

## Useful text extracts for comparison with **Doctor Faustus**

The three texts below are worth reading by any student of *Dr Faustus*.

The Doctor of Physik description from Chaucer's *General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* is relevant to Scene 1.

The extract from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is relevant throughout, but particularly to the repentance section of Scene 6.

The *Pardoner's Prologue and Tale* from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* has many points of comparison throughout the text.

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**CHAUCER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCTOR OF PHYSICK  
FROM THE GENERAL PROLOGUE TO *THE CANTERBURY TALES***

**Lines 413-446**

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK;  
In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,  
415 To speke of phisik and of surgerye,  
For he was grounded in astronomye.  
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel  
In houres, by his magyk natureel.  
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent  
420 Of his yimages for his pacient.  
He knew the cause of everich maladye,  
Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,  
And where they engendred, and of what humour.  
He was a verray parfit praktisour:  
425 The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,  
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.  
Ful redy hadde he hise apothecaries  
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,  
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne-  
430 Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.  
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,  
And Deyscorides and eek Rufus,  
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,  
Serapioun, Razis, and Avycen,  
435 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,  
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.  
Of his diete mesurable was he,  
For it was of no superfluitee,  
But of greet norissyng, and digestible.  
440 His studie was but litel on the Bible.  
In sangwyn and in pers he clad was al,  
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;  
And yet he was but esy of dispence;  
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.  
445 For gold in phisik is a cordial,  
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

**CLAUDIUS TRIES TO REPENT – FROM SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET*****Act Three Scene Three**

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!

Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,  
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!  
All may be well.

*THE PARDONER'S PROLOGUE AND TALE FROM CHAUCER'S THE CANTERBURY TALES*

**The Introduction to the Pardoner's Tale**

**The Wordes of the Hoost to the Phisicien and the Pardoner**

Oure Hooste gan to swere as he were wood;  
 "Harrow!" quod he, "by nayles and by blood!  
 This was a fals cherl and a fals justice!  
 As shameful deeth as herte may devyse  
 5 Come to thise juges and hire advocatz!  
 Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!  
 Allas, to deere boughte she beautee!  
 Wherefore I seye al day, as men may see  
 That yiftes of Fortune and of Nature  
 10 Been cause of deeth to many a creature.  
 (Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;  
 Allas, so pitously as she was slayn!)  
 Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now  
 Men han ful ofte moore harm than prow.  
 15 But trewely, myn owene maister deere,  
 This is a pitous tale for to heere.  
 But nathelees, passe over is no fors;  
 I pray to God so save thy gentil cors,  
 And eek thyne urynals and thy jurdanes,  
 20 Thyn ypocras and eek thy galiones  
 And every boyste ful of thy letuarie,  
 God blesse hem, and oure lady Seinte Marie!  
 So moot I theen, thou art a propre man,  
 And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!  
 25 Seyde I nat wel? I kan nat speke in terme;  
 But wel I woot thou doost myn herte to erme,  
 That I almoost have caught a cardyacle.  
 By corpus bones, but I have triacle,  
 Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale,  
 30 Or but I heere anon a myrie tale,  
 Myn herte is lost, for pitee of this mayde!

Thou beelamy, thou Pardoner," he sayde,  
 "Telle us som myrthe or japes right anon."  
 "It shal be doon," quod he, "by Seint Ronyon;  
 35 But first," quod he, "heere at this alestake,  
 I wol bothe drynke and eten of a cake."  
 But right anon the gentils gonne to crye,  
 "Nay, lat hym telle us of no ribaudye!  
 Telle us som moral thyng that we may leere  
 40 Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly heere!"  
 "I graunte, ywis," quod he, "but I moot thynke  
 Upon som honeste thyng, while that I drynke."

