as noe hadde.  
3561 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute.  
3562 Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-about.



3563 But whan thou hast, for hire and thee and me,  
3564 Ygeten us thise knedyng tubbes thre,  
3565 Thanne shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye,  
3566 That no man of oure purveiaunce spye.  
3567 And whan thou thus hast doon, as I have seyde,  
3568 And hast oure vitaille faire in hem yleyd,  
3569 And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo,  
3570 Whan that the water comth, that we may go,  
3571 And breke an hole an heigh, upon the gable,  
3572 Unto the gardyn-ward, over the stable,  
3573 That we may frely passen forth oure way,  
3574 Whan that the grete shour is goon away,  
3575 Thanne shaltou swymme as myrie, I undertake,  
3576 As dooth the white doke after hire drake.  
3577 Thanne wol I clepe, -- how, alison! how, john!  
3578 Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon. --  
3579 And thou wolt seyn, -- hayl, maister nicholay!  
3580 Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day. --  
3581 And thanne shul we be lordes al oure lyf  
3582 Of al the world, as noe and his wyf.  
3583 But of o thyng I warne thee ful right:  
3584 Be wel avysed on that ilke nyght  
3585 That we ben entred into shippes bord,  
3586 That noon of us ne speke nat a word,  
3587 Ne clepe, ne crie, but be in his preyere;  
3588 For it is goddes owene heeste deere.  
3589 Thy wyf and thou moote hange fer atwynne;  
3590 For that bitwixe yow shal be no synne,  
3591 Namore in lookyng than ther shal in deede,  
3592 This ordinance is seyde. Go, God thee speede!  
3593 Tomorwe at nyght, whan men ben alle aslepe,  
3594 Into oure knedyng-tubbes wol we crepe,  
3595 And sitten there, abidyng goddes grace.  
3596 Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space  
3597 To make of this no lenger sermonyng.  
3598 Men seyn thus, -- sende the wise, and sey no thyng: --  
3599 Thou art so wys, it needeth thee nat teche.  
3600 Go, save oure lyf, and that I the biseche.  
3601 This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.  
3602 Ful ofte he seide allas and weylawey,  
3603 And to his wyf he tolde his pryvetee,  
3604 And she was war, and knew it bet than he,  
3605 What al this queynte cast was for to seye.  
3606 But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye,  
3607 And seyde, allas! go forth thy wey anon,  
3608 Help us to scape, or we been dede echon!  
3609 I am thy trewe, verray wedded wyf;  
3610 Go, deere spouse, and help to save oure lyf.  
3611 Lo, which a greet thyng is affeccion!  
3612 Men may dyen of ymaginacioun,  
3613 So depe may impressioun be take.

3614 This sely carpenter bigynneth quake;  
3615 Hym thynketh verrailly that he may see  
3616 Noees flood come walwyng as the see  
3617 To drenchen alisoun, his hony deere.  
3618 He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory cheere;  
3619 He siketh with ful many a sory swogh;  
3620 He gooth and geteth hym a knedyng trogh,  
3621 And after that a tubbe and a kymelyn,  
3622 And pryvely he sente hem to his in,  
3623 And heng hem in the roof in pryvetee.  
3624 His owene hand he made laddres thre,  
3625 To clymben by the ronges and the stalkes  
3626 Unto the tubbes hangyng in the balkes,  
3627 And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and tubbe,  
3628 With breed and chese, and good ale in a jubbe,  
3629 Suffisyng right ynogh as for a day.  
3630 But er that he hadde maad al this array,  
3631 He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,  
3632 Upon his nede to london for to go.  
3633 And on the monday, whan it drow to nyght,  
3634 He shette his dore withoute candel-lyght,  
3635 And dressed alle thyng as it sholde be.  
3636 And shortly, up they clomben alle thre;  
3637 They seten stille wel a furlong way.  
3638 Now, pater-noster, clom! seyde nicholay,  
3639 And clom, quod john, and clom, seyde alisoun.  
3640 This carpenter seyde his devocioun,  
3641 And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,  
3642 Awaityng on the reyn, if he it heere.  
3643 The dede sleep, for wery bisynesse,  
3644 Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,

3645 Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel moore;  
3646 For travaille of his goost he groneth soore,  
3647 And eft he routeth, for his heed myslay.  
3648 Doun of the laddre stalketh nicholay,  
3649 And alisoun ful softe adoun she spedde;  
3650 Withouten wordes mo they goon to bedde,  
3651 Ther as the carpenter is wont to lye.  
3652 Ther was the revel and the melodye;  
3653 And thus lith alison and nicholas,  
3654 In bisynesse of myrthe and of solas,  
3655 Til that the belle of laudes gan to ryng,  
3656 And freres in the chaunsel gone synge.  
3657 This parissh clerk, this amorous absolon,  
3658 That is for love alwey so wo bigon,  
3659 Upon the monday was at oseneye  
3660 With compaignye, hym to disporte and pleye,  
3661 And axed upon cas a cloisterer  
3662 Ful prively after john the carpenter;  
3663 And he drough hym apart out of the chirche,

