

## The Pardoner's Tale

IN FLANDERS, ONCE, there was a company  
Of young companions given to folly,  
Riot and gambling, brothels and taverns;  
And, to the music of harps, lutes, gitterns,  
5 They danced and played at dice both day and night,  
And ate also and drank beyond their might,  
Whereby they made the devil's sacrifice  
Within that devil's temple, wicked wise,  
By superfluity both vile and vain.  
10 So damnable their oaths and so profane  
That it was terrible to hear them swear;  
Our blessed Saviour's Body did they tear;  
They thought the Jews had rent Him not enough;  
And each of them at others' sins would laugh.  
15 Then entered dancing-girls of ill repute,  
Graceful and slim, and girls who peddled fruit,  
Harpers and bawds and women selling cake,  
Who do their office for the Devil's sake,  
To kindle and blow the fire of lechery,  
20 Which is so closely joined with gluttony;  
I call on holy writ, now, to witness  
That lust is in all wine and drunkenness.  
O gluttony, of you we may complain!  
Oh, knew a man how many maladies  
25 Follow on excess and on gluttonies,  
Surely he would be then more moderate  
In diet, and at table more sedate.  
Alas! A foul thing is it, by my fay,  
To speak this word, and fouler is the deed,  
30 When man so guzzles of the white and red  
That of his own throat makes he his privy,

## The Pardoner's Tale

IN FLANDERS, THERE was once a group of young men who were prone to the foolish conduct of fighting and gambling and going to brothels and taverns. Dancing to the music of harps, lutes, and guitars, they tossed dice day and night and ate and drank beyond their capacity; and in so doing, they made sacrifice to the devil in wicked ways with their evil and worthless overindulgence. Their oaths were so damnable and so full of contempt for sacred things that it was terrible to hear them swear. Our blessed Lord's body they tore apart with their oaths; they thought the Jews had not torn Him enough. They would laugh at each other's sins. Then entered the graceful, slim dancing girls of ill repute, and the girls who peddled fruit, the minstrels and prostitutes, and women selling cake, all who do the Devil's work by kindling and enflaming the sexual desire which is so closely connected with gluttony. I call on the Bible, now, as witness that lust comes from wine and drunkenness.

O gluttony, of you we may well complain! O, if a man knew how many illnesses are caused by overindulgence, and eating and drinking too much, he would have a more moderate diet and be sober at the table. Alas! A foul thing it is, by my faith, to speak this word, gluttony, and fouler is the deed, when a man drinks so much white and red wine that he turns his own throat into a toilet because of this cursed overindulgence. To be honest, a person who gives in to such pleasures is really dead while he is absorbed with this vice. Wine is a lustful thing, and drunkenness is full of conflict and

- Because of this cursed superfluity.  
 But truly, he that such delights entice  
 Is dead while yet he wallows in this vice.  
 35 A lecherous thing is wine, and drunkenness  
 Is full of striving and of wretchedness.  
 O drunken man, disfigured is your face,  
 Sour is your breath, foul are you to embrace,  
 You fall down just as if you were stuck swine;  
 40 Your tongue is loose, your honest care obscure;  
 For drunkenness is very sepulture  
 Of any mind a man may chance to own.  
 In whom strong drink has domination shown  
 He can no counsel keep for any dread.  
 45 Now keep you from the white and from the red.  
 And now that I have told of gluttony,  
 I'll take up gambling, showing you thereby  
 The curse of chance, and all its evils treat;  
 From it proceeds false swearing and deceit,  
 50 Blaspheming, murder, and—what's more—the waste  
 of time and money; add to which, debased  
 And shamed and lost to honour quite is he,  
 Who once a common gambler's known to be.  
 And ever the higher one is of estate,  
 55 The more he's held disgraced and desolate.  
 And if a prince plays similar hazardry  
 In all his government and policy,  
 He loses in the estimate of men  
 His good repute, and finds it not again.  
 60 Now these three roisterers, whereof I tell,  
 Long before prime was rung by any bell,  
 Were sitting in a tavern for to drink;  
 And as they sat they heard a small bell clink  
 Before a corpse being carried to his grave;  
 65 Whereat one of them called unto his knave:  
 "Go run," said he, "and ask them civilly  
 What corpse it is that's just now passing by,  
 And see that you report the man's name well."  
 "Sir," said the boy, "it needs not that they tell.  
 70 I learned it, ere you came here, full two hours;

unhappiness. O drunken man, your face is distorted, your breath is sour; and you are disgusting to embrace. You fall down like a stuck pig, you cannot speak clearly, and your decent appearance is lost. For drunkenness is the very tomb in which any intelligence a man may have is buried. There is no doubt that he who is controlled by drink can keep no secrets. Now stay away from the white and from the red wine.