### **The Pardoner's Prologue**

#### **Heere folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale**

*Radix malorum est Cupiditas. Ad Thimotheum*

"Lordynges," quod he, "in chirches whan I preche,  
 I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,  
 45 And ryngge it out as round as gooth a belle,  
 For I kan al by rote that I telle.  
 My theme is alwey oon and evere was -  
 'Radix malorum est Cupiditas.'  
 First I pronounce whennes that I come,  
 50 And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some;  
 Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,  
 That shewe I first, my body to warente,  
 That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,  
 Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk.  
 55 And after that thanne telle I forth my tales,  
 Bulles of popes and of cardynales,  
 Of patriarkes and bishopes I shewe,  
 And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,  
 To saffron with my predicacioun,  
 60 And for to stire hem to devocioun.  
 Thanne shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,  
 Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones;  
 Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon.  
 Thanne have I in latoun a sholder-boon

65 Which that was of an hooly Jewes sheepe.  
'Goode men,' I seye, 'taak of my wordes keepe;  
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,  
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle,  
That any worm hath ete, or worm ystonge,  
70 Taak water of that welle, and wassh his tonge,  
And it is hool anon; and forthermoor,  
Of pokkes and of scabbe and every soore  
Shal every sheepe be hool that of this welle  
Drynketh a draughte. Taak kepe eek what I telle,  
75 If that the goode man that the beestes oweth,  
Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,  
Fastynge, drinken of this welle a draughte,  
As thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte,  
Hise beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.  
80 And, sires, also it heeeth jalousie;  
For though a man be falle in jalous rage,  
Lat maken with this water his potage,  
And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,  
Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste,  
85 Al had she taken preestes two or thre.  
Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se.  
He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,  
He shal have multipliynge of his grayn  
What he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,  
90 So that he offre pens, or elles grottes.  
Goode men and wommen, o thyng warne I yow,  
If any wight be in this chirche now  
That hath doon synne horrible, that he  
Dar nat for shame of it yshryven be,  
95 Or any womman, be she yong or old,  
That hath ymaad hir housbonde cokewold,  
Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace  
To offren to my relikes in this place.  
And who so fyndeth hym out of swich fame,  
100 He wol come up and offre, on Goddes name,  
And I assoille him, by the auctoritee  
Which that by tulle ygraunted was to me."

By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,  
An hundred mark, sith I was pardoner.  
105 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,  
And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,  
I preche so, as ye han heerd bifoore,  
And telle an hundred false japes moore.  
Thanne peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,  
110 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,  
As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.  
Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne  
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.  
Of avarice and of swich cursednesse  
115 Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free  
To yeven hir pens; and namely, unto me!  
For myn entente is nat but for to wynne,  
And no thyng for correccioun of synne.  
I rekke nevere, whan that they been beryed,  
120 Though that hir soules goon a-blakeberied!  
For certes, many a predicacioun  
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun.  
Som for plesance of folk, and flaterye,  
To been avaunced by ypocrisye,  
125 And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.  
For whan I dar noon oother weyes debate,  
Thanne wol I styng hym with my tonge smerte  
In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte  
To been defamed falsly, if that he  
130 Hath trespased to my bretheren, or to me.  
For though I telle noght his propre name,  
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same  
By signes, and by othere circumstances.  
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances,  
135 Thus spitte I out my venym, under hewe  
Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.  
But shortly, myn entente I wol devyse;  
I preche of no thyng but for coveityse.  
Therefore my theme is yet, and evere was,  
140 'Radix malorum est Cupiditas.'  
Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice



Which that I use, and that is avarice.  
 But though myself be guilty in that synne,  
 Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne  
 145 From avarice, and soore to repente;  
 But that is nat my principal entente.  
 I preche no thyng but for coveitise.  
 Of this mateere it oghte ynogh suffise.  
     Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon  
 150 Of olde stories longe tyme agoon.  
 For lewed people loven tales olde;  
 Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and holde.  
 What, trowe ye, the whiles I may preche,  
 And wynne gold and silver for I teche,  
 155 That I wol lyve in poverte wilfully?  
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it nevere, trewely!  
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry landes,  
 I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,  
 Ne make baskettes, and lyve therby,  
 160 By cause I wol nat beggen ydelly.  
 I wol noon of the apostles countrefete;  
 I wol have moneie, wolle, chese, and whete,  
 Al were it yeven of the povereste page,  
 Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,  
 165 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.  
 Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne,  
 And have a joly wenche in every toun.  
 But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun:  
 Your likyng is, that I shal telle a tale.  
 170 Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,  
 By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng  
 That shal by resoun been at youre likyng.  
 For though myself be a ful vicious man,  
 A moral tale yet I you telle kan,  
 175 Which I am wont to preche, for to wynne.  
 Now hoold youre pees! My tale I wol bigynne.”

**The Pardoner's Tale**  
**Heere bigynneth the Pardoners Tale**

In Flaundres whilom was a compaignye

Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,  
As riot, hasard, stywes, and tavernes,  
180 Wher as with harpes, lutes, and gyternes  
They daunce and pleyen at dees, bothe day and nyght,  
And eten also and drynken over hir myght,  
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrificise  
Withinne that develes temple in cursed wise,  
185 By superfluytee abhomynable.  
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable  
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere.  
Oure blissed lordes body they totere -  
Hem thoughte that Jewes rente hym nocht ynough -  
190 And ech of hem at otheres synne lough.  
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres,  
Fetys and smale, and yonge frutesteres,  
Syngeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres,  
Whiche been the verray develes officeres  
195 To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,  
That is annexed unto glotonye.  
The hooly writ take I to my witenesse,  
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.  
Lo, how that dronken Looth, unkyndely  
200 Lay by hise doghtres two, unwityngly;  
So dronke he was, he nyste what he wroghte.  
Herodes, whoso wel the stories soghte,  
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,  
Right at his owene table he yaf his heeste  
205 To sleen the Baptist John, ful giltelees.  
Senec seith a good word, doutelees;  
He seith, he kan no difference fynde  
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde,  
And a man which that is dronkelewe,  
210 But that woodnesse fallen in a shrewe  
Persevereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.  
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse!  
O cause first of oure confusioun!  
O original of oure dampnacioun  
215 Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn!

Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,  
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye!  
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!  
     Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,  
 220 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo  
 Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.  
 For whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,  
 He was in Paradys, and whan that he  
 Eet of the fruyt deffended on the tree,  
 225 Anon he was out cast to wo and peyne.  
 O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!  
 O, wiste a man how manye maladyes  
 Folwen of excesse and of goltonyes,  
 He wolde been the moore mesurable  
 230 Of his diete, sittyng at his table.  
 Allas, the shorte throte, the tendre mouth  
 Maketh that est and west and north and south  
 In erthe, in eir, in water, man to swynke  
 To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drynke!  
 235 Of this matiere, O Paul! wel kanstow trete:  
 "Mete unto wombe and wombe eek unto mete  
 Shal God destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.  
 Allas, a foul thyng is it, by my feith,  
 To seye this word, and fouler is the dede  
 240 Whan man so drynketh of the white and rede  
 That of his throte he maketh his pryvee  
 Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.  
     The Apostel wepyng seith ful pitously,  
 "Ther walken manye of whiche yow toold have I -  
 245 I seye it now wepyng with pitous voys,  
 That they been enemys of Cristes croys,  
 Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is hir god."  
 O wombe! O bely! O stynkyng cod!  
 Fulfilled of donge and of corrupcioun,  
 250 At either ende of thee foul is the soun;  
 How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde,  
 Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grynde,  
 And turnen substaunce into accident,