3664 And seyde, I noot, I saugh hym heere nat wirche  
3665 Syn saterday; I trowe that he be went  
3666 For tymber, ther oure abbot hath hym sent;  
3667 For he is wont for tymber for to go,  
3668 And dwellen at the grange a day or two;  
3669 Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn.  
3670 Where that he be, I kan nat soothly seyn.  
3671 This absolon ful joly was and light,  
3672 And thoghte, now is tyme to wake al nyght;  
3673 For sikirly I saugh hym nat stiryng  
3674 Aboute his dore, syn day bigan to spryng.  
3675 So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe,  
3676 Ful pryvely knocken at his wyndowe  
3677 That stant ful lowe upon his boures wal.  
3678 To alison now wol I tellen al  
3679 My love-longyng, for yet I shal nat mysse  
3680 That at the leeste wey I shal hire kisse.  
3681 Som maner confort shal I have, parfay.  
3682 My mouth hath icched al this longe day;  
3683 That is a signe of kysyng atte leeste.  
3684 Al nyght me mette eek I was at a feeste.  
3685 Therefore I wol go slepe an houre or tweye,  
3686 And al the nyght thanne wol I wake and pleye.  
3687 Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon  
3688 Up rist this joly love-re absolon  
3689 And hym arraieth gay, at poynt-devys.  
3690 But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys,  
3691 To smellen sweete, er he hadde kembd his heer.  
3692 Under his tonge a trewe-love he beer,  
3693 For therby wende he to ben gracious.  
3694 He rometh to the carpenteres hous,  
3695 And stille he stant under the shot-wyndowe --  
3696 Unto his brest it raughte, it was so lowe --  
3697 And softe he cougheth with a semy soun --  
3698 What do ye, hony-comb, sweete alisoun,  
3699 My faire bryd, my sweete cynamome?  
3700 Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me!  
3701 Wel litel thynken ye upon my wo,  
3702 That for youre love I swete ther I go.  
3703 No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;  
3704 I moorne as dooth a lamb after the tete.  
3705 Ywis, lemman, I have swich love-longyng,  
3706 That lik a turtel trewe is my moornyng.  
3707 I may nat ete na moore than a mayde.  
3708 go fro the wyndow, jakke fool, she sayde;  
3709 As help me god, it wol nat be 'com pa me.'  
3710 I love another -- and elles I were to blame --  
3711 Wel bet than thee, by jhesu, absolon.  
3712 Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,  
3713 And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!  
3714 allas, quod absolon, and weylaway,

**3715** That trewe love was evere so yvel biset!  
**3716** Thanne kysse me, syn it may be no bet,  
**3717** For jhesus love, and for the love of me.  
**3718** Wiltow thanne go thy wey therwith? quod she.  
**3719** Ye, certes, lemman, quod this absolon.  
**3720** Thanne make thee reddy, quod she, I come anon.  
**3721** And unto nicholas she seyde stille,  
**3722** Now hust, and thou shalt laughen al thy fille.  
**3723** This absolon doun sette hym on his knees  
**3724** And seyde, I am a lord at alle degrees;  
**3725** For after this I hope ther cometh moore.  
**3726** Lemman, thy grace, and sweete bryd, thyn oore!  
**3727** The wyndow she undoth, and that in haste.  
**3728** Have do, quod she, com of, and speed the faste,  
**3729** Lest thatoure neighebores thee espie.  
**3730** This absolon gan wype his mouth ful drie.  
**3731** Derk was the nyght as pich, or as the cole,  
**3732** And at the wyndow out she putte hir hole,  
**3733** And absolon, hym fil no bet ne wers,  
**3734** But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers  
**3735** Ful savourly, er he were war of this.  
**3736** Abak he stirte, and thoughte it was amys,  
**3737** For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd.  
**3738** He felte a thyng al rough and long yherd,  
**3739** And seyde, fy! allas! what have I do?  
**3740** Tehee! quod she, and clapte the wyndow to,  
**3741** And absolon gooth forth a sory pas.  
**3742** A berd! a berd! quod hende nicholas,  
**3743** By goddes corpus, this goth faire and weel.  
**3744** This sely absolon herde every deel,  
**3745** And on his lippe he gan for anger byte,  
  
**3746** And to hymself he seyde, I shal thee quyte.  
**3747** Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes  
**3748** With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,  
**3749** But absolon, that seith ful ofte, allas!  
**3750** My soule bitake I unto sathanas,  
**3751** But me were levere than al this toun, quod he,  
**3752** Of this despit awroken for to be.  
**3753** Allas, quod he, allas, I ne hadde ybleynt!  
**3754** His hoote love was coold and al yqueynt;  
**3755** For fro that tyme that he hadde kist hir ers,  
**3756** Of paramours he sette nat a kers;  
**3757** For he was heeled of his maladie.  
**3758** Ful ofte paramours he gan deffie,  
**3759** And weep as dooth a child that is ybete.  
**3760** A softe paas he wente over the strete  
**3761** Until a smyth men cleped daun gerveys,  
**3762** That in his forge smythed plough harneys;  
**3763** He sharpeth shaar and kultour bisily.  
**3764** This absolon knokketh al esily,