And now that I have spoken of gluttony, I'll talk about gambling and discuss all its evils; from it comes lying and deceit, swearing against God, murder, and, what's more, the waste of time and money; furthermore, once a man's known to be a common gambler, he is shamed and dishonored. And the higher one's class, the greater he is held in disgrace and ruin. And if a prince gambles in government and policy, he loses his good reputation in the judgment of men, and he will not get it back again.

Long before the bell which rings at nine in the morning was rung, three revelers of whom I speak were sitting in a tavern drinking; and as they sat there, they heard that small processional bell rung which precedes a corpse as it is being carried to his grave. One of the three then called to his serving boy, "Go quickly and ask them politely who that corpse is just now passing by."

"Sir," said the boy, "they do not have to tell me that. I learned that information two hours ago before you came here. He was, by

- He was, by gad, an old comrade of yours;  
 And he was slain, all suddenly, last night,  
 When drunk, as he sat on his bench upright;  
 An unseen thief, called Death, came stalking by;  
 Who hereabouts makes all the people die,  
 And with his spear he clove his heart in two  
 And went his way and made no more ado.  
 He's slain a thousand with this pestilence;  
 And, master, ere you come in his presence,  
 It seems to me to be right necessary  
 To be forewarned of such an adversary:  
 Be ready to meet him for evermore.  
 My mother taught me this, I say no more.”  
 “By holy Mary,” said the innkeeper,  
 “The boy speaks truth, for Death has slain, this year,  
 A mile or more hence, in a large village,  
 Both man and woman, child and hind and page.  
 I think his habitation must be there;  
 To be advised of him great wisdom ’twere,  
 Before he did a man some dishonour.”  
 “Yea, by God’s arms!” exclaimed this roisterer,  
 “Is it such peril, then, this Death to meet?  
 I’ll seek him in the road and in the street,  
 As I now vow to God’s own noble bones!  
 Hear, comrades, we’re of one mind, as each owns;  
 Let each of us hold up his hand to other  
 And each of us become the other’s brother,  
 And we three will go slay this traitor Death;  
 He shall be slain who’s stopped so many a breath,  
 By God’s great dignity, ere it be night.”  
 Together did these three their pledges plight  
 To live and die, each of them for the other,  
 As if he were his very own blood brother.  
 And up they started, drunken, in this rage,  
 And forth they went, and towards that village  
 Whereof the innkeeper had told before.  
 And so, with many a grisly oath, they swore  
 And Jesus’ blessed body once more rent—  
 “Death shall be dead if we find where he went.”

heaven, an old friend of yours; and he was killed suddenly last night while he was drunk and as he sat upright on his bench. An unseen thief called Death, who makes all the people around here die, came stalking. With his spear he cut his heart in two, and he left without saying anything. He has killed a thousand with this plague; and, master, before you come in Death’s presence, I must warn you of such an adversary; be ready to meet him any time. My mother taught me this, I say no more.”

“By holy Mary,” said the innkeeper, “the boy is telling the truth, for this year Death has slain both man and woman, child and servant and page in a large village a mile or so from here. I think he lives over there. It would be wise to be warned of him before he does a man some harm.”

“Ha, by God!” said the merryman, “Is it so dangerous, then, to meet Death? I swear to God, I will look for him on the highways and the streets. Listen friends, let the three of us join together, and we will make a pledge to each other that with God’s help, before it is night, we will find and kill this traitor Death, who has stopped so many a breath.” So together the three pledged to live and die for each other, just as though they were really brothers. And in their drunken madness they jumped up and headed toward the village the innkeeper had told them about.

And so they swore many grisly oaths and tore apart Jesus’ blessed body once more: “Death shall be dead if we find where he went.” When they had gone about half a mile, just as they were about to go

110 When they had gone not fully half a mile,  
 Just as they would have trodden over a stile,  
 An old man, and a poor, with them did meet.  
 This ancient man full meekly them did greet,  
 And said thus: "Now, lords, God keep you and see!"

115 The one that was most insolent of these three  
 Replied to him: "What? Churl of evil grace,  
 Why are you all wrapped up, except your face?  
 Why do you live so long in so great age?"