To fulfillen al thy likerous talent!  
 255 Out of the harde bones knocke they  
 The mary, for they caste noght away,  
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote;  
 Of spicerie, of leef, and bark, and roote,  
 Shal been his sauce ymaked by delit,  
 260 To make hym yet a newer appetit.  
 But, certes, he that haunteth swiche delices  
 Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.  
     A lecherous thyng is wyn, and dronkenesse  
 Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse.  
 265 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face!  
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,  
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun,  
 As though thow seydest ay, "Sampsoun! Sampsoun!"  
 And yet, God woot, Sampsoun drank nevere no wyn!  
 270 Thou fallest, as it were a styked swyn;  
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honeste cure;  
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture  
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun,  
 In whom that drynke hath dominacioun.  
 275 He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.  
 Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,  
 And namely, fro the white wyn of Lepe,  
 That is to selle in fysshstrete, or in Chepe.  
 This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly  
 280 In othere wynes, growynge faste by,  
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,  
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes thre  
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,  
 He is in Spaigne, right at the toune of Lepe,  
 285 Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeux toun;  
 And thanne wol he seye "Sampsoun, Sampsoun!"  
     But herkneth, lordynges, o word I yow preye,  
 That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,  
 Of victories in the Olde Testament,  
 290 Thurgh verray God that is omnipotent  
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere.

Looketh the Bible, and ther ye may it leere.  
Looke, Attila, the grete conquerour,  
Deyde in his sleepe, with shame and dishonour,  
295 Bledynge ay at his nose in dronkenesse.  
A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse;  
And over al this avyseth yow right wel,  
What was comaunded unto Lamwel,  
Nat Samuel, but Lamwel, seye I -  
300 Redeth the Bible and fynde it expresly,  
Of wyn yevyng to hem that han justise.  
Namooore of this, for it may wel suffise.  
And now that I have spoken of glotonye,  
Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.  
305 Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,  
And of dedeite and cursed forswerynges,  
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre and wast also  
Of catel and of tyme, and forthermo  
It is repreeve and contrarie of honour  
310 For to ben holde a commune hasardour.  
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,  
The moore is he holden desolaat;  
If that a prynce useth hasardrye,  
In all governaunce and policye  
315 He is as by commune opinioun  
Yholde the lasse in reputacioun.  
Stilboun, that was a wys embassadour,  
Was sent to Corynthe in ful greet honour,  
Fro Lacidomye to maken hire alliaunce.  
320 And whan he cam hym happede par chaunce,  
That alle the grettete that were of that lond  
Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond.  
For which, as soone as it myghte be,  
He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,  
325 And seyde, "Ther wol I nat lese my name,  
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame.  
Yow for to allie unto none hasardours.  
Sendeth othere wise embassadours,  
For by my trouthe me were levere dye

- 330 Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.  
For ye that been so glorious in honours  
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours  
As by my wyl, ne as by my tretee."  
This wise philosophre, thus seyde hee.
- 335 Looke eek that to the kyng Demetrius  
The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,  
Sente him a paire of dees of gold, in scorn,  
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn,  
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
- 340 At no value or reputacioun.  
Lordes may fynden oother maner pley  
Honeste ynough, to dryve the day away.  
Now wol I speke of othes false and grete  
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
- 345 Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,  
And fals sweryng is yet moore reprevable.  
The heighe God forbad sweryng at al,  
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special  
Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye,
- 350 "Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat lye,  
And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnesse";  
But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.  
Bihoold and se, that in the firste table  
Of heighe Goddes heestes honorable
- 355 How that the seconde heeste of hym is this:  
"Take nat my name in ydel or amys."  
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich sweryng  
Than homycide, or any cursed thyng;  
I seye, that as by ordre thus it stondeth,
- 360 This knowen that hise heestes understondeth  
How that the seconde heeste of God is that.  
And forther-over I wol thee telle al plat,  
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous  
That of hise othes is to outrageous.
- 365 "By Goddes precious herte," and "by his nayles,"  
And "By the blood of Crist that is in Hayles,  
Sevene is my chauce and thyn is cynk and treye!"