3766 What, who artow? it am I, absalon.  
3765 And seyde, undo, gerveys, and that anon.  
3767 What, absolon! for cristes sweete tree,  
3768 Why rise ye so rathe? ey, benedicitee!  
3769 What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, God it woot,  
3770 Hath broght yow thus upon the viritoot.  
3771 By seinte note, ye woot wel what I mene.  
3772 This absolon ne roghte nat a bene  
3773 Of al his pley; no word agayn he yaf;  
3774 He hadde moore tow on his distaf  
3775 Than gerveys knew, and seyde, freend so deere,  
3776 That hote kultour in the chymenee heere,  
3777 As lene it me, I have therwith to doone,  
3778 And I wol brynge it thee agayn ful soone.  
3779 Gerveys answerde, certes, were it gold,  
3780 Or in a poke nobles alle untold,  
3781 Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smyth.  
3782 Ey, cristes foo! what wol ye do therwith?  
3783 Therof, quod absolon, be as be may.  
3784 I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day --  
3785 And caughte the kultour by the colde stele.  
3786 Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,  
3787 And wente unto the carpenteris wal.  
3788 He cogheth first, and knokketh therwithal  
3789 Upon the wyndowe, right as he dide er.  
3790 This alison answerde, who is ther  
3791 That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.  
3792 Why, nay, quod he, God woot, my sweete leef,  
3793 I am thyn absolon, my deerelyng.  
3794 Of gold, quod he, I have thee broght a ryng.  
3795 My mooder yaf it me, so God me save;  
3796 Ful fyn it is, and therto wel ygrave.  
3797 This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse.  
3798 This nicholas was risen for to pisse,  
3799 And thoughte he wolde amenden al the jape;  
3800 He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.  
3801 And up the wyndowe dide he hastily,  
3802 And out his ers he putteth pryvely  
3803 Over the buttoke, to the haunche-bon;  
3804 And therwith spak this clerk, this absolon,  
3805 Spek, sweete bryd, I noot nat where thou art.  
3806 This nicholas anon leet fle a fart,  
3807 As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,  
3808 That with the strook he was almoost yblent;  
3809 And he was redy with his iren hoot,  
3810 And nicholas amydde the ers he smoot.  
3811 Of gooth the skyn an hande-brede aboute,  
3812 The hote kultour brende so his toute,  
3813 And for the smert he wende for to dye.  
3814 As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye,  
3815 Help! water! water! water! help, for goddes herte!

3816 This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,  
3817 And herde oon crien water as he were wood,  
3818 And thoughte, allas, now comth nowelis flood!  
3819 He sit hym up withouten wordes mo,  
3820 And with his ax he smoot the corde atwo,  
3821 And doun gooth al; he foond neither to selle,  
3822 Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle  
3823 Upon the floor, and ther aswowne he lay.  
3824 Up stirte hire alison and nicholay,  
3825 And criden out and harrow in the strete.  
3826 The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,  
3827 In ronnen for to gauren on this man,  
3828 That yet aswowne lay, bothe pale and wan,  
3829 For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm.  
3830 But stonde he moste unto his owene harm;  
3831 For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun  
3832 With hende nicholas and alisoun.  
3833 They tolden every man that he was wood,  
3834 He was agast so of nowelis flood  
3835 Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanytee  
3836 He hadde yboght hym knedyng tubbes thre,  
3837 And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;  
3838 And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,  
3839 To sitten in the roof, par compaignye.  
3840 The folk gan laughen at his fantasye;  
3841 Into the roof they kiken and they cape,  
3842 And turned al his harm unto a jape.  
3843 For what so that this carpenter answerde,  
3844 It was for nocht, no man his reson herde.  
3845 With othes grete he was so sworn adoun  
3846 That he was holde wood in al the toun;  
3847 For every clerk anonright heeld with oother.

3848 They seyde, the man is wood, my leeve brother;  
3849 And every wight gan laughen at this stryf.  
3850 Thus swyved was this carpenteris wyf,  
3851 For al his kepyng and his jalousye;  
3852 And absolon hath kist hir nether ye;  
3853 And nicholas is scalded in the towte.  
3854 This tale is doon, and God save al the rowte!

### The Reeve's Prologue

3855 Whan folk hadde laughen at this nyce cas  
3856 Of absolon and hende nicholas,  
3857 Diverse folk diversely they seyde,  
3858 But for the moore part they loughe and pleyde.  
3859 Ne at this tale I saugh no man hym greve,  
3860 But it were oonly osewold the reve.  
3861 By cause he was of carpenteris craft,