120 This ancient man looked upon his visage  
 And thus replied: "Because I cannot find  
 A man, nay, though I walked from here to Ind,  
 Either in town or country who'll engage

125 To give his youth in barter for my age;  
 And therefore must I keep my old age still,  
 As long a time as it shall be God's will.  
 Not even Death, alas! my life will take;  
 Thus restless I my wretched way must make

130 But, sirs, in you it is no courtesy  
 To speak to an old man despitefully,  
 Unless in word he trespass or in deed.  
 In holy writ you may, yourselves, well read,  
 'Before an old man, hoar upon the head,  
 You should arise.' Which I advise you read,  
 Nor to an old man any injury do

135 More than you would that men should do to you  
 In age, if you so long time shall abide;  
 And God be with you, whether you walk or ride.  
 I must pass on now where I have to go."  
 "Nay, ancient churl, by God it sha'n't be so,"  
 Cried out this other hazarder, anon;  
 "You sha'n't depart so easily, by Saint John!  
 You spoke just now of that same traitor Death,  
 Who in this country stops our good friends' breath  
 Hear my true word, since you are his own spy,  
 Tell where he is or you shall rue it, aye  
 By God and by the holy Sacrament!  
 Indeed you must be, with this Death, intent  
 To slay all us young people, you false thief."

through a gate, they met a poor old man who greeted them humbly and said, "God bless you and protect you!"

The most arrogant of the revelers replied, "What? Peasant, why is all but your face so wrapped up? Why do you live to such a great age?"

This ancient man looked upon the other man's face and replied: "Because, even though I walked from here to India, I cannot find anyone in either town or country who will agree to give his youth in exchange for my old age; therefore I must keep my old age for as long as it shall be God's will. Not even Death, alas, will take my life. So I have to walk around like this all day. But, sirs, it is not courteous to talk to an old man with contempt unless he wrongs you by word or deed. In the Bible you yourselves may read, 'Before an old man with gray hair, you should rise,' which I advise you to read. Nor should you harm an old man, any more than you would have men do so to you when you are old, if you shall live so long. Now, God be with you wherever you walk or ride. I must be on my way to where I have to go."

"Oh no, old man, by God, you shall not go!" said one of the gamblers immediately. "You will not get away so easily, by Saint John! You just spoke of that traitor Death, who is killing our friends in this country. Since you are his spy, you will tell us where he is or, by God and by the holy Sacrament, take my word for it, you will regret it! Indeed, you and Death must be intent on killing all of us young people, you false thief."

- 150 "Now, sirs," said he, "if you're so keen, in brief,  
to find out Death, turn up this crooked way,  
For in that grove I left him, by my fay,  
Under a tree, and there he will abide;  
Nor for your boasts will he a moment hide.  
See you that oak? Right there you shall him find.  
155 God save you, Who redeemed all humankind,  
And mend your ways!"—thus said this ancient man.  
And every one of these three roisterers ran  
Till he came to that tree; and there they found,  
Of florins of fine gold, new-minted, round,  
160 Well-nigh eight bushels full, or so they thought.  
No longer, then, after this Death they sought,  
But each of them so glad was of that sight,  
Because the florins were so fair and bright,  
That down they all sat by this precious hoard.  
165 The worst of them was first to speak a word.  
"Brothers," said he, "take heed to what I say;  
My wits are keen, although I mock and play.  
This treasure here Fortune to us has given  
That mirth and jollity our lives may liven,  
170 And easily as it's come, so will we spend.  
But might this gold be carried from this place  
Home to my house, or if you will, to yours—  
For well we know that all this gold is ours—  
Then were we all in high felicity.  
175 But certainly by day this may not be;  
For men would say that we were robbers strong,  
And we'd, for our own treasure, hang ere long.  
This treasure must be carried home by night  
All prudently and slyly, out of sight.  
180 So I propose that cuts among us all  
Be drawn, and let's see where the cut will fall;  
And he that gets the short cut, blithe of heart  
Shall run to town at once, and to the mart,  
And fetch us bread and wine here, privately.  
185 And two of us shall guard, right cunningly,  
This treasure well; and if he does not tarry,  
When it is night we'll all the treasure carry

"Now sirs," said he, "if you are so eager to meet Death, turn up this crooked path, for I left him, by my faith, in that grove under a tree, and there he will remain. He will not hide for a moment because of your boasts. Do you see that oak? He will be there. May God, who redeemed all humankind, save you and mend your ways!"—thus said this ancient man.