“By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,  
This daggere shal thurghout thyn herte go!”  
370 This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,  
Forsweryng, ire, falsnesse, homycide!  
Now, for the love of Crist, that for us dyde,  
Lete youre othes bothe grete and smale.  
But, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.  
375 Thise riotoures thre, of whiche I telle,  
Longe erst er prime rong of any belle,  
Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke.  
And as they sat, they herde a belle clynke  
Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave.  
380 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,  
“Go bet,” quod he, “and axe redily  
What cors is this, that passeth heer forby;  
And looke, that thou reporte his name weel.”  
“Sire,” quod this boy, “it nedeth never a deel;  
385 It was me toold, er ye cam heer two houres.  
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;  
And sodeynly he was yslayn to-nyght,  
Fordronke, as he sat on his bench upright.  
Ther cam a privee theef men clepeth Deeth,  
390 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,  
And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,  
And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.  
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.  
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,  
395 Me thynketh that it were necessarie  
For to be war of swich an adversarie.  
Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore;  
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey namoore.”  
“By Seinte Marie!” seyde this taverner,  
400 “The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer  
Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village  
Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne, and page.  
I trowe his habitacioun be there.  
To been avysed, greet wysdom it were,  
405 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.”

"Ye, Goddes armes!" quod this riotour,  
 "Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?  
 I shal hym seke, by wey and eek by strete,  
 I make avow to Goddes digne bones!  
 410 Herkneht, felawes, we thre been al ones;  
 Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,  
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,  
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth.  
 He shal be slayn, which that so manye sleeth,  
 415 By Goddes dignitee, er it be nyght!"  
 Togidres han thise thre hir trouthes plight  
 To lyve and dyen, ech of hem for oother,  
 As though he were his owene ybore brother;  
 And up they stirte al dronken in this rage,  
 420 And forth they goon towardses that village,  
 Of which the taverner hadde spoke biforn.  
 And many a grisly ooth thanne han they sworn,  
 And Cristes blessed body they torente -  
 Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym hente!  
 425 Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,  
 Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,  
 An oold man and a povre with hem mette.  
 This olde man ful mekely hem grette,  
 And seyde thus, "Now, lordes, God yow see!"  
 430 The proudeste of thise riotoures three  
 Answerde agayn, "What, carl, with sory grace,  
 Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?  
 Why lystow so longe in so greet age?"  
 This olde man gan looke in his visage,  
 435 And seyde thus: "For I ne kan nat fynde  
 A man, though that I walked into Ynde,  
 Neither in citee nor in no village,  
 That wolde change his youthe for myn age;  
 And therfore mooth I han myn age stille,  
 440 As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.  
 Ne Deeth, allas, ne wol nat han my lyf.  
 Thus walke I lyk a resteles kaityf,  
 And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,



I knokke with my staf bothe erly and late,  
445 And seye, "Leeve mooder, leet me in!  
Lo, how I varysshe, flessh and blood and skyn!  
Allas, whan shul my bones been at reste?  
Mooder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,  
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,  
450 Ye, for an heyre-clowt to wrappe me."  
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,  
For which ful pale and welked is my face.  
    But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye  
To speken to an old man vileynye,  
455 But he trespasse in word, or elles in dede.  
In Hooly Writ ye may yourself wel rede,  
'Agayns an oold man, hoor upon his heed,  
Ye sholde arise;' wherfore I yeve yow reed,  
Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now,  
460 Namooore than that ye wolde men did to yow  
In age, if that ye so longe abyde.  
And God be with yow where ye go or ryde.  
I moote go thider, as I have to go."  
    "Nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so,"  
465 Seyde this oother hasardour anon;  
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!  
Thou spak right now of thilke traytour Deeth,  
That in this contree alle oure freendes sleeth.  
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye,  
470 Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abyde,  
By God and by the hooly sacrament!  
For soothly thou art oon of his assent  
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false thief?"  
    "Now, sires," quod he, "if that ye be so leef  
475 To fynde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,  
For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,  
Under a tree, and there he wole abyde;  
Noght for your boost he wole him no thyng hyde.  
Se ye that ook? Right ther ye shal hym fynde.  
480 God save yow that boghte agayn mankynde,  
And yow amende!" Thus seyde this olde man;