3862 A litel ire is in his herte ylaft;  
3863 He gan to grucche, and blamed it a lite.  
3864 So theek, quod he, ful wel koude I thee quite  
3865 With bleryng of a proud milleres ye,  
3866 If that me liste speke of ribaudye.  
3867 But ik am oold, me list not pley for age;  
3868 Gras tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage;  
3869 This white top writeth myne olde yeris;  
3870 Myn herte is also mowled as myne heris,  
3871 But if I fare as dooth an open-ers, --  
3872 That ilke fruyt is ever lenger the wers,  
3873 Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.  
3874 We olde men, I drede, so fare we:  
3875 Til we be roten, kan we nat be rype;  
3876 We hoppen alwey whil the world wol pype.  
3877 For in oure wyl ther stiketh evere a nayl,  
3878 To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,  
3879 As hath a leek; for thogh oure myght be goon,  
3880 Oure wyl desireth folie evere in oon.  
3881 For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke;  
3882 Yet in oure asshen olde is fyr yreke.  
3883 Foure gleedes han we, which I shal devyse, --  
3884 Avauntyng, liyng, anger, coveitise;  
3885 Thise foure sparkles longen unto eelde.  
3886 Oure olde lemes mowe wel been unweelde,  
3887 But wyl ne shal nat failen, that is sooth.  
3888 And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,  
3889 As many a yeer as it is passed henne  
3890 Syn that my tappe of lif bigan to renne.  
3891 For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon  
3892 Deeth drough the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;  
3893 And ever sithe hath so the tappe yronne  
3894 Til that almost al empty is the tonne.  
3895 The stream of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe.  
3896 The sely tonge may wel ryng and chymbe  
3897 Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yooore;  
3898 With olde folk, save dotage, is namoore!  
3899 Whan that oure hoost hadde herd this sermonyng,  
3900 He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng.  
3901 He seide, what amounteth al this wit?  
3902 What shul we speke alday of hooly writ?  
3903 The devel made a reve for to preche,  
3904 Or of a soutere a shipman or a leche.  
3905 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme  
3906 Lo depeford! and it is half-wey pryme.  
3907 Lo grenewych, ther many a shrewe is inne!  
3908 It were al tyme thy tale to bigynne.  
3909 Now, sires, quod this osegold the reve,  
3910 I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve,  
3911 Thogh I answeere, and somdeel sette his howve;  
3912 For leveful is with force force of-showve.

3913 This dronke millere hath ytoold us heer  
3914 How that bigyled was a carpenteer,  
3915 Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon.  
3916 And, by youre leve, I shal hym quite anoon;  
3917 Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.  
3918 I pray to God his nekke mote to-breke;  
3919 He kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke,  
3920 But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke.

## The Reeve's Tale

3921 At trumpyngtoun, nat fer fro cantebrigge,  
3922 Ther gooth a brook, and over that a brigge,  
3923 Upon the whiche brook ther stant a melle;  
3924 And this is verray sooth that I yow telle:  
3925 A millere was ther dwellynge many a day.  
3926 As any pecok he was proud and gay.  
3927 Pipen he koude and fissue, and nettes beete,  
3928 And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and sheete;  
3929 Ay by his belt he baar a long panade,  
3930 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade  
3931 A joly poppere baar he is in his pouche;  
3932 Ther was no man, for peril, dorste hym touche.  
3933 A sheffeld thwitel baar he in his hose.  
3934 Round was his face, and camus was his nose;  
3935 As piled as an ape was his skulle.  
3936 He was a market-betere atte fulle.  
3937 Ther dorste no wight hand upon hym legge,  
3938 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.  
3939 A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,  
3940 And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele.  
3941 His name was hote deynous symkyn.  
3942 A wyf he hadde, ycomen of noble kyn;  
3943 The person of the toun hir fader was.  
3944 With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras,  
3945 For that symkyn sholde in his blood allye.  
3946 She was yfostred in a nonnerye;  
3947 For symkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,  
3948 But she were wel ynorissed and a mayde,  
3949 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.  
3950 And she was proud, and peert as is a pye.  
3951 A ful fair sighte was it upon hem two;  
3952 On halydayes biforn hire wolde he go  
3953 With his typet bounden aboute his heed,  
3954 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;  
3955 And symkyn hadde hosen of the same.  
3956 Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but dame;  
3957 Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye  
3958 That with hire dorste rage or ones pleye,  
3959 But if he wolde be slayn of symkyn



3960 With panade, or with knyf, or boidekyn.  
3961 For jalous folk ben perilous everemo;  
3962 Algate they wolde hire wyves wenden so.  
3963 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,  
3964 She was as digne as water in a dich,  
3965 And ful of hoker and of bisemare.  
3966 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hire spare,  
3967 What for hire kynrede and hir nortelrie  
3968 That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie.  
3969 A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two  
3970 Of twenty yeer, withouten any mo,  
3971 Savyng a child that was of half yeer age;  
3972 In cradel it lay and was a propre page.  
3973 This wenche thikke and wel ygrowen was,  
3974 With kamus nose, and eyen greye as glas,  
3975 With buttokes brode, and brestes rounde and hye;  
3976 But right fair was hire heer, I wol nat lye.  
3977 This person of the toun, for she was feir,  
3978 In purpos was to maken hire his heir,  
3979 Bothe of his catel and his mesuage,  
3980 And straunge he made it of hir mariage.  
3981 His purpos was for to bistowe hire hye  
3982 Into som worthy blood of auncetrye;  
3983 For hooly chirches good moot been despended  
3984 On hooly chirches blood, that is descended.  
3985 Therefore he wolde his hooly blood honoure,  
3986 Though that he hooly chirche sholde devoure.  
3987 Greet sokene hath this millere, out of doute,  
3988 With whete and malt of al the land aboute;  
3989 And nameliche ther was a greet collegge  
3990 Men clepen the soler halle at cantebregge;  
3991 Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt ygrounde.  
3992 And on a day it happed, in a stounde,  
3993 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;  
3994 Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.  
3995 For which this millere stal bothe mele and corn  
3996 An hundred tyme moore than biforn;  
3997 For therbiforn he stal but curteisly,  
3998 But now he was a theef outrageously,  
3999 For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.  
4000 But therof sette the millere nat a tare;  
4001 He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.  
4002 Thanne were ther yonge povre scolers two,  
4003 That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.  
4004 Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,  
4005 And, oonly for hire myrthe and revelrye,  
4006 Upon the wardeyn bisily they crye  
4007 To yeve hem leve, but a litel stounde,  
4008 To goon to mille and seen hir corn ygrounde;  
4009 And hardily they dorste leye hir nekke  
4010 The millere sholde not stele hem half a pekke