So each of the scoundrels ran until he came to that tree, and there they found about eight bushels full of fine, newly-minted gold coins. Then they no longer searched for Death. Each of them was so happy at the sight of gold that they all just sat down next to the precious hoard. The worst of them spoke first. "Brothers," he said, "listen to what I am going to say. Even though I laugh at things and joke around, my mind is shrewd. Fortune has given this treasure to us so that we can live our lives in merriment and fun, and we should spend this money as easily as we came by it. But if this gold could be carried from this place to my home or yours—for we certainly know that all this gold is ours—then we would all be extremely happy. But we certainly cannot carry it home during the day because men would say that we were flagrant thieves, and they'd soon hang us for the taking of our own treasure. Thus, this gold must be carried away at night, as carefully and secretly as possible.

Therefore, I suggest that we all draw lots, and the person with the shortest straw should run off to town and secretly bring bread and wine back to us. The other two will closely guard the gold, and if it doesn't take too long, we can all carry away the treasure at night to a spot we agree is the best place."

- 190 Where, by agreement, we may think it best."  
 That one of them the cuts brought in his fist  
 And bade them draw to see where it might fall;  
 And it fell on the youngest of them all;  
 And so, forth toward the town he went anon.  
 And just as soon as he had turned and gone,  
 That one of them spoke thus unto the other:  
 195 "You know well that you are my own sworn brother,  
 So to your profit I will speak anon.  
 You know well how our comrade is just gone;  
 And here is gold, and that in great plenty,  
 That's to be parted here among us three.  
 200 Nevertheless, if I can shape it so  
 That it be parted only by us two,  
 Shall I not do a turn that is friendly?"  
 The other said: "Well, now, how can that be?  
 He knows well that the gold is with us two.  
 205 What shall we say to him? What shall we do?"  
 "Shall it be secret?" asked the first rogue, then,  
 "And I will tell you in eight words, or ten,  
 What we must do, and how bring it about."  
 "Agreed," replied the other, "Never doubt,  
 210 That, on my word, I nothing will betray."  
 "Now," said the first, "we're two, and I dare say  
 The two of us are stronger than is one.  
 Watch when he sits, and soon as that is done  
 Arise and make as if with him to play;  
 215 And I will thrust him through the two sides, yea,  
 The while you romp with him as in a game,  
 And with your dagger see you do the same;  
 And then shall all this gold divided be,  
 My right dear friend, just between you and me;  
 220 Then may we both our every wish fulfill  
 And play at dice all at our own sweet will."  
 And thus agreed were these two rogues, that day,  
 To slay the third, as you have heard me say.  
 225 This youngest rogue who'd gone into the town,  
 Often in fancy rolled he up and down

They drew the lots and the youngest of them happened to pick the shortest. So, immediately he started off toward town.

Just as soon as he had turned and gone, one of the two said to the other, "You well know that you are my sworn brother, so I will speak to you about something profitable. You well know that our friend is gone, and here is a great amount of gold which is going to be divided between the three of us. But if I could figure out how to divide it only between the two of us, wouldn't I be doing you a good turn?"

The other answered, "Well, now, how can that be? He knows that the gold is with us. What shall we tell him? What shall we do?"

"Will you keep a secret?" asked the first rogue. "I will tell you in a few words what we must do and how we are going to do it."

"Agreed," replied the other. "On my word, I will reveal nothing. Don't you worry."

"Now," said the first, "there are two of us, and we know that we two are stronger than one. Watch when the other returns, and once he sits down, right away you get up as though you would fool with him; and I will stab him through both sides while you play with him as in a game. And with your dagger see that you do the same. Then, dear friend, all this gold shall be divided just between you and me. Then we may both fulfill our every wish and play at dice whenever we will." And so these two scoundrels agreed that day to kill the third, as you heard me say.

