The Shaking of the Sheets

– Or the dance of death

*Dance, dance the shaking of the sheets  
Dance, dance when you hear the piper  
Playing, everyone must dance  
The Shaking of the Sheets with me*  
  
Bring away the beggar, bring away the king  
And every man in his degree,  
Bring away the oldest and the youngest thing  
Come to death and follow me  
  
Bring away the merchant who made his money in France  
And the crafty banker too,  
When you hear the piper you and I must dance  
The dance that everyone must do.  
  
I'll find you in the courtrooms, I'll find you in the schools  
When you hear the piper play,  
I'll take away the wise men, I'll take away the fools  
**And bring their bodies all to clay**.  
  
All the politicians of high and low degree,  
Lords and ladies great and small,  
Don't think that you'll escape and need not dance with me,  
I'll make you come when I do call.  
  
It may be in the day, it may be in the night,  
Prepare yourselves to dance and pray  
That when the piper plays ``The Shaking Of The Sheets''  
You may to Heaven dance the way.

By Steeleye Span