4011 Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve;  
4012 And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.  
4013 John highte that oon, and aleyn highte that oother;

4014 Of o toun were they born, that highte strother,  
4015 Fer in the north, I kan nat telle where.  
4016 This aleyn maketh redy al his gere,  
4017 And on an hors the sak he caste anon.  
4018 Forth goth aleyn the clerk, and also john,  
4019 With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.  
4020 John knew the wey, -- hem nedede no gyde, --  
4021 And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.  
4022 Aleyn spak first, al hayl, symond, y-fayth!  
4023 Hou fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf?  
4024 Aleyn, welcome, quod symkyn, by my lyf!  
4025 And john also, how now, what do ye heer?  
4026 Symond, quod john, by god, nede has na peer.  
4027 Hym boes serve hymself that has na swayn,  
4028 Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.  
4029 Oure manciple, I hope he wil be deed,  
4030 Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed;  
4031 And forthy is I come, and eek alayn,  
4032 To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn;  
4033 I pray yow spede us heythen that ye may.  
4034 It shal be doon, quod symkyn, by my fay!  
4035 What wol ye doon whil that it is in hande?  
4036 By god, right by the hopur wil I stande,  
4037 Quod john, and se howgates the corn gas in.  
4038 Yet saugh I nevere, by my fader kyn,  
4039 How that the hopur wagges til and fra.  
4040 Aleyn answerde, john, and wiltow swa?  
4041 Thanne wil I be bynethe, by my croun,  
4042 And se how that the mele falles doun  
4043 Into the trough; that sal be my disport.  
4044 For john, y-faith, I may been of youre sort;  
4045 I is as ille a millere as ar ye.  
4046 This millere smyled of hir nycetee,  
4047 And thoghte, al this nys doon but for a wyle.  
4048 They wene that no man may hem bigyle,  
4049 But by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir ye,  
4050 For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.  
4051 The moore queynte crekes that they make,  
4052 The moore wol I stele whan I take.  
4053 In stide of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren.  
4054 -- The grettete clerkes been noght wisest men, --  
4055 As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare.  
4056 Of al hir art ne counte I noght a tare.  
4057 Out at the dore he gooth ful pryvely,  
4058 Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly.  
4059 He looketh up and doun til he hath founde  
4060 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood ybounde

4061 Bihynde the mille, under a levesel;  
4062 And to the hors he goth hym faire and wel;  
4063 He strepeth of the brydel right anon.  
4064 And whan the hors was laus, he gynneth gon  
4065 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,  
4066 And forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.  
4067 This millere gooth agayn, no word he seyde,  
4068 But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,  
4069 Til that hir corn was faire and well ygrounde.  
4070 And whan the mele is sakked and ybounde,  
4071 This john goth out and fynt his hors away,  
4072 And gan to crie harrow! and weylaway!

4073 Oure hors is lorn, alayn, for goddes banes,  
4074 Step on thy feet! com of, man, al atanes!  
4075 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.  
4076 This aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn;  
4077 Al was out of his mynde his housbondrie.  
4078 What, whilk way is he geen? he gan to crie.  
4079 The wyf cam lepyng in ward with a ren.  
4080 She seyde, allas! youre hors goth to the fen  
4081 With wilde mares, as faste as he may go.  
4082 Unthank come on his hand that boond hym so,  
4083 And he that bettre sholde han knyght the reyne!  
4084 Allas, quod john, aleyn, for cristes peyne  
4085 Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa.  
4086 I is ful wight, God waat, as is a raa;  
4087 By goddes herte, he sal nat scape us bathe!  
4088 Why ne had thou pit the capul in the lathe?  
4089 Ilhay! by god, alayn, thou is a fonne!  
4090 Thise sely clerkes han ful faste yronne  
4091 Toward the fen, bothe aleyn and eek john.  
4092 And whan the millere saugh that they were gon,  
4093 He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,  
4094 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.  
4095 He seyde, I trowe the clerkes were aferd.  
4096 Yet kan a millere make a clerkes berd,  
4097 For al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye!  
4098 Lo, wher he gooth! ye, lat the children pleye.  
4099 They gete hym nat so lightly, by my croun.  
4100 Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun  
4101 With keep! keep! stand! stand! jossa, warderere,  
4102 Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe hym heere!  
4103 But shortly, til that it was verray nyght,  
4104 They koude nat, though they dide al hir myght,  
4105 Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,  
4106 Til in a dych they caughte hym atte laste.  
4107 Wery and weet, as beest is in the reyn,  
4108 Comth sely john, and with him comth aleyn.  
4109 Allas, quod john, the day that I was born!  
4110 Now are we dryve til hethyng and til scorn.