The youngest scoundrel who'd gone into the town imagined handling the beautiful new, bright gold coins. "Oh Lord," he thought, "if

The beauty of those florins new and bright.  
 "O Lord," thought he, "if so be that I might  
 Have all this treasure to myself alone,  
 There is no man who lives beneath the throne  
 Of God that should be then so merry as I."  
 230 And at the last the Fiend, our enemy,  
 Put in his thought that he should poison buy  
 With which he might kill both his fellows; aye,  
 The Devil found him in such wicked state,  
 235 He had full leave his grief to consummate;  
 For it was utterly the man's intent  
 To kill them both and never to repent.  
 And on he strode, no longer would he tarry,  
 Into the town, to an apothecary,  
 240 And prayed of him that he'd prepare and sell  
 Some poison for his rats, and some as well  
 For a polecat that in his yard had lain,  
 The which, he said, his capons there had slain,  
 And fain he was to rid him, if he might,  
 245 Of vermin that thus damaged him by night.  
 The apothecary said: "And you shall have  
 A thing of which, so God my spirit save,  
 In all this world there is not live creature  
 That's eaten or has drunk of this mixture  
 250 As much as equals but a grain of wheat,  
 That shall not sudden death thereafter meet;  
 Yea, die he shall, and in a shorter while  
 Than you require to walk but one short mile;  
 This poison is so violent and strong."  
 255 This wicked man the poison took along  
 With him boxed up, and then he straightway ran  
 Into the street adjoining, to a man,  
 And of him borrowed generous bottles three;  
 And into two his poison then poured he;  
 260 The third one he kept clean for his own drink.  
 For all that night he was resolved to swink  
 In carrying the florins from that place.  
 And when this roisterer, with evil grace,  
 Had filled with wine his mighty bottles three,

*I could have all that treasure to myself, there is no man alive who would be as happy as I."*

*And at the end, the Devil, our enemy, put in the young man's mind the idea that he should buy poison to kill both his companions. Because the Devil found him in such a wicked condition, he had full permission to carry out the young man's destruction; for it was absolutely the young man's intent to kill them both and never to repent. And on he walked quickly into the town to a druggist and asked him to prepare and sell him some poison with which he might kill some rats and a polecat that had come in his yard at night and killed his chickens.*

*The druggist said, "You will have something which, I swear, will cause sudden death to any creature who eats or drinks the mixture in an amount equal to a grain of wheat. Yes, this poison is so violent and strong that he shall die in a shorter time than it takes to walk one short mile."*

*This wicked man took along the poison in a box and ran immediately to the next street and borrowed three large bottles from a man. He poured the poison into two of the bottles, and the third he kept pure for his own drink. For he was prepared to work all that night carrying the gold coins from that place. And when this scoundrel, with an evil will, had filled the three large bottles with wine, he returned to his comrades.*

- 265 Then to his comrades forth again went he.  
 What is the need to tell about it more?  
 For just as they had planned his death before,  
 Just so they murdered him, and that anon.  
 And when the thing was done, then spoke the one:
- 270 "Now let us sit and drink and so be merry,  
 And afterward we will his body bury."  
 And as he spoke, one bottle of the three  
 He took wherein the poison chanced to be  
 And drank and gave his comrade drink also,  
 For which, and that anon, lay dead these two.  
 275 Thus ended these two homicides in woe;  
 Died thus the treacherous poisoner also.  
 O cursed sin, full of abominableness!  
 O treacherous homicide! O wickedness!  
 O gluttony, lechery, and hazardry!  
 O blasphemmer of Christ with villainy,  
 And with great oaths, habitual for pride!  
 Alas! Mankind, how may this thing betide  
 That to thy dear Creator, Who thee wrought,  
 And with His precious blood salvation bought,  
 285 Thou art so false and so unkind, alas!  
 Now, good men, God forgive you each trespass,  
 And keep you from the sin of avarice.  
 My holy pardon cures and will suffice,  
 290 So that it brings me gold, or silver brings,  
 Or else, I care not—brooches, spoons or rings.  
 Bow down your heads before this holy bull!  
 Come up, you wives, and offer of your wool!  
 Your names I'll enter on my roll, anon,  
 295 And into Heaven's bliss you'll go, each one.  
 For I'll absolve you, by my special power,  
 You that make offering, as clean this hour  
 As you were born.  
 And lo, sirs, thus I preach.  
 300 And Jesus Christ, who is our souls' great leech,  
 So grant you each his pardon to receive;  
 For that is best; I will not you deceive.