And everich of these riotoures ran  
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde  
Of floryns fyne of gold ycoyned rounde  
485 Wel ny an eichte busshels, as hem thoughte.  
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,  
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,  
For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,  
That down they sette hem by this precious hoord.  
490 The worste of hem, he spak the firste word.  
    "Bretheren," quod he, "taak kepe what I seye;  
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.  
This tresor hath Fortune unto us yeven,  
In myrthe and joliftee oure lyf to lyven,  
495 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.  
Ey, Goddes precious dignitee! Who wende  
To-day that we sholde han so fair a grace?  
But myghte this gold be caried fro this place  
Hoom to myn hous or elles unto youres -  
500 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures -  
Thanne were we in heigh felicitee.  
But trewely, by daye it may nat bee;  
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,  
And for oure owene tresor doon us honge.  
505 This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte  
As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.  
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle  
Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle,  
And he that hath the cut, with herte blithe  
510 Shal renne to the towne, and that ful swithe,  
And brynge us breed and wyn, ful prively;  
And two of us shul kepen subtilly  
This tresor wel, and if he wol nat tarie,  
Whan it is nyght, we wol this tresor carie,  
515 By oon assent, where as us thynketh best."  
That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,  
And bad hym drawe, and looke where it wol falle;  
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,  
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.

- 520 And al so soone, as that he was agon,  
That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother,  
"Thou knowest wel thou art my sworn brother;  
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.  
Thou woost wel, that oure felawe is agon,  
525 And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,  
That shal departed been among us thre.  
But nathelees, if I kan shape it so  
That it departed were among us two,  
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?"
- 530 That oother answerde, "I noot hou that may be;  
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye;  
What shal we doon? What shal we to hym seye?"  
"Shal it be conseil?" seyde the firste shrewe,  
"And I shal tellen, in a wordes fewe,  
535 What we shal doon, and bryngen it wel aboute."  
"I graunte," quod that oother, "out of doute,  
That by my trouthe I shal thee nat biwreye."  
"Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we be tweye,  
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
- 540 Looke whan that he is set, that right anoon  
Arys, as though thou woldest with hym pleye,  
And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye,  
Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game,  
And with thy daggere looke thou do the same;  
545 And thanne shal al this gold departed be,  
My deere freend, bitwixen me and thee.  
Thanne may we bothe oure lustes all fulfille,  
And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille."  
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
- 550 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.  
This yongeste, which that wente unto the toun,  
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and down  
The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte.  
"O lorde," quod he, "if so were that I myghte  
555 Have al this tresor to my-self allone,  
Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone  
Of God, that sholde lyve so murye as I."

And atte laste the feend, oure enemy,  
Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson beye,  
560 With which he myghte sleen hise felawes tweye;  
For-why, the feend foond hym in swich lyvyng  
That he hadde leve hem to sorwe bryng.  
For this was outrely his fulle entente,  
To sleen hem bothe, and nevere to repente.  
565 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,  
Into the toun unto a pothecarie  
And preyde hym that he hym wolde selle  
Som poyson, that he myghte hise rattes quelle;  
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,  
570 That, as he seyde, hise capouns hadde yslawe;  
And fayn he wolde wreke hym, if he myghte,  
On vermyn that destroyed hym by nyghte.  
The pothecarie answerde, "And thou shalt have  
A thyng, that al so God my soule save,  
575 In al this world ther is no creature  
That eten or dronken hath of this confiture  
Noght but the montance of a corn of whete,  
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete;  
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse while  
580 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a mile,  
This poyson is so strong and violent."  
This cursed man hath in his hond yhent  
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran  
Into the nexte strete unto a man,  
585 And borwed of hym large botels thre;  
And in the two his poyson poured he;  
The thridde he kepte clene for his owene drynke.  
For al the nyght he shoop hym for to swynke  
In cariynge of the gold out of that place.  
590 And whan this riotour, with sory grace,  
Hadde filed with wyn his grete botels thre,  
To hise felawes agayn repaireth he.  
What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?  
For right as they hadde cast his deeth bifoore,  
595 Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.

