

Throughout go buy
wine, the other two
greedily



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Throughout literature, relationships can often be found between the author of a story and the story that he writes. In Geoffrey Chaucer's frame story, *Canterbury Tales*, many of the characters make this idea evident with the tales that they tell.

A distinct relationship can be made between the character of the Pardoner and the tale that he tells. Through the Prologue to the Pardoner's tale, the character of the Pardoner is revealed. Although the Pardoner displays many important traits, the most prevalent is his greed. Throughout the prologue, the Pardoner displays his greed and even admits that the only thing he cares about is money: "I preach nothing except for gain" ("Pardoner's Tale", Line 105). This avarice is seen strongly in the Pardoner's tale as well. In the Pardoner's tale, three friends begin a journey in order to murder Death. On their journey, though, an old man leads them to a great deal of treasure.

At this point, all three of the friends in the tale display a greed similar to the Pardoner's. The three friends decide that someone should bring bread and wine for a celebration. As the youngest of the friends leaves to go buy wine, the other two greedily plot to kill him so they can split the treasure only two ways. Even the youngest decides to "put it in his mind to buy poison / With which he might kill his two companions" (383, 384).

The greed, which is evident in the character of the Pardoner, is also clearly seen in the tale. Another trait that is displayed by the Pardoner and a character in his tale is hypocrisy. Although the Pardoner is extremely greedy, he continues to try and teach that "Avarice is the root of all evil" (6).

The characters in his tale display great hypocrisy as well. As the tale begins, the friends all act very trustworthy and faithful towards all of their friends. They nobly make a decision to risk their lives while trying to slay their friend's murderer. As they talk about their challenge, they pledge "to live and die each of them for the other, / As if he were his own blood brother" (241-242).

At the end of the tale, the "brothers" begin to reveal their true nature. They all turn on each other in an attempt to steal the treasure for themselves. All of the loyalty, which they had pledged, was simply a lie and no faithfulness remained. While the two older "brother" plotted to kill the younger, the younger "brother" plotted "to kill them both and never to repent" (388). Thus, these so-called "faithful" brothers display their true ruthlessness and reveal their hypocrisy in relation to the Pardoner's character.

The characters in the "Pardoner's Tale" match the unctuous nature of the Pardoner in a great deal of ways. All of these traits and ideas that are seen in both the Pardoner and the tale that he tells show a strong relationship in the two. Chaucer used this technique in all of the tales that are recorded in Canterbury Tales. This technique gives a greater insight into the mind of the teller.

By analyzing the tales, it is possible to learn much about the teller of the tale. Using this method, Chaucer focuses on the characteristics of each of the people involved in Canterbury Tales, but also keeps the poem interesting.

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