*There is no need to tell what happened next. They killed him quickly, just as they had planned in advance. And when the deed was done, one of them said, "Now let us drink and have fun, and later we will bury his body."*

*And as he spoke, he took one of the three bottles which, by chance, contained the poison. He drank and also gave some to his friend, which caused them to both die instantly. Therefore, these two murders ended in misery, and the treacherous poisoner died also.*

*O cursed sin, full of hate! O treacherous murder! O wickedness! O gluttony, lust, and gambling! O he who swears against Christ with great and vile oaths out of habit and pride! Alas! Mankind, how can it be that you are so false and unkind to the dear Creator who made you and bought you salvation with His precious blood. Now good men, God forgive you each sin and keep you from the sin of avarice. My holy pardon can save you if you have any gold or silver to bring, or anything else, I don't care—brooches, spoons, or rings. Come on, you women, offer your wool. I will write your name down on my rolls and into the bliss of Heaven each of you will go. By my special power, I will pardon you who give offering and make you as pure this hour as the day you were born.*

*And see, sirs, thus I preach.  
 And Jesus Christ, who is our souls' great physician, so grant you each to receive his pardon, for that is best; I will not deceive you.*



But, sirs, one word forgot I in my tale;  
 I've relics in my pouch that cannot fail,  
 As good as England ever saw, I hope,  
 The which I got by kindness of the pope.  
 If gifts your change of heart and mind reveal.  
 You'll get my absolution while you kneel.  
 Come forth, and kneel down here before, anon.  
 And humbly you'll receive my full pardon;  
 Or else receive a pardon as you wend,  
 All new and fresh as every mile shall end,  
 So that you offer me each time, anew,  
 More gold and silver, all good coins and true.  
 It is an honour to each one that's here  
 That you may have a competent pardoner  
 To give you absolution as you ride,  
 For all adventures that may still betide.  
 Perchance from horse may fall down one or two,  
 Breaking his neck, and it might well be you.  
 See what insurance, then, it is for all  
 That I within your fellowship did fall,  
 Who may absolve you, both the great and less,  
 When soul from body passes, as I guess.  
 I think our host might just as well begin,  
 For he is most enveloped in all sin.  
 Come forth, sir host, and offer first anon,  
 And you shall kiss the relics, every one,  
 Aye, for a groat! Unbuckle now your purse."  
 "Nay, nay," said he, "then may I have Christ's curse!  
 Why, you would have me kissing your old breeches,  
 And swear they were the relics of a saint,  
 Though with your excrement 'twere dabbed like paint.  
 By cross Saint Helen found in Holy Land,  
 I would I had your ballocks in my hand  
 Instead of relics in a reliquary;  
 Let's cut them off, and them I'll help you carry;  
 They shall be shrined within a hog's fat turd."  
 This pardoner, he answered not a word;  
 So wrathful was he no word would he say.

But sirs, one thing I forgot in my tale. I have relics in my pouch that cannot fail. They are the best England ever saw, I hope, and were given to me by the kindness of the pope. If your gifts reveal your change of heart and mind, you'll get my pardon while you kneel. Come forth, and kneel down here before me now and humbly receive my full pardon, or else receive a new pardon at the end of each mile as we travel, as long as you offer me more gold and silver each time.

It is an honor to each one who's here that you have a competent pardoner to grant you forgiveness for anything that may happen on the way as you ride. Perhaps one or two of you may fall from a horse and break your neck. See what a safeguard it is for everyone that I happened to join your company so that I might pardon you, both the high and the low, when the soul passes from the body. I suggest that our host be the first one to seek the pardon because he is the most surrounded by sin. Come forth, sir host, and make the first offering, and you shall kiss every one of the relics, yes, for a grain of oats. Open your purse now!

"No, no," said the innkeeper, "then may I have Christ's curse. You would have me kiss your old pants and swear they were the relics of a saint even though they were stained like paint with your excrement. But by the cross which Saint Helen found in the Holy Land, I would rather have your testicles in my hand than the relics in a relic-box. Let's cut them off, and I will help you carry them; they shall be enshrined in a hog's fat turd." This pardoner could not say anything in reply; he was too angry to open his mouth.

"Now," said our host, "I will no longer play  
With you, nor any other angry man."

But at this point the worthy knight began,

When that he saw how all the folk did laugh:

"No more of this, for it's gone far enough;

Sir pardoner, be glad and merry here;

And you, sir host, who are to me so dear,

I pray you that you kiss the pardoner.

And, pardoner, I pray you to draw near,

And as we did before, let's laugh and play."

And then they kissed and rode forth on their way.

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"Now," said our host, "I will no longer play with you or any  
other angry man."

But at this point, when he saw how everyone laughed, the worthy knight began, "No more of this, for it's gone far enough. Sir pardoner, be glad and happy here; and you, sir host, who means so much to me, I ask that you kiss the pardoner. And, pardoner, I ask you to draw near and let's laugh and play as we did before." And then they kissed and rode forth on their way.

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