And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon:  
 "Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us merie,  
 And afterward we wol his body berie."  
 And with that word it happed hym, par cas,  
 600 To take the botel ther the poysoun was,  
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drynke also,  
 For which anon they storven bothe two.  
 But certes, I suppose that Avycen  
 Wroot nevere in no canoun, ne in no fen,  
 605 Mo wonder signes of empoisonyng  
 Than hadde these wrecches two, er hir endyng.  
 Thus ended been these homycides two,  
 And eek the false empoysoner also.  
 O cursed synne ful of cursednesse!  
 610 O traytours homycide, O wikkednesse!  
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!  
 Thou blasphemour of Crist, with vileynye  
 And othes grete, of usage and of pride,  
 Allas, mankynde, how may it bitide  
 615 That to thy Creatour which that the wroghte,  
 And with His precious herte-blood thee boghte,  
 Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas!  
 Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre trespas,  
 And ware yow fro the synne of avarice;  
 620 Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle warice,  
 So that ye offre nobles or sterlynges,  
 Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges;  
 Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!  
 Com up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolle!  
 625 Youre names I entre heer in my rolle anon,  
 Into the blisse of hevene shul ye gon.  
 I yow assoille by myn heigh power,  
 Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer  
 As ye were born. - And lo, sires, thus I preche.  
 630 And Jesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,  
 So graunte yow his pardoun to receyve,  
 For that is best, I wol yow nat deceyve.  
 But sires, o word forgat I in my tale:

I have relikes and pardoun in my male,  
 635 As faire as any man in Engelond,  
 Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.  
 If any of yow wole of devocioun  
 Offren, and han myn absolucioun,  
 Com forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun,  
 640 And mekely receyveth my pardoun;  
 Or elles taketh pardoun as ye wende,  
 Al newe and fressh at every miles ende,  
 So that ye offren alwey, newe and newe,  
 Nobles or pens, whiche that be goode and trewe.  
 645 It is an honour to everich that is heer  
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer  
 T'assoille yow in contree as ye ryde,  
 For adventures whiche that may bityde.  
 Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two  
 650 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.  
 Look, which a seuretee is it to yow alle  
 That I am in youre felaweship yfalle,  
 That may assoille yow, bothe moore and lasse,  
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.  
 655 I rede thatoure Hoost heere shal bigynne,  
 For he is moost envoluped in synne.  
 Com forth, sire Hoost, and offre first anon,  
 And thou shalt kisse my relikes everychon,  
 Ye, for a grote! unbokele anon thy purs.'  
 660 "Nay, nay," quod he, "thanne have I Cristes curs!  
 Lat be," quod he, "it shal nat be, so theeche,  
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,  
 And swere it were a relyk of a seint,  
 Though it were with thy fundement depeint.  
 665 But by the croys which that Seint Eleyne fond,  
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond  
 In stide of relikes or of seintuarie.  
 Lat kutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;  
 They shul be shryned in an hogges toord."  
 670 This Pardoner answerde nat a word;  
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.

“Now,” quod oure Hoost, “I wol no lenger pleye  
With thee, ne with noon oother angry man.”  
But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,  
675 Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,  
“Namoore of this, for it is right ynough.  
Sir Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;  
And ye, sir Hoost, that been to me so deere,  
I prey yow, that ye kisse the pardoner;  
680 And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,  
And, as we diden lat us laughe and pley.”  
Anon they kiste, and ryden forth hir weye.

**Heere is ended the Pardoners Tale.**



Because plays are  
written to be seen.