4111 Oure corn is stoln, men wil us fooles calle,  
4112 Bathe the wardeyn and oure felawes alle,  
4113 And namely the millere, weylaway!  
4114 Thus pleyneth john as he gooth by the way  
4115 Toward the mille, and bayard in his hond.  
4116 The millere sittynge by the fyr he fond,  
4117 For it was nyght, and forther myghte they noght;  
4118 But for the love of God they hym bisoght  
4119 Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.  
4120 The millere seyde agayn, if ther be eny,  
4121 Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part.  
4122 Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;  
4123 Ye konne by argumentes make a place  
4124 A myle brood of twenty foot of space.  
4125 Lat se now if this place may suffise,  
4126 Or make it rowm with speche, as is youre gise.  
4127 Now, symond, seyde john, by seint cutberd,  
4128 Ay is thou myrie, and this is faire answerd.  
4129 I have herd seyde, -- man sal taa of twa thynges  
4130 Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he brynges. --  
4131 But specially I pray thee, hooste deere,  
4132 Get us som mete and drynke, and make us cheere,  
4133 And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.  
4134 With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;  
4135 Loo, heere oure silver, redy for to spende.  
4136 This millere into toun his doghter sende  
4137 For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,  
4138 And boond hire hors, it sholde namoore go loos;  
4139 And in his owene chambre hem made a bed,  
4140 With sheetes and with chalons faire yspred  
4141 Noght from his owene bed ten foot or twelve.  
4142 His doghter hadde a bed, al by hirselve,  
4143 Right in the same chambre by and by.  
4144 It myghte be no bet, and cause why?  
4145 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.  
4146 They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,  
4147 And drynken evere strong ale atte beste.  
4148 Aboute mydnyght wente they to reste.  
4149 Wel hath this millere vernysshed his heed;  
4150 Ful pale he was for dronken, and nat reed.  
4151 He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose  
4152 As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.  
4153 To bedde he goth, and with hym goth his wyf.  
4154 As any jay she light was and jolyf,  
4155 So was hir joly whistle wel ywet.  
4156 The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,  
4157 To rokken, and to yeve the child to sowke.  
4158 And whan that dronken al was in the crowke,  
4159 To bedde wente the doghter right anon;  
4160 To bedde goth aleyn and also john;  
4161 Ther nas na moore, -- hem nedede no dwale.

4162 This millere hath so wisely bibbed ale  
4163 That as an hors he fnorteth in his sleep,  
4164 Ne of his tayl bihynde he took no keep.  
4165 His wyf bar hym a burdon, a ful strong;  
4166 Men myghte hir rowtyng heere two furlong;  
4167 The wenche rowteth eek, par compaignye.  
4168 Aleyn the clerk, that herde this melodye,  
4169 He poked john, and seyde, slepestow?  
4170 Herdestow evere slyk a sang er now?  
4171 Lo, swilk a complyn is ymel hem alle,  
4172 A wilde fyr upon thair bodyes falle!  
4173 Wha herkned evere slyk a ferly thyng?  
4174 Ye, they sal have the flour of il endyng.  
4175 This lange nyght ther tydes me na reste;  
4176 But yet, nafors, al sal be for the beste.  
4177 For, john, seyde he, als evere moot I thryve,  
4178 If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.  
4179 Som esement has lawe yshapen us;  
4180 For, john, ther is a lawe that says thus,  
4181 That gif a man in a point be agreved,  
4182 That in another he sal be releved.  
4183 Oure corn is stoln, sothly, it is na nay,  
4184 And we han had an il fit al this day;  
4185 And syn I sal have neen amendement  
4186 Agayn my los, I will have esement.  
4187 By goddes sale, it sal neen other bee!  
4188 This john answerde, alayn, avyse thee!  
4189 The millere is a perilous man, he seyde,  
4190 And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde,  
4191 He myghte doon us bathe a vileynye.  
4192 Aleyn answerde, I counte hym nat a flye.  
4193 And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.  
4194 This wenche lay uprighte, and faste slepte,  
4195 Til he so ny was, er she myghte espie,  
4196 That it had been to late for to crie,  
4197 And shortly for to seyn, they were aton.  
4198 Now pley, aleyn, for I wol speke of john.  
4199 This john lith stille a furlong wey or two,  
4200 And to hymself he maketh routhe and wo.  
4201 Allas! quod he, this is a wikked jape;  
4202 Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.  
4203 Yet has my felawe somewhat for his harm;  
4204 He has the milleris doghter in his arm.  
4205 He auntred hym, and has his nedes sped,  
4206 And I lye as a draf-sak in my bed;  
4207 And when this jape is tald another day,  
4208 I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!  
4209 I wil arise and auntre it, by my fayth!  
4210 -- Unhardy is unseely, -- thus men sayth.  
4211 And up he roos, and softely he wente  
4212 Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hente,

4213 And baar it softe unto his beddes feet.  
4214 Soone after this the wyf hir rowtyng leet,  
4215 And gan awake, and wente hire out to pisse,  
4216 And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel mysse,  
4217 And groped heer and ther, but she foond noon.

4218 Allas! quod she, I hadde almoost myssoon;  
4219 I hadde almoost goon to the clerkes bed.  
4220 Ey, benedicite! thanne hadde I foule ysped.  
4221 And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.  
4222 She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,  
4223 And foond the bed, and thoghte noght but good,  
4224 By cause that the cradel by it stood,  
4225 And nyste wher she was, for it was derk;  
4226 But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,  
4227 And lith ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.  
4228 Withinne a while this john the clerk up leep,  
4229 And on this goode wyf he leith on soore.  
4230 So myrie a fit ne hadde she nat ful yooore;  
4231 He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.  
4232 This joly lyf han thise two clerkes lad  
4233 Til that the thridde cok bigan to synge.  
4234 Aleyn wax wery in the dawenyng,  
4235 For he had swonken al the longe nyght,  
4236 And seyde, fare weel, malyne, sweete wight!  
4237 The day is come, I may no lenger byde;  
4238 But everemo, wher so I go or ryde,  
4239 I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!  
4240 Now, deere lemman, quod she, go, far weel!  
4241 But er thou go, o thyng I wol thee telle:  
4242 Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,  
4243 Right at the entree of the dore bihynde  
4244 Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel fynde  
4245 That was ymaked of thyn owene mele,  
4246 Which that I heelp my sire for to stele.  
4247 And, goode lemman, God thee save and kepe!  
4248 And with that word almoost she gan to wepe.  
4249 Aleyn up rist, and thoghte, er that it dawe,  
4250 I wol go crepen in by my felawe;  
4251 And fond the cradel with his hand anon.  
4252 By god, thoghte he, al wrang I have mysгон.  
4253 Myn heed is toty of my swynk to-nyght,  
4254 That makes me that I ga nat aright.  
4255 I woot wel by the cradel I have mysго;  
4256 Heere lith the millere and his wyf also.  
4257 And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,  
4258 Unto the bed ther as the millere lay.  
4259 He wende have copen by his felawe john,  
4260 And by the millere in he creep anon,  
4261 And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak.  
4262 He seyde, thou john, thou swynes-heed, awak,

4263 For cristes saule, and heer a noble game.  
4264 For by that lord that called is seint jame,  
4265 As I have thries in this shorte nyght  
4266 Swyved the milleres doghter bolt upright,  
4267 Whil thow hast, as a coward, been agast.  
4268 Ye, false harlot, quod the miller, hast?  
4269 A, false traitour! false clerk! quod he,  
4270 Thow shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee!  
4271 Who dorste be so boold to disparage  
4272 My doghter, that is come of swich lynage?  
4273 And by the throte-bolle he caughte alayn,  
4274 And he hente hym despitously agayn,  
4275 And on the nose he smoot hym with his fest.  
4276 Doun ran the bloody streem upon his brest;  
4277 And in the floor, with nose and mouth tobroke,  
4278 They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke;  
4279 And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,  
4280 Til that the millere sporned at a stoon,  
4281 And doun he fil bakward upon his wyf,  
4282 That wiste no thyng of this nyce stryf;  
4283 For she was falle aslepe a lite wight  
4284 With john the clerk, that waked hadde al nyght,  
4285 And with the fal out of hir sleep she breyde.  
4286 Help! hooly croys of bromeholm, she seyde,  
4287 In manus tuas! lord, to thee I calle!  
4288 Awak, symond! the feend is on me falle.  
4289 Myn herte is broken; help! I nam but deed!  
4290 Ther lyth oon upon my wombe and on myn heed.  
4291 Help, symkyn, for the false clerkes fighte!  
4292 This john stirte up as faste as ever he myghte,  
4293 And graspeth by the walles to and fro,  
4294 To fynde a staf; and she stirte up also,  
4295 And knew the estres bet than dide this john,  
4296 And by the wal a staf she foond anon,  
4297 And saugh a litel shymeryng of a light,  
4298 For at an hole in shoon the moone bright;  
4299 And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,  
4300 But sikerly she nyste who was who,  
4301 But as she saugh a whit thyng in hir ye.  
4302 And whan she gan this white thyng espye,  
4303 She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer,  
4304 And with the staf she drow ay neer and neer,  
4305 And wende han hit this aleyn at the fulle,  
4306 And smooth the millere on the pyled skulle,  
4307 That doun he gooth, and cride, harrow! I dye!  
4308 Thise clerkes beete hym weel and lete hym lye;  
4309 And greythen hem, and tooke hir hors anon,  
4310 And eek hire mele, and on hir wey they gon.  
4311 And at the mille yet they tooke hir cake  
4312 Of half a busshel flour, ful wel ybake.

4313 Thus is the proude millere wel ybete,  
4314 And hath ylost the gryndyng of the whete,  
4315 And payed for the soper everideel  
4316 Of aleyn and of john, that bette hym weel.  
4317 His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als.  
4318 Lo, swich it is a millere to be fals!  
4319 And therefore this proverbe is seyde ful sooth,  
4320 Hym thar nat wene wel that yvele dooth;  
4321 A gylour shal hymself bigyled be.  
4322 And god, that sitteth heighe in magestee,  
4323 Save al this compaignye, grete and smale!  
4324 Thus have I quyt the millere in my tale.

### The Cook's Prologue

4325 The cook of londoun, whil the reve spak,  
4326 For joye him thoughte he clawed him on the bak.  
4327 Ha! ha! quod he, for cristes passion,  
4328 This millere hadde a sharp conclusion  
4329 Upon his argument of herbergage!  
4330 Wel seyde salomon in his langage,  
4331 -- Ne bryng nat every man into thyn hous; --  
4332 For herberwyng by nyghte is perilous.  
4333 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be  
4334 Whom that he broghte into his pryvetee.  
4335 I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care  
4336 If evere, sithe I highte hogge of ware,  
4337 Herde I a millere bettre yset a-werk.  
4338 He hadde a jape of malice in the derk.  
4339 But God forbode that we stynte heere;  
4340 And therefore, if ye vouche-sauf to heere  
4341 A tale of me, that am a povre man,  
4342 I wol yow telle, as wel as evere I kan,  
4343 A litel jape that fil in oure citee.  
4344 Oure hoost answerde and seide, I graunte it thee.  
4345 Now telle on, roger, looke that it be good;  
4346 For many a pastee hastow laten blood,  
4347 And many a jakke of dovere hastow soold  
4348 That hath been twies hoot and twies coold.  
4349 Of many a pilgrym hastow cristes curs,  
4350 For of thy percely yet they fare the wors,  
4351 That they han eten with thy stubbel goos;  
4352 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.  
4353 Now telle on, gentil roger by thy name.  
4354 But yet I pray thee, be nat wroth for game;  
4355 A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.  
4356 Thou seist ful sooth, quod roger, by my fey!  
4357 But -- sooth pley, quaad pley, -- as the flemyng seith.  
4358 And therefore, herry bailly, by thy feith,



4359 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,  
4360 Though that my tale be of an hostileer.  
4361 But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit;  
4362 But er we parte, ywis, thou shalt be quit.  
4363 And therwithal he lough and made cheere,  
4364 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after heere.

## The Cook's Tale

4365 A prentys whilom dwelled in oure citee,  
4366 And of a craft of vitailliers was hee.  
4367 Gaillard he was as goldfynch in the shawe,  
4368 Broun as a berye, a propre short felawe,  
4369 With lokkes blake, ykembd ful fetisly.  
4370 Dauncen he koude so wel and jolily  
4371 That he was cleped perkyn revelour.  
4372 He was as ful of love and paramour  
4373 As is the hyve ful of hony sweete:  
4374 Wel was the wenche with hym myghte meete.

4375 At every bridale wolde he synge and hoppe;  
4376 He loved bet the tavernne than the shoppe.  
4377 For whan ther any ridyng was in chepe,  
4378 Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe --  
4379 Til that he hadde al the sighte yseyn,  
4380 And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ayeyn --  
4381 And gadered hym a meynee of his sort  
4382 To hoppe and synge and maken swich disport;  
4383 And ther they setten stevene for to meete,  
4384 To pleyen at the dys in swich a streete.  
4385 For in the toun nas ther no prentys  
4386 That fairer koude caste a paire of dys  
4387 Than perkyn koude, and therto he was free  
4388 Of his dispense, in place of pryvetee.  
4389 That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;  
4390 For often tyme he foond his box ful bare.  
4391 For sikerly a prentys revelour  
4392 That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour.  
4393 His maister shal it in his shoppe abyen,  
4394 Al have he no part of the mynstralcyen.  
4395 For thefte and riot, they been convertible,  
4396 Al konne he pleyen on gyterne or ribible.  
4397 Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degree,  
4398 They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.  
4399 this joly prentys with his maister bood,  
4400 Til he were ny out of his prentishood,  
4401 Al were he snybbed bothe erly and late,  
4402 And somtyme lad with revel to newegate.  
4403 But atte laste his maister him bithoghte.  
4404 Upon a day, whan he his papir soghte,

4405 Of a proverbe that seith this same word,  
4406 Wel bet is roten appul out of hoord  
4407 Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.  
4408 So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;  
4409 It is ful lasse harm to lete hym pace,  
4410 Than he shende alle the servantz in the place.  
4411 Therefore his maister yaf hym acquitance,  
4412 And bad hym go, with sorwe and with meschance!  
4413 And thus this joly prentys hadde his leve.  
4414 Now lat hym riote al the nyght or leve.  
4415 And for ther is no theef withoute a lowke,  
4416 That helpeth hym to wasten and to sowke  
4417 Of that he brybe kan or borwe may,  
4418 Anon he sente his bed and his array  
4419 Unto a compeer of his owene sort,  
4420 That lovede dys, and revel, and disport,  
4421 And hadde a wyf that heeld for contenance  
4422 A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance.